CHAPTER - 4

FLAUBERT AND BANKIM - AN ESSAY IN THE TYPOLOGY OF COMPARATIVE DISCOURSE
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>NAME OF WORK</th>
<th>GENRE</th>
<th>TYPOLOGICAL DETAILS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1857</td>
<td>The Temptation of Sant Anthony</td>
<td>Novel</td>
<td>He gave free rein to his flamboyant imagination.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1857</td>
<td>Madame Bovary</td>
<td>Novel</td>
<td>He was prosecuted for offending public morals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1862</td>
<td>Salammbo</td>
<td>Historical Novel</td>
<td>His exotic novel was criticized for its encrustations of archaeological detail; nevertheless it was a success.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1869</td>
<td>Sentimental Education</td>
<td>Novel</td>
<td>It was intended as the moral history of the generation, was largely misunderstood by the critics but considered to be his best by Flaubert</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1874 The Candidate
Political Play
It was a disastrous failure

1877 Three Tales
Novellas
(Short Stories)
It was as unqualified success but it appeared when Flaubert's spirits, health and finances were all at their lowest ebb.

1881 Bouvard and Pécuchet
Unfinished Comic Masterpiece
It was published after Flaubert's death and his fame and reputation grew steadily, strengthened by this publication. Many other remarkable volumes of his correspondence followed.

BANKIM CHANDRA CHATTERJEE - 1838-1894

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>NAME OF WORK</th>
<th>GENRE</th>
<th>TYPOLOGICAL DETAILS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1856</td>
<td>BENGALI</td>
<td>Verse</td>
<td>Initial recognition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1856</td>
<td>Lalita O Manas</td>
<td>Verse</td>
<td>Initial recognition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Type</td>
<td>Notes</td>
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<tr>
<td>1878</td>
<td>Kavita Pustak</td>
<td>Verse</td>
<td>He bettered his style</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1865</td>
<td>Durgeshnandini</td>
<td>Novel</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1866</td>
<td>Kapalkundala</td>
<td>Novel</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1869</td>
<td>Mrinalini</td>
<td>Novel</td>
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<tr>
<td>1873</td>
<td>Bishabriksha</td>
<td>Novel</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1875</td>
<td>Chandrashekhar</td>
<td>Novel</td>
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<tr>
<td>1877</td>
<td>Rajani</td>
<td>Novel</td>
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<td>1878</td>
<td>Krishna Kanter</td>
<td>Novel</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Will</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1882</td>
<td>Anandmath</td>
<td>Novel</td>
<td>A political novel dealing with the sanyasi revolt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1884</td>
<td>Debi</td>
<td>Novel</td>
<td>He depicts his theory of discipline and culture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Choudhrurani</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1887</td>
<td>Sitaram</td>
<td>Novel</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>English Title</td>
<td>Yearly Event</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1864</td>
<td>Rajmohan's wife Novel</td>
<td>It was first published serially in <em>The Indian Field</em> in 1864, published as a book in 1935. Sachishchandra Chatterji has mentioned in his biography of Bankim Chandra that Bankim wrote another novel entitled <em>Adventures of a Young Hindu</em> in English, but that work is yet to be found.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1869</td>
<td>On the origins of Hindu festivals</td>
<td>Essay</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870</td>
<td>A popular literature for Bengali.</td>
<td>Essay</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1871</td>
<td>Bengali Literature Essay</td>
<td>Essay</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1871</td>
<td>Buddhism and Sankhya Philosophy</td>
<td>Essay</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1872</td>
<td>The confessions of a young Bengal.</td>
<td>Essay</td>
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<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Subtitle</td>
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<tr>
<td>1873</td>
<td>Indira</td>
<td></td>
<td>Short Fiction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1874</td>
<td>Yugalanguriya</td>
<td></td>
<td>Short Fiction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1877</td>
<td>Upakatha</td>
<td></td>
<td>Short Fiction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1874</td>
<td>Lokarahasya</td>
<td></td>
<td>Humour and Satire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1884</td>
<td>Muchiramgurer Jibancharit</td>
<td></td>
<td>Humour and Satire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1876</td>
<td>Kamlakanter Daptar</td>
<td></td>
<td>Belles-Lettres</td>
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<tr>
<td>1875</td>
<td>Bijnan Rahasya</td>
<td></td>
<td>Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1879</td>
<td>Samya</td>
<td></td>
<td>Essays on Literature, History,</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bibidha Prabandha</td>
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<tr>
<td>1886</td>
<td>Krishna Charitra</td>
<td></td>
<td>Philosophy, and religion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1888</td>
<td>Dharma Tattva</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Details</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1902</td>
<td>Srimadhhaghvat Gita</td>
<td>Translation and commentary.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1877</td>
<td>Dinbandhu Mitrer Granthabali</td>
<td>Edited work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1885</td>
<td>Ishwar Gupta Pranita Kabitabali</td>
<td>Edited work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1892</td>
<td>Luptoratnoddhar</td>
<td>Edited work</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Collected works of Peary Chand Mitra</td>
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<tr>
<td>1892</td>
<td>Calcutta University Bengali Selections.</td>
<td>Edited work</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1893</td>
<td>Sanjivani Sudha</td>
<td>Edited work</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Collected works of Sanjibchandra Chatterjee</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1894</td>
<td>Sahaj Rachana Shiksha</td>
<td>Text book for children</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1894</td>
<td>Sahaj Ingreji Shiksha</td>
<td>Text book for children</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Title 1</td>
<td>Type</td>
<td>Title 2</td>
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<td>------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1873</td>
<td>The study of</td>
<td>Essay</td>
<td>Hindu Philosophy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vande Mataram</td>
<td>Poem</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Hinduism</td>
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<tr>
<td>1882</td>
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</table>

Vande Mataram has been translated by Sri Aurobindo in verse as well as in prose and both the translations are to be found in Sri Aurobindo Birth Century Library, Vol. VIII. The song was also translated by Harinath De, first published in the Indian Mirror, Calcutta, 11th November 1905, later reprinted in Select Papers of Harinath De, edited by Sunil Bandyopadhyay, Calcutta, 1972.
The Annales group have been most critical of narrative history, but in a rather more polemical than a distinctively theoretical way. For them, narrative history was simply the history of past politics and moreover, political history conceived as short-term, "dramatic" conflicts and crises lending themselves to "novelistic" representations, of a more "literary" than a properly "scientific" kind. The charge launched by the Annalistes is that narrativity is inherently "dramatizing" or "fictionalizing of its subject matter, as if dramatic events either did not exist in history, or if they did exist, where by virtue of their dramatic nature not a suitable object for historical study. In the nineteenth century, the relationship between madness and sanity changes again reflected in the reforms of Pinel and Juke, who "liberated" the insane from association with criminals and paupers, defined them as simply "sick" rather than essentially different from their "heal their "counterparts and identified their "illness" with a phase in the development of the human organism, as either an arrested form of, or regression to, childhood.
Against the backdrop of the Bengal Renaissance the post mutiny era in the history of Bengal was marked by a magnificent outburst of creative activity in literature. The flowering of the renaissance began with the poetry of Mandhusudan Datta, the drama of Dinabandhu Mitra, and the novels of Bankim Chandra Chatterji. Bankim moulded Bengali prose into a fine literary form which achieved great renown. In 1856 came his first historical romance Durgeshnandini, which was a reaction to the reading public and started the vogue for romantic novels. In Bisha Briksha (1873) he made popular the social novel in Bengali. He founded and edited the Bangadarshan for four years from 1872. This was the first great cultural periodical in Bengali and drew to it a group of writers to whom and to the reading public Bankim was the acknowledged leader. In his Kamalakanta, printed in book form in 1875, he created an unforgettable character and preached his own cherished values of humanity and Patriotism. In this Samya essays, reprinted collectively in 1879, he showed his sympathy for the common people and the peasantry, leaned towards egalitarianism and betrayed traces of the influence on him of utopian socialism. Then the wave of patriotic revivalism caught him up and in Anandamath published in book form in 1882, he gave a classic expression to such sentiments. The famous Bande Mataram hymn was included in this novel. Late in life, he turned to religious thoughts and endeavoured to vindicate the character of Krishna as depicted in our ancient books. Hindu revivalism with an excessive stress on the Hindu character and tradition seemed to speak out through him. His greatest achievement lay, however, in evolving a prose style which chalked out a middle path between the heavy chaste form of Vidyasagar and the vulgar colloquial idiom of Tek Chand Thakur. Susobhan Sarkar notes that in the ranks of the old society there was some uneasiness at the moral stature of the protestant movement (Bengal Renaissance), and this took the form of scoffing at Brahmo puritanism. Orthodox society also tried to rationalise its instinctive
resistance, and even Bankimchandra Chatterjee reacted in this manner. Tagore among the Brahmo Samajis was one of the first artist to realise the importance of the traditional religious language and he exploited all traditional myths and symbols. Tagore in his religious lyrics compensated for the absence of traditional Hindu symbols by nature images and created new symbols charged with deeper spiritual significance. Bankim Chandra Chatterjee who was not a Brahmo and who had little sympathy for Hindu orthodoxy defended idolatory not from any religious standpoint but from a purely aesthetic standpoint. He wrote, man is by instinct a poet and an artist the passionate yearning of the heart for the Ideal in beauty, in power, and in purity must find an expression in the world of Real... The religious worship of idols is as justifiable as the intellectual worship of Hamlet or Prometheus. The homage we owe to the ideal of the Human realized in art is admiration. The homage we owe to the ideal of the Divine realized in idolatry is worship.

28th October, 1882, The States Man.

As an artist Bankim valued the religious symbolism of Hindu life and found in it a rich store of materials for artistic creation. Of all the religious symbols in Bengal the most significant is the Mother Symbol. Anthropologists and Sociologists may relate it with some deep-rooted psychological fact associated with a primitive matriarchal society. Bengali mind found its most congenial expression in religious life through a mother-son relation between the devotee and the Absolute. Mother has two basic manifestations in Kali and in Durga. Kali has been conceived as the fierce aspect of the Divine nature. She is dark, and dreadful, naked and lurid. The horrors and ravages of nature are petrified in her nature. Durga, on the other hand, though a worrior goddess, is tender and beautiful. Her complexion is as golden as the ripe corn and in her hair is the fragrance of autumn, as the poets describes her. With both the goddesses
a mother-son relationship exists among their devotees. The symbols of Kali and Durga acquired a new significance in the nineteenth century and Bankim was primarily responsible for this. He created a mother-myth. A new goddess was born-The Motherland. In Kamalakanter Daptar (1875). The identification between Durga and Bengal is complete. Or was it a replacement of Durga by Mother Bengal.

On the waves in the distance I saw her. I saw the golden goddess to be worshipped on the seventh day of the month. She floats smilingly on the water and radiates her glory. Is this the mother? Yes. It is she. The Mother. I recognized, the mother, the land of my birth.

In Bankim's novel Anandamath (1882) Kali has been identified with the Famine stricken impoverished Bengal. In the song Vande Mataram Mother Bengal is identified with both Durga and Kali as well as with other manifestations of the Divine Mother. The last section of this song invokes the Mother who is also the Motherland:

It is thy image we raise in every temple.

For thou art Durga holding her ten weapons of war....

I bow to thee goddess of wealth pure and peerless, richly watered, richly fruited, the Mother.

(Translated by Shri Aurbindo)

This unique song in the history of patriotic literature is an example of how religious symbolism dominated Indian national life. But even at a purely religious level this symbol has so irresistible an appeal to a Bengali that even a believer in the non-dualist philosophy such as a Vivekananda accepted it without any misgivings. Vivekananda told Nivedita. I cannot but believe that there is
TABLE 2

A COMPARATIVE SURVEY IN THE SIGNIFYING CATEGORIES OF THE CONCEPTUAL OPPOSITIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONCEPTUAL OPPOSITIONS</th>
<th>NAME OF WORKS</th>
<th>NAME OF CHARACTERS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. Crime and Justice</td>
<td>Madame Bovary</td>
<td>Emma Bovary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Durgeshnandini</td>
<td>Ayesha, Jagat, Osman, Katlu Khan, Birendra, Bimla and Tilottama.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kapalkundala</td>
<td>Nabakumar, Moti Bibi, Kapalkundala, Kapalik.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bishabriksha</td>
<td>Hira, Debendra, Kundanandini, Suryamukhi, Nagendra.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Anandmath</td>
<td>Satyendra, Santans, Mahendra, Bhabananda, Kalyani, and Satyananda.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Debi Choudhurani</td>
<td>Prafulla, Haraballav, Brajeshwar, Bhavani Pathak.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Impurity and Purity</td>
<td>Madame Bovary</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Durgeshnandini</td>
<td>Tilotama.</td>
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<td>Kapalkundala</td>
<td>Kapalkundala</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bishabriksha</td>
<td>Kundanandini, Suryamukhi, Hira.</td>
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<td>Chandrasekhar</td>
<td>Saibalini, Dalani.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rajani</td>
<td>Rajani, Labanga, Amar Nath.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Krishnakanter</td>
<td>Bhramar, Rohini.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Will</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>Kalyani.</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Debi Choudhurani</td>
<td>Prafulla.</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>3.</th>
<th>Fidelity and Infidelity</th>
<th>Madame Bovary</th>
<th>Emma Bovary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mrinalini</td>
<td>Manorama and Mrinalini.</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Kapalkundala</td>
<td>Kapalkundala</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fidelity and Infidelity</td>
<td>Bishabriksha</td>
<td>Kundanandini, Suryamukhi.</td>
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<td>Rajani</td>
<td>Rajani, Labanga, Amar Nath.</td>
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<td>Bhramar, Rohini.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Anandmath</td>
<td>Kalyani.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Debi Choudhurani</td>
<td>Prafulla.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
somewhere a great Power that thinks of herself as feminine, and called Kali, and Mother...  
....And I believe in Brahman to.

— Nivedita, The Master As I Saw Him. (P. 165)

Bankim's exposition of a new hinduism is significant not only because it drew heavily from western thinkers such as Bentham, Mill, Comte, and Spencer but primarily because it is an attempt at demytholization. Inspite of this Bankim was not an ordinary Hindu. On the evidence of a biographical essay written by his friend Kalinath Datta, Bankim had little interest in religion and was almost an atheist in his early life. Since his youth Bankim was always haunted by some fundamental questions of life. He wrote in his Dharma Tattva, I had been thinking since my young days what should I do with this life? What one ought to do with this life?

Probably a change in his religious attitude occurred around 1872. From this time onward one finds in his novels either a man or a woman is caught in the net of circumstances struggling against himself or herself or situated in a conflict between desire and conscience. Against this backdrop Bankim deals with three Conceptual Oppositions in his novels:

1. Crime and Justice
2. Impurity and purity
3. Fidelity and Infidelity

Women in their role as a dacoit queen as well as being a wife and in a whore get enmeshed in actions of purity in trying to be honest to their own selves. As the dispenser of justice Bankim's Debi Choudhurani (1884) assumes the functions of a saviour hero like an archetypal Krishna.
To save the good, to destroy evil
To reestablish true religion.
I shall appear in every age.
(The Geeta 717 - xiv)

As dispenser of justice Prafulla moulds herself into the venerated dacoit queen in Debi Choudhurani published in 1884. In moulding herself Prafulla has to undergo strict discipline that Bankim calls anushilan - the theory of Discipline and Culture. Prafulla had to attain "Bahubol" to become the dispenser of justice. Her actions though spoke of criminality on the surface but sanctified and were made chaste by her do-gooder motives behind the facade. In his enterprise to ably maintain moderation, order, Bankim in the likes of the nineteenth century babu wants to bring about change. Bankim can never think of a complete overhauling of the system and ably maintains status, quo.

The 'Renaissance' reformers were highly selective in their acceptance of liberal ideas from Europe. Specifically on the question of the social position of women, Bankim shows the fundamental but subtle presence in phases of autonomous struggles by women themselves to change relations within or outside the family. Education was meant to inculcate in women the typically 'bourgeois' virtues characteristic of the new social forms of 'disciplining' - of orderliness, thrift, cleanliness and the practical skills of literacy. Formal education became acceptable
for the bhadramahila (respectable woman). This patriarchy used subtle force of persuasion as well as coercive authority in its hegemonic exercise of dominance. Thus an inverted ideological firm of the relation of power between the sexes took shape - that of the Adulation of Woman as Goddess or as Mother. This new patriarch set up by the Nationalist discourse as a hegemonic construct culturally alienated itself not only from the west but also from the general mass of its own people. Bankim became more preoccupied with the reconstruction of a heroic Hinduism and Hindu Nationhood. For Bankim, Nationalism was no final solution because he felt Hindu guilt lay in accepting the rule of an alien civilization. A sense of victimhood marked this nationalism and he went about the reconstruction of the nation through his narration in Anandmath.

The concrete sense of guilt about the flesh and blood woman was shifted away and he concentrated on the abstract, feminine shape of an enslaved motherland. Bankim shifted away from the liberal, feministic statements that he made in Samya. Bankim's Krishnacaritra has as its hero a male patriot. The only actualization of the archetypal ideal Krishna comes about in Debi Choudhrani where the functions of a saviour hero are assumed by Prafulla — a woman.

Vaishnav Bhakti in Bengal (devotional discourses and practices that established a direct emotional connection between Vishnu in his incarnation as Krishna and the devotee) seemed to grant an unprecedentedly large and free space to the woman. The great body of bakti lyrics glorified the illicit love between Krishna and the cowherd maidens (Gopinis) of Vrindavan, of whom Radha was of paramount importance.

Esoteric cults loosely affiliated to Vaishnavism placed a powerful emphasis on the practice of sexual rites between a man and a woman who were not
married to each other. These traditions seemed to privilege the woman's emotions but they also carved out a problematic space for her by containing the impulses within devotional meditation and sexo-yogic practice. The combined effect was to heighten the sheer instrumentality of the woman's body and emotions within devotion itself. Even for the self — flagelating Hindu there remained a locus of unconquered purity which was the body of the Hindu Woman. Prafulla the Devi is authentic and resplendent in her sexuality but ascetic in her ways.

Prafulla's attempt at rekindling love in husband Brajeshwar by stirring memory and attachment seems almost similar to Radha's predicament in Jayadeva's Gita Govinda. It is a remarkable coincidence that three of the world's best known works of romantic love which occupy pivotal positions in their respective cultures — Beroul's Tristan and Isolde in Europe, Nizam's Layla and Majnum in the Islamic world and Jayadeva's Gita Govinda in India were all produced roughly during the same time in the twelfth century. Jayadeva legend has it, hesitant to commit sacrilege by having the god touch Radha's feet — the usual sign of a submissive lower status — was unable, to pen the last lines and went out to bathe. When he returned, he found that Krishna himself had completed the verse in his absence. Incidentally Bankim's Bisha - Brikska also ends with the same significant lines. This time it is Hira the insane maid servant who utters the dramatic lines in a symobolic way.

\[
\text{devi pata pallabmudaram.}
\]

The Radha—Krishna legend is not a story in the sense of an orderly narrative whose protagonists have a shared past and are progressing towards a tragic or happy future. It is more an evocation and elaboration of the here—and—
now of passionate love, an attempt to capture the exciting, fleeting movements of the senses and the baffling ways in which love's pleasures and pains are felt before retrospective recollection, trying to regain a lost control over emotional life, edits away love's inevitable confusions. Jayadeva merely hints at the illicit nature of *Radha and Krishna*’s love. Later poets (Vidyapati) tend to focus more on Radha and her love than on *Krishna*, gave illicit element in the story a more concrete cast and a specific content.

*Radha* is jealous but more than jealousy, she is infused with all the perplexing emotions of a proud, passionate woman who feels deserted by her lover. Solitary grief and images of a love betrayed and passion lost, recreated in reverie, alternate and reinforce each other. The power of *Radha*'s yearning produces a change in *Krishna*. Of all the gopis (cowherdesses) interchangeable suppliers of pleasure and feelings of conquest, *Radha* begins to stand out in *Krishna*’s mind as someone special who is desired in her uniqueness. In Maurice Valency's formulation, from the *heroic lover* for whom no woman is exceptional and who simply desires a variety of amorous dalliances, *Krishna* becomes the "*romantic lover*" impelled toward a single irreplaceable mistress.

The unheeding pursuit of pleasure, a bewildered *Krishna*, discovers, has, been brought to a halt by pleasures arch — enemies — memory and attachment. Having been the god who strove to please himself, alone, *Krishna* has become a man for whom his partner's well being assumes an importance which easily equals his own. He discovers that he would rather serve and adore than vanquish and demand. As a tale of love, this transformative moment from desire's sensations to love's adoration, gives the story of *Radha* and *Krishna* its singular impact.

Bankim gives a spiritual flavour to Prafulla's adoring singular love for Brajeshwar
who is wedded twice more. Prafulla fits into Bankim's world as the rightful first wife, seeking what is justfully hers. Within the pure span of her mental space, she believes, ardently that Brajeswar belongs to her alone. She had spent only one night with him at her in-law's house when he had given her a ring. She wore, that ring like an iron clasp of fidelity around her. Prafulla tries to infuse her longing in Brajeshwar. Her grief and longing recreated in reverie reinforce her feelings and yearning for her husb and. Inspite of her rigorous training in the spartan ways of asceticism and martial arts and mastering the scriptures Prafulla is unable to regain control over her emotional life. Upon meeting Brajeshwar she attempts to capture and rekindle the exciting fleeting moments of the senses. She tries to inflict love's pleasures and pains in him in retrospective recollection. She wants to stand out in Brajeshwar's mind as the special one among his other wives. Prafulla succeeds in bringing about a change in her husband and he rebels before his authoritarian father who had been mainly responsible in bringing about Prafulla's misfortune of being separated from Brajeshwar. In comparism to his other adolescent younger wives Brajeshwar realizes that Prafull is the more mature and desired one. It is through memory and attachment that such a change is wrought in him. Prafullas well being assumes equal importance as of his own and Brajeswar accepts her as his lawfully wedded wife and beloved.

Considering Bankim's deep, sensitivity, romanticism and love of the human form, it would be somewhat naive to call him a conservative in social thinking. The disjunction between woman as an object of beauty and romantic love and woman as found in common place social roles—the mother, the wife, the daughter, the sister—was distinct in the case of Bankim as compared to any other Bangali writer of his generation. Writers and intellectuals in this period, rarely visualized woman simultaneously in these two forms and were prone to exaggerate one
or the other. Bankim's close friends and contemporaries Chandranath Basu and Akshay Sarkar for example seldom talk of the appeal and power of feminine beauty, they only condemn it as Bankim himself does after a stage with the important distinction however, that this is not the only conclusion in Bankim who is strongly attracted and repelled by physical beauty. Bankim no doubt spoke of gender-relations and of woman's "assigned" place in society as a mid-nineteenth century Victorian was expected to do but he also spoke of the overpowering qualities of love and how life could be sublimated with love, of the power that woman held over men of the man that was incomplete without the woman. Nearly all his major characters in novels — whether male or female, are uncommonly good-looking. However, in Bankim tragedy strikes because it is this very beauty that gave birth to the mutual attraction between the sexes that could be sinful and fatal in its consequences.

Bankim not only gave beauty an autonomous importance but also occasionnally subjected it to personal standards as in Krishnakanter Will (1878) where Bhramar's major failing is that, according to accepted standards she is neither fair-skinned nor beautiful. For Bankim, beauty was beauty but also tragically the source of man's greatest temptation. Bankim lost his first wife Mohini Debi in 1859 and was married a second time to Rajlakshmi Debi of Halisahar within only a few months of this event. Is it possible that Bankim loved him child-bride deeply and continued to privately mourn her loss? Nirad C. Chaudhury thinks otherwise arguing that Bankim would not have married a second time and certainly not so soon, if he had truly loved his first wife.²

Dante's love for Beatrice increased after she had passed away and the same may be the case with Bankim who perhaps wished to keep alive the image of the first woman in his life by marrying a second. True love in Bankim is
often elusive, painful and seldom realized in flesh and blood. In Rajani, Amarnath who is spurned in love tries to sublimate his grief by ensuring that the woman he cannot for some reason marry, is nevertheless suitably married elsewhere. Perhaps it is possible of Bankim being intensely in love with love itself. In Bisha-briksha Nagendra's first wife Suryamukhi has all that Bankim expected of a (Hindu) wife — finelity, patience and fortitude. It is Nagendra who succumbs to the temptations of flesh but is ultimately happily reunited with Suryamukhi. There is also conflict in Bankim who often took on woman as an object of love and sexual attraction and woman as keeper of the household, between woman as the symbol of idyllic beauty and woman as the source of comfort and conjugal happiness, between the captivating, sublime power of love and of its brutal consequences. In Bisha-briksha, there is no public outrage at Nagendra's marrying the widow Kundanandini. Both Nagendra and Suryamukhi the wife having realized their mistakes—he for having been led astray and she at not thwarting her husband's second marriage; there is no place for Kundanandini even though she remained a legally wedded wife. Apparently it would seem that Kunda's ultimately ending her life is a result of her injured ego but her fate evidently was to serve as a grim reminder of the tragic consequence of unbridled human passion. No female character in Bankim's later novels (after 1869) who tasted the forbidden fruits of clandestine love, loves to reflect on her deeds.

It was as though to prove her fidelity that Manorama commits Sati in Mrinalini, Hira of Bisha-briksha turns insane, Kundanandini (Bisha-briksha) commits suicide, Rohini of Krishnakanter will is shot dead, Shaibalini in Chandrasekhar leads an extremely tormented and pitiable life. On the other hand Nagendra (Bisha-briksha), Govindlal (Krishnakanter Will), Protap (Chandrasekhar), Sitaram (Sitaram), Amarnath (Rajani) have the choice to obliterate their misdeeds
either through a pointless act of heroism (Pratap and Sitaram), yearning of a speedy reconciliation with their wives (Nagendra) or else to turn into idling ascetics (Gobindlal, Amarnath).

In Mrinalini, Hemchandra tells Manorama:

"Love is no less important than eating, sleeping or the pursuit of knowledge but it is certainly inferior to dharma. A woman's greatest virtue lies in being faithful and therefore I say, 'Conquer Love!.... Be careful Manorama!.... Human error grows out of passion.... error in turn leads to neglect of one's duties and therefrom to the fall of man!"

(Bankim Rachnavali, I, P. 231)

Devi Choudhurani has an eighteenth century setting, the time of the sanyasi rising when Babudom, western rationalism and education were yet to develop in Bengal.

Haraballabh, a kulin brahmin had expelled his innocent daughter-in-law Prafulla to same the purity of his line. Prafulla turns into a dacoit queen hunted by the english. She advances a massive loan to Haraballabh to save him from bankruptcy. When the time for repayment comes, Harballabh takes a Sahib with him to capture Prafulla and earn a reward. Out witted by her, they find themselves prisoners on her boat. The Sahib turns on Haraballabh in his anger and shouts: "You low-born swine!" When Haraballabh's son Brajeshwar slaps..."
the Sahib for this, Haraballabh bursts into tears— "What have you done! What have you done!! You have ruined us!"

Bankim savaged the Hindu male for being the westernized Babu for apeing western rationalism\(^6\) also for being cowardly, having week physique, absence of self-respect, absence of mental, physical or spiritual strength for betraying one's religion, one's country and one's women and above all the sense of lack that formed a self-destructive subordination. At the same time white masters were not for him the compelling figures of doom, of apocalyptic ruin, not Shiva dancing his wild dance of destruction (Tandav Nritya). They are not figures invested with the grandeur of terror, they are small, mean, ridiculous men whose only power comes from our own powerlessness. Bankim often laughts at their strutting arrogance, their gullibility, ignorance and ridiculous misrecognitions within all cross-cultural encounters.\(^7\)

They triumph over us in minor though useful virtues like better discipline, technological skills or a more efficient crisis—management but they do not possess grand virtues or vices. Unsavoury experiences of despots at lower rungs of local administration informed his images of the Sahibs in India—the Reids, the Meanwells, the grogerhams and the Lawrence Foresters\(^4\) but he painted them in drab, shabby, not strong colours. They are simply not strong enough for love or for hate.

The intense and total focus on the colonial period, characteristics of nationalism, gets broken up, dispersed and distributed over the entire span of Hindu history—over seven hundred years of 'subjection' even before which there was no awareness of freedom or nationhood in our traditions.\(^9\) The span of seven centuries creates the space for the entry of the Muslim into Bankim's discourse on nationhood.
In Bankim's Krishnacharitra, Krishna is a divine warrier and nation-builder and in his later discursive prose, pre-occupied with the potential for Hindu nationhood, the patriotic project is an exclusively male one. Yet, the only actualisation of the ideal—type of Krishna occurs in a novel, Debi Choudhurani, where the functions of a saviour hero are assumed by a woman. It is immensely revealing of the wayward, slippery, nature of Bankim's complexity that, having consigned the great dacoit queen Prafulla to dreary domesticity at the end of the novel, and thereby, presumably, upholding a domesticated morality, he adds a small sequel:

"Come again, Prafulla... and face this world. Stand before this society and say— I am not new, I am everlasting. I am that word. I have come so often but you forgot me, so I come again—

To save the good, to destroy evil
To re-establish true religion, I shall appear in every age."

(Ibid., P. 872)

The invocation, addressed to the woman, is one that Krishna had applied to himself in the Gita. Even for the self-flagellating Hindu, there then remained a locus of unconquered purity which was the body of the Hindu woman, disciplined
by the Shastras above and proving its unique capacity for pain and suffering
wherein lay the redemptive hopes for the whole community. The Hindu woman's
body was moulded from her infancy through the Shastric regimen of non-consensual,
indissoluble infant marriage, iron laws of absolute chastity, austere widowhood
and a proved capacity for self-immolation. The last was celebrated by Bankim
as the only measure of hope and greatness of a doomed people.

_I can see the funer al pyre burning, the Chaste wife sitting at the heart
of the blazing flames, clasping the foot of her husband lovingly to her
breasts. Slowly the fire spreads, destroying one part of the body and entering
another. the burning woman thinks of her husband and recites the name
of Hari.... No sign of physical stress, her face is joyful, gradually the flame
burn higher, life departs and the body is burnt to ashes.... When I think
that only sometime back our women, despite their tender, frail bodies could
die like this, then new hope rises up in me, then I have faith that we,
too have the seeds of greatness within us,... Women of Bengal! You are
the true jewels of this country._

(Kamlakanter Daptar, B.R., P. 73)

Bankim had resolutions about Hindu cojugality identifying with it only at its
most painful point of termination, celebrating it only in its violent end by sensualising
the spectacle of pain.

In the last passages of _Debi Choudharani_ Bankim celebrates the hindu notions
of feminine domesticity. He seems to affirm to the vast range of contemporary
tracts and manuals on house-hold management which constructed a world of
female beauty and order to soothe please and fulfill others: a world of love'
in contrast to the power relations structuring the public sphere in colonised
On the other hand, there is a chilling dialogue in Bankim's second novel Kapal Kundala where a young woman born and brought up in the wild is placed in domestic surroundings and yet longs for the vast sand dunes and the beckoning, open seas. She responds to her sister-in-law's request to beautify herself, to love her new home:

"Let us assume that I will do my hair put on a nice dress wear all manner of jewellery.... even hold a little golden doll of a baby in my arms. Let us assume the whole lot. But, even so, where is happiness for me in all this?"

The sister-in-law answers —

Tell me, isn't it a happy occasion when the flower blooms?

She replies —

That brings happiness to people who are watching the flower. Where is happiness for the flower in all this?

Amazed, he asked — who turned you into this?

Hira clenched her fists in anger and with blazing eyes... retorted... You ask me that?.... The day you abused me and kicked me out, that day I went mad... i bless you so that even Hell won't have room for you.

The mad woman burst into loud laughter. Debendra fearfully hid on the other side of the bed. The only delirious words he could utter from that day were snatches of a love song with which he had seduced her —

Pada Pallaba Mudram


In Chandrasekhar, Shaibalini, a married woman, who remains in love with her girlhood flame, Pratap, undergoes severe penance, inducing a state of delirium and confesses involuntarily in front of her husband, Chandrasekhar:

Chandrsekhar : Were you Pratap’s mistress?
Shaibalimi : Shame on you!
Chandrsekhar : what were you to him, then?
Shaibalini : We were two flowers growing on the same stem. Why did you tear us apart?
Chandrasekhar, sighed deeply, now that he understood all.

Bankim supposedly rejected and affiliated with early Bengali Hindu nationalism in terms of different conceptualisations of the Hindu self also pertaining to nineteenth century liberal reform in Bengal. The liberalism that blamed the Hindu self for all kinds of social and political subjugation felt that an alien power structure could assume a corrective, productive function. The liberal project was constructed on basic self criticism in relation to Hindu womanhood. Hindu fundamentalist nationalism (as distinct from the early Indian National Congress variant) would often be bitterly self-critical. Yet, it felt that the primary fault lay in rationalism and an alien civilisation—a powre structure. So, hindu guilt supposedly lay in collaborating at its spread and in accepting its rule. A primary sense of victimisation became the hallmark of this nationalism. Bankim became preoccupied with the reconstruction of a heroic Hinduism and Hindu nationalhood. The concrete sense of guilt about the flesh and blood woman was shifted a way and Bankim concentrated on the abstract, feminine shape of an enslaved motherland. Bankim distanced himself from the liberal project and the feminist statements in Samya.

At the same time, there are frequently repeated situations in many of his novels where a woman charges a man with her ruin and the man accepts with silence—having no answer in return. In Bisha-briksha, Hira, a maid servant had been seduced and ruined by the educated babu, Debendra.
In Krishnakanter Will, Gobindalal had deserted his loving wife Bhramar for the young widow Rohini. Due to a misunderstanding he had shot Rohini dead and when he returned home he found his wife Bhramar dying of a broken heart. He then wanders about in a ruined garden where he used to spend a lot of languorous hours with Bhramar and where he had first met Rohini.

Suddenly in that dark deserted garden, Gobindalal's unbalanced mind turned delirious. He seemed to hear Rohini's voice clearly.

*It said*: Do your penance. Die.


In Bishabriksha, Nagendra's second wife Kundanandini takes poison and he hurries to her bedside in great repentance.

What is this, Kunda?

*For what sin of mine are you leaving me?*

*Kunda had never talked back to her husband before, but now, in her death—throes, she spoke freely: For what sin of mine did you leave me?... If even yesterday you had come to me and called out my name, if...*
you had come and sat with me like this I wouldn't died.

At these terrible, loving words, Nagendra, speechlessly rested his head on his knees.


On the prosecuting side then, are a mad maidservant, an adulterous wife, a mistress, a chaste and loving wife, a widow who remarries. In Bisha-briksha, Hira the attractive maidservant at Nagendra's mansion is socially subordinated to Debendra the man she loves and who actually ruins her adding a further edge to the accusation. The class dimension seems to be deeply embedded into the plot structure adding a subtext of fresh guilt of separate added weightage. At the level of fiction in Bankim there is a powerful sense of guilt towards woman. In his novels, Bankim's woman characters encounter individual tragic situations dissolving their problematised existence ultimately in the extremes of madness, hysteria, delirium and death.... in psychotic states of woman's social existence. There are also significant moments when Bankim's women utter extremely terse, brief and self-revealing statements of deep psychic dimension which seem to question the very nature of the entire moral thrust of the novels. In Rajani, Labanga is a beautiful young woman but married to an elderly husband. Her devoted self is charmingly portrayed. Amarnath had been an admirer in her youthful days before marriage but she had violently repelled his advances. Towards the end of the novel Amarnath asks her if she cared for him at all. Labanga replies.

\[ \text{In this life, I will not care for you.} \]

On the surface Labanga's answer aptly fits into the accepted patriarchal moral code of the day, that of a married woman's response to the possibility of a transgressive emotion. Yet, Labanga's words are accompanied by deeply ambiguous tears that keeps a subversive leeway open for caring and desiring for a man in the next life to whom she is not married in this one. Her very faithfulness to the husband in this life apparently satisfactorily rendered by her chaste rejection of Amarnath becomes ultimately transgressive by her emotive, self-revealing tears.... moreso as the possibility of transgression is obliquely indicated in this life itself. Since every Hindu caste wife is meant to desire a reunion with her husband alone in all lives to come, Labanga's statement seems to interrogate the accepted moralistic code of married women according to Hindu notions.

Bankim disagreed with the much exalted Hindu construction of the chaste Hindu wife, married off at her infancy, supposedly the representative perfect picture of all domestic virtue and conjugal happiness. He also critiqued Hindu ideal types of romantic and erotic love comparing Kalidasa's coy heroines with Miranda and Desdemona. He felt Shakespearean women speak words of love in their own voice while for Shakuntala the only signs of love have to be interpreted from Dushyanta the male hero's deciphering of them.¹¹

Bankim's novels reveal his penchant for adult, mature, intellectually, emotionally and physically strong women whose subversive passionate being cannot be bound within the confines of Hindu domestic traditions. From Bimala in Durgeshmandini to Shri in Sitaram, all the Bankim's central compelling women figures under varying circumstance and situations had to opt out of Hindu domestic conventions. At the same time the questioning of Hindu conjugality is fictionally resolved by the usage of women characters whose unconventionality had been thrust upon them by quirks of fate or history or figures of mythical or historical personae.
Bankim moved on to a construction of an exclusively male Hindu nationalist self. In Anandmath, Dabi Choudhurani or Sitaram, women were equally the creations of this patriotic project.

In Sitaram, Bankim provides a memorably powerful visual image of communal violence fusing it with nationalist passion.

Then Gangaram saw a goddess—like figure among the green leaves of the huge tree. Her feet resting on two branches, the right hand clutching a tender branch, the left-hand swirling her sari-end, she was calling out—'Kill, Kill!' Her tresses were dancing in the wind, her proud feet were swinging the branches up and down as if Durga herself was dancing on her lion on the battlefield. She had no more shame left, no consciousness, no fear, no rest. She kept calling out—'Kill, Kill' the enemy! That raised arm, was such a lovely arm! Such beauty in her swollen lips, her flaring nostrils, lightning—laden glances, sweat-drenched stray locks falling across a perspiring forehead. All the Hindus kept looking at her and then streaming towards the fight with 'glory to mother Chandike' on their lips."

(Sitaram Op.cit., P. 881)

The human agency of a feminine figure is made sacred through her resemblance to Chandika, the goddess of war. There is a sense of serially charged and
recharged passion, spiralling from one level of commitment to another: personal
vengeance of a woman, honour of the Community a patriotic agenda, a divine
mission. The whole process of encapsulation and reencapsulation of various
types of violent emotions is fused together within the highly sensuous body
of a young woman. The sense of continuous escalation of political passion
vibes with the continuous rhythm of a body gripped by mounting physical excitement,
the unstoppable movement towards a sexual climax; the woman's body "moving
up and down, up and down," displaying upraised arms, swollen lips, flaring
nostrils, electric glances, "Sweat drenched" loose locks and "perspiring forehead."
The superimposition of the images of Durga and Chandika of this feminine body
provides a sacred frame that tightly controls yet obliquely heightens the flow
of sexual energy from which the verbal icon derives its power. The icon draws
more powerful strength through its inevitable resonances from among the popular
shakta songs in Bengal. The eighteenth century poet Ramprasad Sen put together
in these shakta songs the powerful figure of the beautiful, dark, terrible figure
of Kali dancing on the battle field — "Who is that naked woman dancing at
the battle?"

Bankim's novels and tales on contemporary life have their locales mostly in
villages away from Calcutta and his chief characters belong to the propertied
class, though they are closer to the middle class in their education and attitudes.
The minor characters have a wider range representing various professions,
lawyers, teachers, journalists, musicians, government officers, policemen, tax
collectors, and domestic servants. These characters are generally well-drawn
and realistic, and lend a fullness to the canvas. The metropolis Calcutta features
only marginally in Bankim's novels but the villages portrayed by him are not
idyllic in character. Not only English education has made inroads there but
they are not free from the impact of the social reform movements of the big
cities. It is mainly through his minute and absorbing descriptions of the household of rich and educated class, their drawing-rooms and bed-rooms, kitchens and gardens, their reading habits, etiquettes, rituals and attitudes towards various social and religious institutions Bankim captures the rhythm of the middle class life as well as the changing villages.

In Khulna Bankim found enough time to write a novel in English, his first as well as his last. This novel, Rajmohan's Wife, was written at the request of Kishorichand Mitra (1822-73), a deputy magistrate who had been dismissed from service. In 1857 Mitra started a journal called Indian Field. Bankim's novel was serialized in this journal in 1864. It was little known outside an intimate circle and was soon forgotten. Bankim thought of translating it into Bengali and, in fact, he did translate the first nine chapters. He did not complete the job perhaps because he thought it was too unsatisfactory to receive any public attention. The novel remained buried in the pages of Indian Field till it was salvaged by Brajendranath Banerji in 1935. Why did Bankim write a novel in English? It was been suggested that it was a common practice among educated Bengalis of that time to write in English, Kashiprasad Ghosh, Michael Madhusudan Datta, Krishnamohan Banerji, Toru Dutt, Govinda Chandra Dutt and others felt that English was more suited to their creative expression though some of them changed their minds later. Kashi-prasad Ghosh wrote several hundred songs in Bengali, Michael Madhusudan abandoned it altogether and wrote in Bengali, and one wonders if Toru Dutt too would have taken to Bengali had not her genius been so tragically denied maturity.

But the early Indo-Anglians failed to develop any special character. 'Such poetry as they produced', observed T.D. Dunn, 'was Indian only in so far as it was written in Bengal, and was the result of education received therein, and
it is scarcely an exaggeration to say that here its oriental character begins and ends'. It is true that the experimentations in Indo-Anglian literature for some time at least, belonged to a neutral zone of tradition and perception, but it is also true that modern Bengali literature first appeared in English, though this sounds a contradiction in terms. Both Kashiprasad and Michael Madhusudan explored a new area of expression and imagination unknown to contemporary Bengali writers. Their medium was English but their sensibility was very Bengali. With the English language they tried to break with the earlier literary tradition and because of this there was a struggle with regard to the right medium.

Once a traditional poet ridiculed the language of the Tagores by saying that the anglicized writing was the equivalent of Indian gods being worshipped with daffodils. The search for a new medium continued throughout the century, and a new Bengali emerged out of that search. In 1858 Peary Chand Mitra published *Alafer Gharer Dula!* (The Pampered Child) the first novel written by a Bengali; Rangalal Banerji wrote a long poem on Padmini legend, and Michael Madhusudan published his first play *Sarmistha* modelled on Shakespeare's plays. Two years later Madhusudan introduced blank verse in Bengali and in 1861 he wrote his famous epic *Meghnadbadh Kabya*, constructed on the model of the Iliad. He wrote in a letter to his friend that we must study English to have access to the 'intellectual resources of the most civilized quarters of the globe', but when we speak to the world 'let us speak in our own language'. This linguistic ambivalence so characteristic of Bengal seems to have affected Bankim and either took longer to resolve in his mind or surfaced in his work as an oddly late resurgence—hence the effort at writing a novel in English as late as 1864. Unlike Madhusudan, Bankim's first literary efforts were in Bengali, and unlike the majority of students of the Hindu College he was deeply rooted within his native culture.
The story 'Rajmohan's Wife' evolved round Matangini, a remarkable woman unhappily married to Rajmohan, a rude and brutal man. It develops into an exciting climax involving Matangini's brother-in-law Madhab. Matangini forewarns Madhab, whom she loves, about an impending dacoity planned by her husband. Matangini undergoes long-protracted hardships before she is rescued by Madhab, and Rajmohan sent to jail. The story has hardly any sustained interest. Its execution is poor though it contains some pen-pictures of the villages of Khulna and powerful descriptions of dacoities. Its dialogues are often lively and full of Indianism which became a common feature in later Indo-Anglian novels. Bankim failed to integrate the exciting incidents in the novel with any serious emotional problems. The book was not able to excite even his enthusiastic friends. It was a false step.

And now, good reader, I have brought my story to a story to a close. Lest, however, you fall to censuring me for leaving your curiosity unsatisfied, I will tell you what happened....

Thus begins the last chapter of the novel Rajmohan's Wife and it ends after telling us sketchily what happened to persons who figured in the story — some are dead and the others will die — in an ironic vein. Throwing this flood of light on their past and future history, I bid you, good reader, Farewell. That was indeed Bankimchandra's final farewell to one section of readers, for Bankimchandra never wrote another work of fiction in English in the rest of his life. He published this, his first novel and his first and last English novel, when the was twenty-six in an obscure weekly magazine (1864). In the next thirty years Bankimchandra secured for himself a place in Indian literary history, but he seems to have taken care to excise from it this novel. He was not an excessively modest man and he published in book form all that he wrote in
various journals, including things he had written when he was fifteen years of age. But he allowed this English novel to be forgotten in the pages of an ephemeral magazine. In fact it was not published as a book till 1935 when a great expert in literary history, Brajendra Nath Banerjee stumbled upon old copies of that magazine by chance. Rajmohan's Wife has been since reprinted.

The interesting question thrown up by this text is: Why did Bankim—I shall use this abbreviation commonly used in Bengal—write this novel in English and why did he not use that language in any of his creative writings from 1864 till his death in 1894? And, as the author of what is probably the first Indian novel in English, shall we regard him as the progenitor of what came to be known later as Indo-Anglian literature?

_I would much rather have the authentic Bengali than a spurious English man. The authentic Bengali can never emerge from the circle of writers in the English language... It is better to have pure silver than gilded brass....._ said Bankim in 1872. This was his introductory essay in the first number of the journal he launched, Bangadarshan. Around this time he wrote to his friend S.C. Mookerjee, the editor of an English magazine. _I think we ought to disanglicise ourselves, so to speak, to a certain extent, and speak to the masses in a language which they understand._ (Bankim to S.C. Mookerjee, 14th March 1872). In 1871 he wrote in Calcutta Review a long essay on Bengali literary history in which he remarked rather disparagingly on the educated native who considers himself above writing in his own language. Earlier, in February 1870, Bankim, in his essay presented at the Bengal Social Science Association, again rites self-critically, _We preach in English, and harague in English and write in English......._ And so forth.
In the Foreword to *Rajmohan's Wife*, published by Ravi Dayal Publishers, Delhi, 1996, editor Professor Meenakshi Mukherjee says "now, in the last decade of the twentieth century when many more Indians are writing in English than ever before, we are so accustomed to this literary phenomenon that we seldom pause to reflect on why, and for which audience, a Bengali of a Marathi or a Tamil writer should want to write in English... It is indeed worth considering the complex circumstances that made Bankimchandra shift from English to the mother tongue before he could gain national recognition, while in late twentieth century India one would expect (sic) the process to be reversed" (P. vii-viii). Later she mentions "the tendency to claim Bankimchandra as an originary figure of the Indian novel in English" and offers her view that "he may be the unwitting founder of a genre that now has high visibility" (P. 154-155). Was Bankim the first of the Indo-Anglians?

Bankim's views cited earlier suggests that his declared aim was to *disanglicise* himself and others in his circle who fancied themselves to be akin to Englishmen in culture. I have cited from his didacted writings that his portrayal of mimic Anglicism was even harsher in his satirical writings in Bengali. The entire mindset that has led to the growth of an Indo-Anglian literature in the late twentieth century India is, let us say, different. One does not know if it is true that a shift from the mother tongue to English is the way to gain national recognition, the reverse of the trajectory of Bankim's career. If that is indeed true, it is curious. Bankim surely would have found that very worrying, because he formed a firm conviction that spurious Anglicism was irrelevant in the realm of creative writing. As Professor Mukherjee remarks he was "convinced that English was the language of polemics in India, ut not of creative literature" (P. 151). Then what sort of originary figure of Indian fiction in English could Bankim be?
The question remains, why did Bankim write his first novel in English? It is unlikely that Bankim expected a large readership in India. Nor was he unaware of the difficulty of translating for English sensibilities cultural traits specific to Bengal. In Rajmohan's Wife he must have tied himself into knots over English for supari (arecanut) and father's younger brother's wife and the style of braiding women's hair. He evidently found it difficult to translate into English phrases and idioms used by women; it turned out terribly stilted and awkward compared to the Bengali version made by Bankim himself (chapter 1 to 9 were translated by him, never to be published in his lifetime). And a few clumsy gestures to European cultural sensibilities such as reference to Guido and Angelo, and occasional use of the colonial's Hobson-Jobsonese were too conspicuous. Bankim had every reason to treat this work as a forgettable chapter in his life feels Professor Sabyasachi Bhattacharya in his article The First Indo-Anglian? in The Book Review / Volume XXI Number 8, August 1997.

The only plausible reason why Bankim chose to write this novel in English may be that it was a pilot run of his project to introduce in Bengali literature for the first time the romantic novel—Alaler Gharer Dulal was scarcely a romantic novel—and since he was drawing upon English literary tradition he tried his hand by writing this novel in English. It was like the maquette sculptors use, and it was discarded when the author established the new genre in Bengali in Durgeshnandini, published next year.

The alternative hypothesis would be that Bankim fancied himself as a novelist in the English language and, made "an abrupt shift of linguistic gear" since it was "a false start". This view found favour with some literary critics. But Bankim wrote a good deal before he published Rajmohan's Wife and all of those writings a book of poems (1856) were in Bengali. All his creative writings
after Rajmohan's Wife are in Bengali. It is only this first novel that he wrote in English. This track-record is quite unlike Michael Madhusudan Dutt's — who wrote in English exclusively and without conspicuous success until his midlife switch to Bengali. In 1860 Michael described this inner struggle in a sonnet which deserves to be quoted at least partially:

Bengal, you have many jewels in your coffer;
Stupid as I was, I disregarded them all....
The goddess who protects you spoke to me in a dream
"Thousands of gems adorn you mother,
And yet you are disgraced like a bagger,
Go back, my thoughtless child, go back home."
I obeyed her command cheerfully
And in turn I received a mine of radiant jewels:

When Michael wrote in Bengali his work appeared strange and new to traditional readers of literature in Bengali. Once a traditional poet ridiculed the language of the Tagores by saying that the anglicized writing was the equivalent of Indian gods being worshipped with daffodils. The search for a new medium continued throughout the century, and a new Bengali emerged out of that search. Bankim wrote and published poetic and fictional work from 1854 till his death in Bengali with the sole exception of a novel, a literary form that he wanted to bring in from English literature. Professor Sabyasachi Bhattacharya feels that it was a maquette, — the first hypothesis more plausible.

In the novel Rajmohan's Wife, an unsophisticated village woman of East Bengal is made to exclaim 'Go to Jericho!' as a phrase of friendly remonstrance, professor Meenakshi Mukherjee chooses certain lexical items external to the ethos of the story.... and the reader is troubled by the possibility that a second
hand and bookish mind-frame is regulating expression" (P. 149). Sometimes there is also evidence of authorial intention... the word 'Billingsgate' in the text seems to be that it is "another instance of the inscription of Englishness through diction." It is interesting to note that where this particular passage that includes the word 'Billingsgate' occurs one should remember that Bankim did not write them at all. The first three chapter as I have mentioned were not written by Bankim; they are lost and from Bankim's Bengali version they were-retranslated into English by someone else, probably Brajendra Nath Banerjee. Kishori Chand Mitra (1822-1873) the editor of this magazine which serialized this novel lost his job in the civil service. Actually it is a well-known incident in Bengal's history. Mitra was one of those who expressed opinion against the racist European agitation in Calcutta against the so-called Black Act, i.e. laws which proposed to allow the trial of non-official Europeans in mofussil criminal courts. Therefore Mitra lost his job in October 1858 after having served with distinction since 1846. It is only with Emma Bovary that Matangini has similarities in characterisation and in her want to rebel against norms. Flaubert's Madame Bovary was first published in 1856 and Rajmohan's Wife was serialised in 1864 makes it obvious that Bankim must have read Madame Bovary as also the other great European Novels of that Era — Anna Karenina, War and Peace etc. Rajmohan's Wife situated the novel in the context of nineteenth century literary tradition, and brings within the reach of the readers an important text in the cultural history of India. Bankim spoke too soon when he bid the "good reader, Farewell."

Bankim revived a sense of the past, an important factor in the growth of Indian nationalism. The historical romance is a direct outcome of the growing interest in history and attempts towards a romanticization of Indian history. Bankim showed the way and it was quickly followed by a host of writers in all parts
of the country resulting in a phenomenal growth of historical novels like wild monsoon flowers in all Indian languages. For Bankim, however, historical novel was a means to an end. He slowly developed it into a resplendent structure of complex relations between individual passion and mightier historical forces.

The main reason for the rapturous welcome to Durgeshnandini lies not just in its novelty of the form of expression, but in its new attitude towards life. Apparently, it is a story of the medieval world, but in reality it is a story of the modern world struggling to emerge out of it.

Towards the close of 1866 Bankim published his second novel Kapalkundala. This is a simple and well-designed novel, rich in imagination and lyrical in tone. The natural and the supernatural are interwoven in the story with such skill that the novel has acquired a mystical quality. According to some critics this is the most satisfying novel writing by Bankim.

It is a gripping story of a girl, Kapalkundala, who was rescued from the wreck of a Portuguese boat and brought up by a Kapalik (a devotee of the goddess Kali) in a forest far away from human habitation. She grows into a woman without coming into contact with any man except the Kapalik and an old priest who lives near by. A young man, Nabakumar, who was left by his companions near the forest beside the sea, meets this Kapalik who gives him food and shelter. Nabakumar finds the manner of the fierce-looking Kapalik weird and sinister but does not realize that his intention is to sacrifice him at the alter of the goddess. One evening Nabakumar in the course of his aimless wanderings in the wilderness suddenly meets Kapalkundala on the lonely sea-beach. "There stood on the sandy beach of the roaring sea, dimly visible in the twilight, a woman... Her cloud-dark tresses flowed down below her knees in long serpentine curls... Her face partly visible, partly hidden, shone like the moon through
clouds. There was a mild and subdued radiance in her large black eyes, her face was beautiful but grave.’ She asked Nabakumar, ‘Traveller, have you lost your way?’

Kapalkundala has compassion for the young man and takes him to the house of the priest who suggests that Nabakumar should marry Kapalkundala and leave the place at once. Kapalkundala, though absolutely ignorant of social manners and customs, agrees to the proposal without much thought.

On the way home Nabakumar meets Moti Bibi who is his first wife. Moti Bibi left him long ago and has been living in Agra. Tired of her glamorous life at the royal court of Agra, Moti Bibi suddenly feels an irresistible attraction for Nabakumar and almost in a fit of passion decides to settle in Saptagram, the native place of Nabakumar, with a hope to win back her former husband.

Kapalkundala, a child of nature, finds herself in chains every-where in the human society. She longs for the forest and sea and the freedom she once had. The Kapalik who has been searching for her eventually reaches Saptagram and meets both Moti Bibi and Nabakumar. He chalks out a clever and sinister plan to punish Kapalkundala for her betrayal. He succeeds in arousing suspicion in Nabakumar about her chastity. The role of Moti Bibi creates further complications and brings the story to a painful end. Nabakumar joins hands with the Kapalik who plans to sacrifice Kapalkundala to the goddess Kali. When Nabakumar escorts her to the sea for an ablution, a requirement for the sacrifice, Kapalkundala clarifies all misunderstandings but decides to die. Nabakumar, how-ever, throws himself into the rushing waves.

The texture of the novel is too delicate and subtle woven to permit any effective
substitute for itself. The story as outlined above only gives a rough idea of the theme of the novel. It is constructed almost like a Greek tragedy striking an ominous note from the very beginning of the action and reaching a predetermined and yet inevitable climax. An expectation of something sinister rises from the first incident when Nabakumar's boat had lost direction in the fog-bound sea and it deepens further when Nabakumar is left on a lonely sea beach by his co-travellers. The story acquires a feeling of brooding fear and suspense with Nabakumar's encounter with the Kapalik. The eerie atmosphere is further intensified by the deep and metallic voice of the rugged Kapalik speaking Sanskrit in Staccato, and the expanse of the sea on one side and the dark and fierce forest on the other. The personality of Kapalkundala adds yet another dimension to this atmosphere and to the story. While the Kapalik is a straight-forward representation of the fierceness inherent in Nature, the beautiful and innocent Kapalkundala is elusive. She is kind and tender but these virtues are not acquired by her: they are innate in her. Like Lucy, she has learnt everything from the book of nature, and owes nothing to any human institution. She does not respond to love. The centre of the novel, thus, is both psychological and metaphysical.

We are told by Bankim's younger brother that once Bankim asked his friends if a girl was brought up till her adolescence by a man in a forest and if she did not meet any other man except the foster-father, what would happen to her when she would be married and what would be the influence of society on her. Enumerating the problems arising out of the behaviour of Kapalkundala, S.C. Sengupta writes, "What is the influence of Nature on human character? Supposing a girl is from early years brought up away from human society, in the bosom of nature, how will she respond to the call of sex? It may be said that Nature is sexual and procreative, and the sex impulse does not wait for social nurture. That what happens to Kalidasa's Sakuntala and Shakespeare's
Miranda, who respond readily to the call of sex as soon as they meet a person who is 'biologically attractive.'

Kapalkundala, however, is different from both Sakuntala and Miranda. She does not respond to the urges of flesh nor does she show any particular interest in the beauty of nature. For her, to quote Sengupta again, "nature is fascinating in its wilderness and inhumanity." While Sakuntala and Miranda are thrilled with delight when they meet Dushmantya and Ferdinand respectively, Kapalkundala feels only pity for Nabakumar. Her character is further complicated by her deep religiosity and total surrender to fate. Her associations with Kapalkundala, who according to the norms of his esoteric cult practises cruelties, have not made her indifferent to human suffering. And that is why she tries to rescue Nabakumar. But at the same time her unshakable faith in God makes her totally indifferent to her own welfare. She has almost a Cassandra-like premonition but unlike her Kapalkundala accepts the inevitable calmly. Before leaving the priest's house, Kapalkundala places a bel leaf on the feet of the image of Kali. The leaf falls down. According to Kapalkundala that indicates the divine disapproval of her marriage. Though the supernatural portents do not regulate the story, they create complexities in Kapalkundala's character. The story moves in great speed towards a goal which appears to be almost preordained. All incidents and episodes accelerate that speed and intensify a pervading sense of tragic waste.

Despite the foreboding atmosphere of the novel all its actions are controlled and determined by their inner logic without any intervention of supernatural powers. Bankim's deft handling of the story against a historical background does not allow it to transgress into the realm of pure fantasy, but lends a definite temporal character to it and creates an impression of familiarity. The period
mentioned in Kapalkundala is roughly around 1616 during the reign of Jehangir. It was the time when a large Portuguese settlement grew in lower Bengal and most of the Bengal rivers were controlled by Portuguese pirates. Bankim has used this particular situation to weave an exciting story as it can be seen from the opening lines of the novel.

About two hundred and fifty years ago, in the early hours of the day in the winter season, a lone boat was returning from the confluence of the Ganga and the Bay of Bengal. The usual practice among the sailors of that time was not to travel in a single boat but along with other boats because of constant fear of river-pirates, many of them were Portuguese. This boat, however, was separated from the fleet because of the dense fog that enveloped the sky during the night, and the sailors had no idea to which direction it was drifting along. Most of the passengers were asleep. One old gentleman was busy in conversation with a young man. Interrupting the conversation the old man asked one of the sailors, "Boatman, how far can you sail today?" The boatman hesitated and said, "I do not know."

Bankim wears the story with materials of contrasting nature, some pertaining to history and the rest to the world of phantasy. The graphic account of Saptagram, once a flourishing sea-port, and several references to the Mughal court at Agra promise the growth of a historical romance but Bankim exploits them ingeniously to create a subtle tension in the rhythm of the narrative. Each and every character in the novel is finally shaped and determined by a continuous tension between the forces of history and the romance, between civilization and nature, and temporal and eternal. In a historical novel the individuals slowly acquire a greater dimension, slowly merge into the main stream of history; the domestic man assumes a new role and appears to be a crucial element in a historical process.
This process has been reversed in Kapalakundala. Neither the chief characters of the novel—Nabakumar and Kapalkundala—are historical characters, nor do they take part in any historical action. But Moti Bibi comes to Saptagram, as it were from history and merges into the anonymity of the ordinary existence. Moti Bibi who was contending with Nurjahan to become the empress of India, suddenly decides to come back to her former husband. A character from the leaf of Mughal history enters into the every-day life of a common man creating a sharp contrast in the story which was evolving mainly around Kapalkundala, the foster-child of Nature.

Moti Bibi with a halo of the Mughal court around her, enters into the main steam of narrative and counterbalances the exotic and the abnormal. If Kapalkundala symbolizes Nature in all its artlessness, Moti Bibi represents art and sophistication. She introduces a dimension of historical time in the story while Kapalkundala represents timelessness. But both the characters are controlled by enigmatic forces of Destiny. Bankim's delineation of the sudden change in Moti Bibi and her attendant Peshman, wherein he focuses upon the inscrutable ways of Destiny, leading all the participants in the action to their pre-determined end.

Motibibi: All these years I have lived like a Hindu idol, its exterior decked with precious stones, its interior lifeless. I have looked for pleasure in wrong places. I have skimmed the surface. Now I have found the real thing. Now I must find out whether I have a human heart or I am just a cold lifeless idol.

Peshman: But I still don't understand you.

Motibibi: Have I ever loved anyone in Agra?

Peshman: I don't think so.
Motibibi: Am I a woman, then? I am leaving Agra.

Peshman: But why should you leave Agra? Why should you go to that God-forsaken Bangal of all places? Is there any one more handsome, more wealthy and more powerful than him?

Motibibi: But tell me, why does water flow downwards, why doesn't it flow towards the heavens?

Peshman: Why indeed?

Motibibi: These are the decrees of fate.

The change in Moti Bibi, its suddenness notwithstanding, operates on a psychological plane and all her actions to win her former husband back from her new rival, Kapalkundala, can be explained with the framework of human experience. She is a vivacious woman, proud, beautiful and intelligent. When Nabakumar refuses her, Moti Bibi reacts like a "snake with its hood spread". But there is no ontological change in Kapalkundala. She remains unchanged like Nature itself. She remains responsive to calls of love, unaffected by the pressures exerted by human institutions and unruffled by the fear of death. She remains cold when her sister-in-law tells her about conjugal bliss and asks "What's the pleasure in it?" She remains equally cold when a passionate Nabakumar asks her "Have you ever been enraptured by beauty?" Nature has made her completely impersonal, indifferent and callous to all human passions. At the same time her religious convictions have taught her to accept the ways of God calmly and without any question. She jumps into the surging waves as if that is her rightful place.

Bankim wrote more powerful novels than Kapalakunda but none of them equalled its delicate texture and haunting beauty. There is nothing comparable to Kapalakundala in the history of Bengal fiction.
Chandrashekhar which appeared first in Bangadarshan in 1874 and published in a book form next year. The theme of the novel has a direct relation to Bishabriksha but it is more complicated and more emotional in nature, its plot being constructed on a massive scale and its action set against the background of a political turmoil in eighteenth-century Bengal. The kernel of the story is the frustrated love of Saibalini and Pratap who loved each other since their childhood. In their early youth they realized the impossibility of their marriage under the existing social codes and decided to die together. Saibalini faltered at the crucial moment and Pratap was rescued by Chandrasekhar who ironically enough was married to Saibalini. Pratap, too, in course of time married another woman. This is the prolegomena of a long and tortuous story which begins eight years later.

Eight years of married life was not enough either to tame Saibalini or to obliterate the memories of her childhood sweetheart from her mind. In fact the passive and cold Chandrasekhar left her dangerously alone. She is like a sleeping volcano too ready to erupt any time. At that stage of her life enters Lawrence Foster, a British factor, working in the East India Company. A typical adventurous and unscrupulous Englishman in eighteenth-century India, Foster takes fancy for Saibalini and wants to marry her. The impulsive Saibalini welcomes the opportunity to leave her home with him, with a daring hope to meet Pratap. She finally meets Pratap but that meeting culminates, not in love or happiness, but in greater suffering. Eventually she is taken back to her husband after a long process of self-purification and atonement, and Pratap dies in battlefield.

The background of the story is the political crisis in mid-eighteenth-century Bengal leading to the defeat of Mir Kasim, the Nawab of Bengal, and the
consolidation of British power in India. With the story of Pratap and Saibalini Bankim interweaves the story of Dalani, the wife of Mir Kasim, in such a manner that the intrigues of the royal court penetrate into the private life of Dalani and merge with the main plot. The scholarly Brahmin Chandrsekhar, the young landlord Pratap, the innocent Dalani, the impetuous Saibalini, the unlucky Foster and the ill-starred Nawab Mir Kasim—men and women of different temperament and belonging to different stations of life—meet and interact, clash and collide, each of them changing the course of other’s life as well as his own. Equally significant is the place of the Ganga in the novel. The story is anchored in the river itself: it begins in the mango-groves on the banks of the river, and takes its first run on this river where the young lovers are separated; eight years later the abducted Saibalini sails with Foster on the same Ganga, the symbol of the changing moods and emotions of the participants in the dramatic episodes; on the Ganga again Saibalini meets Pratap and on the Ganga they bid farewell to one another. The tenderness of love as well as the impetuosity of passion find their objective correlative in the ever-flowing, ever-changing Ganga which connects five different places of action in the novel—Bedagram, Murshidabad, Mungher, Patna and Calcutta—and the lives of several individuals with the historical changes of the country.

The construction of the plot in this novel follows the principles of a drama. Even the three sections of the prelude are like three different scenes laid in three different locations. With the beginning of the main action Bankim concentrates even more carefully on dramatic principles. The story opens at the Fort of Mungher with Dalani who is much worried about the imminent clash between Mir Kasim and the British army. Mir Kasim's faith in astrology gives the first hint of the uncertainty of the future. He sends for Chandrsekhar, the scholar from Bedagram, presents a sharp contrast to the first. Both the chapter present
a couple, one happy and the other unhappy, and both fraught with an uncertain danger. The next chapter narrates the abduction of Saibalini by Foster while Chandrasekhar is away in Mungher studying the horoscope of Mir Kasim. Foster sails with Saibalini for Calcutta. A friend of Saibalini tries to rescue her but she refuses to come back home. Saibalini knows once she is abducted by a foreigner she will not be accepted by the Hindu society any more. Moreover she admits that she does not love her husband. Chandrashekhar returns home and learns about Saibalini's abduction. He too leaves his ancestral house: 'No body knew where did he go, and no body asked him anything either.'

Thus Bankim builds the edifice of the novel. The movements are swift and sharp, measured and balanced, dramatic both in form and spirit. The story starts with a brooding suspense which deepens slowly with the progress of the story. From the quiet shelter of a village both Saibalini and Chandrashekhar are swept away in the tide of an uncertain future. The second book of the novel, containing eight uniformly short and dramatic chapters, introduces the sub-plot of Dalani. The unscrupulous Gurgan Khan, brother of Dalani, arouses suspicion in Mir Kasim about his wife Dalani and the innocent and faithful woman finds herself deserted in a lonely world. Here in this part of the novel Bankim introduces Pratap, who rescues Saibalini from Foster's boat. They meet after eight years and find the old love still burning in their heart. Pratap, however, appears too austere and rebukes Saibalini for leaving her husband. The story which started eight years ago comes to fall circle reaching its peak of emotional intensity. Pratap and Saibalini have their last swim together on the Ganga. In that background of Nature with its tantalizing beauty and vastness and complete in difference to human relationship. Saibalini understands how deeply Pratap loves her and yet how strongly he restrains himself. If they are still in love then they must die and if they prefer life to death then they
must forget one another.

*She agreed. But it was so difficult for her.*

'Who is more unhappy than I am in this world', she asked,

'Why, I', he replied.

'You have got everything, you have power, you have fame, you have hope, you have friends, you have wife, What have I got, Pratap?

'Nothing', Pratap admitted, 'then why not both of us die.'

The lovers are separated for ever and then begins the most controversial part of the novel. Saibalini loses her mental balance and the story moves into a different zone of experience, into a contrived world, partly made of Dante's Inferno and partly of the Hindu hell, narak. It is a hoary zone of psychic experience as well—suffocating and cruel, and detestingly moral. What makes this part offensive is not just its moral tone but the sudden change in the vision of the novel. The animated world of Pratap and Saibalini suddenly vanished into thin air and is replaced by a world of dim and distorted appritions. There are, no doubt, patches of psychological insights in the episodes described in this part of the novel, but in the main the process of Saibalini's self-purification is too crude and imposed. The self-purification of Saibalini does not emerge from any sense of guilt on her part: it is imposed on her by the demands of social morality. Somerset Maugham who has dealt with a similar problem in his novel, The Painted Veil provides a sharp contrast with Bankim's vision and to his moral commitments affecting the growth of the story. Bankim's commitment to a particular ideology, in this case it is chastity, asserts itself so vehemently that it creates a conflict which, in the words of Professor Harvey, can be described as a conflict between the monist and the pluralist. Harvey writes that while the 'monist' would tend to supersede or abrogate the human
values by some metaphysical fiat, the 'pluralist' deals 'the merely human rather than the over-arching non-human absolutes'. A novelist is by nature liberal, pluralist, his subject is the partial, the limited, the relative. But Bankim in his anxiousness to satisfy the requirements of an ideology ignores the demands of art and life. At times he tries to avert the action and to re-bilitate the story on a natural and humane plane—the incoherent speech of Saibalini is an example of his artistic struggle—but he fails to avoid various supernatural elements including references to 'psychic force' and mesmerism. Only when the fifth part of the novel begins with the sentence, 'The English boats arrived at Murshidabad' the story comes out of the dark terrain of the supernatural and breathes again the fresh air of the open world. The story ends with Saibalini's return to Chandrashekhar and Pratap's heroic death in the battlefield. A miracle man, the protagonist of Bankim's religious views, praises the dying hero for his self-control. But when he asks Pratap if he had ever loved Saibalini, he leaps like a lion from his sleep, and exclaims:

You are an ascetic. What would you know of love? Who in this world will understand me? Who will every know how much I loved Saibalini for these sixteen years. I have not loved her with a lie in my heart; my love is a desire to sacrifice my life. My love is my death.

This last oration of Pratap neutralizes the moral discourse of the miracle man and brings into focus the central problem in Bankim's novels—the tension between love and morality—fidelity and infidelity and his own conflict with himself.

Rajani, the third novel of this period, was first serialized in Bangadarshan in 1873-74 and published as a book in 1877. In between Bishabriksha and Rajani Bankim wrote three tales: Indira (March 1873), Yugalanguriya (April 1873), and Indira (March 1873). In the summer of 1873 he wrote D nopan, a story of Hindu life and culture.
and Radharani (Oct.-Nov. 1875), obviously to meet the increasing demand for stories for his journal. All the three tales share a simple plot and a linear growth without any complication; all of them happy-ending fables with strong elements of fairy-tale. Bankim enlarged Indira in its fifth edition and gave it a new shape. It should be considered, therefore, as a new work and we shall talk about it later. There is a basic similarity in the themes of all the three tales. The heroines of these tales, separated from the heroes due to different reasons finally meet and live happily ever after. In each case Bankim has employed a long process of recognition involving tokens, memories of the past, and also what Aristotle calls this 'the best of all discovery', a series of connected incidents. These three stories can be considered as three camifications of one underlying plot. The only three happy-ending stories in the whole range of Bankim's works they provide a sharp contrast with the turbulent novels of Bankim where crime and justice clash with the conceptual structures of purity and impurity.

In Rajani, Bankim improvised the technique of narration in the first person, which he first used in Indira, the difference being that the story of Rajani is narrated by four different persons. Bankim admits that he learnt this technique from Wilkie Collins' *The Woman in White*. The character of Rajani was suggested by the blind girl Nidia of the Last Day of Pompeii by Lord Lytton.

The story of Rajani is simple and straightforward. Rajani, a beautiful blind girl, earns her livelihood by selling flowers. She often visits the house of Ramsaday, an old man married to young Labanga. Rajani falls in love with Sachindra, Ramsaday's son by his former wife. Without being aware of that, Labanga arranges her marriage with someone else, but Rajani leaves home with Hiralal to avoid persuasion of her parents and of Labanga. Hiralal, a rogue, wants
to take liberties with her and when not obliged by Rajani he leaves her in a lonely place on the Ganga. Rajani wants to commit suicide but is rescued by a young and educated man Amarnath. In the prime of his youth, Amarnath loved Labanga but had not seen her since her marriage with Ramsaday. On making enquiries Amarnath comes to know that Rajani is the real heiress of the property now enjoyed by Ramsaday and Labanga. He acquires the property for her but Labanga cleverly persuades Sachindra to marry the blind girl.

The story contains many elements of a fairy-tale. Not only Rajani finally marries the man she loves, but the poor flower-girl suddenly acquires a vast fortune. And on top of that she also gains her eyesight through the miraculous powers of an ascetic. The story, however, is told in a fascinating style, interspersed with vivid accounts contemporary life and manners, dealing with situations of love and passion. It has its moments of psychological tension and intense lyricism but ends in a realm of fantasy.

Bankim wanted to avoid the usual narrative type by eliminating the author's central point of view and to replace it by a more involved perspective that of the characters themselves. Bankim claimed, that since the characters told their own stories, the author was not responsible for the supernatural elements in the novels. This is a strange argument, to say the least. One can, however, agree that such a device can help distinguish a reliable narrator from an unreliable one or perhaps even obliterate that distinction by making any narrator reliable to the extent that his narration is 'true' from his point of view. Bankim tried to exploit the device to his advantage, but his omniscient point of view is not altogether absent in the novel. Rajani is thus a mixture of both conventional techniques of narrative and of different points of view. Certain parts of the novel are distinguished by a confessive modality which acquires the form of
interior monologues and often a lyrical outburst, but in some other parts the narrative develops in temporal sequence, made of scenes and situations in the conventional manner. Bankim tried to integrate them but not always with success.

The novel starts with a great promise. The focus is on the psychological tensions between the characters rather than on the action itself. The psychological tensions become more acute and complicated with the unfoldment of the story which slowly gets intertwined with several subplots. The story of Rajani and Sachindra penetrates into the story of Amarnath, the former lover of Labanga. The first part, containing eight short chapters introduced by Rajani, presents the key-motif of the novel. Her character develops out of two inter-related motifs: her blindness and her passionate attraction for beauty. She cries out, 'O, the world of many forms, how do you look? I hear about innumerable things, endless variety of objects. How do they look? What is beauty? How does beauty look like? Like an allegorical piece Rajani has two streams flowing together, one at the surface and the other at a deeper level. But unlike the traditional allegorical discourse, the two streams meet and change each other's complexion. The main motif in the novel is search for beauty. Rajani desires not only to see, but to see beauty itself. Amarnath, too, craves for beauty, though for him, 'beauty has no relation with sensuousness'. Sachindra on the other hand thinks beauty is not just a matter of form, nor is it transcendental or a-sensual, but intimately associated with love and affection. He describes Rajani as a 'perfect beauty' but it is the beauty of a 'stone icon'. Rajani, too, compares herself with a 'figure of stone, cold and sightless'. The stone image, however, is humanized through love, and in love its desire for beauty finds fulfilment. The recovery of her sight by a miracle man is an unnecessary bonus.

Amarnath's search for beauty adds a different dimension to the story. Once
'blinded' by the beauty of Labanga, he entered her apartments at the dead of night like a thief only to be chastised and punished. Her search for beauty started at a more primeval level, where beauty is associated with sex. Later in his life he realizes, 'the beauty of youth is more a merchandise ... real beauty has no relation with sensual desire'. His lust for Labanga brought only unhappiness and when he decided to marry Rajani out of compassion he found that happiness eluded him again. His search for beauty merges into a search for happiness leading him to a journey unto the permanent, the source of all beauty. His realization of the transitoriness of the phenomenal world finds a new expression in his life but not before he meets Labanga for the last time. A terse and poigniant dialogue between the two lovers brings out the long dilemma of Bankim and takes the story to its culmination.

Labanga confesses her love for Amarnath though she will not allow herself to violate the rules of the society, the conduct of married life. They parted amid tears and Amarnath takes to wanderings alone. The real story ends here but the story of Rajani and Sachindra continues in the next chapter which brings Amarnath back to their happy home after two years, to find Rajani's eyesight restored by a Sannyasi.

The problem in the novel is not new: it first appeared in Bishabriksha in the form of love between a married man and a young widow. The same theme recurred in Chandrashekhar with slight modification: the man and the woman involved in the situation are childhood sweet-hearts but later married to different persons. It is the heroine who takes initiative in meeting her former lover who still loves her but considers it to be sinful. He admits of his love and alone for it. The Chandrashekhar situation has been reversed in Rajani. Labanga is made of sterner stuff than Saibalini and Pratap; she would not admit any
weakness on her part for Amarnath in this life.

"You are none to me in this world. But if there is a life beyond—".
She did not complete the sentence. I waited for a while and then asked, 'Yes, if there is a life beyond, what then?'
She said, 'I am a woman, weak by nature, what's the use of testing my strength?'

Nagendra and Kunda, Pratap and Saibalini, Amarnath and Labanga are the manifestations of the same problem; the substance is the same, the containers different, dealing with the problematic of fidelity as opposed to Infidelity.

One of the major problems related to literature is its relationship with the social order. It is not easy to answer the different issues involved in it viz, the question of their dependence on each other, their relative importance, the possibility of an independent existence of literature the aim of literature, and the like. Men of learning in different countries of the world have talked a lot either in favour or against these issues and it is encouraging to note that there is almost an unanimity on the point of relationship between the two. The truth is that society and literature are dependent on each other, everywhere and always. But at the same time the differences among them are also clearly marked. Literature is neither meant only for giving pleasure to the people, nor it is a body of ethical principles for-guiding the welfare of the society. it contains both these ideas but at the same time remains above them. On the whole it can be said that outwardly literature is concerned with beauty and inwardly it is related to truth and welfare. It accommodates the social trends to enrich itself and maintains the special features of the place of its origin.
The first and the most significant reason for this relationship between society and literature is the fact that man creates the literature and he is a social animal. There are different norms of behaviour in different societies and they are reflected in their respective literature. This creates distinction among them but there are also some common factors which make it possible for the lovers of literature in different parts of the world to understand and appreciate the literature of one another. The commonness arises out of the common characteristics found among people all over the world. The creative genius cannot confine himself within the limits of his own country. He gives pleasure to the people belonging to different ages and countries. For example, in India we admire the writings of Shakespeare, Shelley, and Roman Rolland. On the other hand Kalidas and Rabindra Nath are also worshipped outside India. This becomes possible when few genius among the writers are able to create such literary works which crosses the territorial limit of their lands as well as the limits of the ages. They create something which is above the individuals, their countries and age. It is very much like an eternal tune.

At the present age, scientific inventions have made the world smaller and people living in different parts have come sufficiently close to each other. As a result of this mutual give and take some universal patterns of culture are developing and along with it attempts are being made to have something common or universal in literature. The outward form or pattern of society in different countries cannot possibly be similar to each other but since antiquity their internal conditions were very much alike and unless the people of the world become antagonistic to each other their similarity will definitely continue to exist. All over the world the individuals are for example, aware about the greater self and they are interested in the welfare of humanity. The men of literature in different countries have different styles and modes of expression but no where literature claims an independent
existence outside the social order. Literature is not, however, the carbon copy of the social order. Like all other fine arts it combines the social situation and personality of the person who makes the literature viz his education, taste temperament and the influence of his country as well as time on him. A particular scene of nature may appear different to the different individuals and the different artists may give different expressions to it. There cannot be any hard and fast rule on this point, neither such a rule is necessary because literature must avoid stereotyped expressions. There is however only one fundamental point which should be kept in mind that literature should not be contrary to the sense of welfare and for this it must be closely associated with truth. The poets in different ages have revolted against the barriers imposed upon them by the society or other agencies but among them only those who have supposed the scene of societal welfare received approval. They have directed the society on the right path. The right to freedom can be earned by using restrain on one's behaviour. Above all logics and arguments we will have to accept the supremacy of man over the literature created by him. The product of imagination which pulls man out of the narrow limits of his every day existence and the fierce struggle for it, as well as, of his selfish interest, and gives him solace for a while, may be considered as much valuable. In case that imagination is the product of a drunken mind which is harmful for the people and their society and if that inspires the animal passions instead of showing the proper line of action and cause moral degradation that should be resisted. The society has every right to prevent the growth of such literature. if the poet or the novelist who claims freedom from all barriers and live outside the society we have nothing to grudge about but in case the effect of his works generates any evil influence that should not be tolerated.

When the writer can help in checking the harmful passions and can promote
the sense of welfare without loosing the glamour of his composition then only he is considered as a great writer and his compositions also become worthy in nature. Literature may accommodate all the different types of passions and feelings but they should be given their proper places. To place the vulgar over the pathos is not appreciated. When we build a house we naturally try to make the garden more attractive and at the same time try to deposit the filth at a place which is not easily perceived by the visitor. Men are similar to other animals in many respects but the finer senses in human beings make them feel ashamed to expose these similarities before their fellow beings. One class of writers are of opinion that unless literature can bear the reflections of the social order, it fails to become realistic and its significance is reduced. In this connection we can point out that from ancient time till the modern age writers of the different countries of the world have exposed both the good and the bad elements in the society but finally they have glorified the good elements in their works. In Ramayana, the great epic of the Hindus, the author Balmiki has given a realistic representation of the indisciplined life in the character of Ravan but after reading the epic nobody wants to imitate Ravan. This is due to the fact that the art of Balmiki glorified the good over the bad. Rama is the hero of the epic and he is still the model for numerous Hindus. Moreover, it is difficult for any particular writer to perceive all the different trends of society and to place them in his work. Only few among them can perceive properly these diverse trends and accommodate all of them in a balanced manner. His sense of proportion and welfare oriented approach add flavour to it. Finally, it can be said that the writer must know how to see the things with an unbiased approach. Unless the writer develops a true vision of his own, he cannot see the things properly and make any significant contribution in the field of literature. He shall not only see the present but also consider the past and think about the future. The literature should try to establish a link between the past and
future via the present.

Literature of the past was mainly concerned with the individual. The writers of that age failed to appreciate the fact that man is subordinate to his social order and his movements as well as thoughts and aspirations are restricted by the society. Literature of the modern age, has been able to reveal this fact satisfactorily. In the last one hundred years or so the economic factors like mode of production etc. have been analysed throughly and as a result much stress have been given in literature on the economic and environmentalistic conditions of man. Previously it was believed that the philosophical doctrines supply materials for literature but in the modern age it is considered as an account of class struggle within the society which is based on the economic factors and more particularly on the mode of production. This is a new concept. The modern literature has become more materialistic in approach and defines the human action as related to the economic and social factors. It experiments with the impact to the economic and social factors. It experiments with the impact of the surrounding environment of human mind. The early literature laid greater stress on ethics and emphasised upon the need for reforming the character of the people but process now has been reversed. In the modern age it is believed that ethics lies within the social environment and therefore, ethics can be changed by changing the social order. Since the age of epics ethics has been claimed as the contribution of God and a part of religion. an uncritical acceptance of ethical rules by the people was demanded by the Brahmins or the custodians of religious faith and those who ignored it were punished as sinners. The social reformers of the modern age realised the fact that any attempt for reformation will necessarily affect the ethical structure of the society. the pointed out that ethics is concerned mainly with the advantages and disadvantages within the society. It has nothing to do with the life and death.
Previously men followed ethics but now the social reformers claim that ethics should follow the men. With the development of this new idea the shape of literature has also changed. The modern literature has revealed the exploitation of the individuals within the society and their revolt against useless ethics. Religion has been condemned as the opiate for the masses and held responsible for the drawbacks within the society. The contemporary writers have tried to prove that at the root of ethics we find the existence of injustice and the intention to safeguard the rights of the people in power. The Brahmins wanted to retain their superiority and, therefore, ethics proclaimed that the Sudras should not demand any privilege. Men wanted the proprietary and permanent as well as monopolistic rights over the females and ethics imposed the restriction of fidelity on them. For males the extra-material sexual relationships are not taken seriously but for females it is a vice. The modern literature, therefore, has assumed a realistic form and it is devoid of romantic ideas. It deals with the co-operation and conflicts of man with social environment and also criticises the ethical standard of the society. It believes that any attempt to describe man outside his social environment will not be the true form of literature and therefore, the importance of social order can not be ignored.

A review of Bengali literature shows that in the nineteenth century, Raja Ram Mohan Roy developed the consciousness against the social evils and as a solution of many such evils he proposed a synthesis between the Indian and the Western cultures. In his works he mentioned the satisfactory conditions of the peasants during his time and also tried to point out to the people of the country about the cultural backwardness of our land. His main purpose was to develop the moral consciousness of the people. He was followed by Ishwar Gupta, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, and Bankin Chandra Chatterji. Gradually other writers like Sasodhar Tarkachuramani and Chandra Nath Basu also followed their
predecessors: Devendra Nath Tagore and Akshoy Kumar Dutta tried for the reformation of the society through literature. Rabindranath Tagore and Sarat Chandra Chattopadhya were also of that opinion. Rabindra Nath was equally influenced by the national and international ideas. In his novels and poems we find the culmination of the attempts for synthesis started by Raja Ram Mohan Roy. Sarat Chandra made an analytical study of our every day existence and exposed the evils were removed the moral consciousness among the people could not develop.

Literature is the symbol of the relationship among the groups of people and the life is the symbol of the individual. The world life, however, is taken here as the spiritual, moral and self consciousness among the individuals. All these things together give a complete shape to the human life and literature attempts to record that "Literature is a vital record of what men have seen in life. What they have experienced of it, what they have thought and felt about those aspects of it, which have the most immediate and enduring interest for all of us. It is thus fundamentally an expression of life through the medium of language. Literature can develop moral consciousness among the people but unless the writer himself is pure in heart and developed in mind, he cannot possibly inspire others towards something great. The creation of literature alone is not sufficient. The writers must also try to find out how far their works are able to develop the moral consciousness. The monetary or the commercial consideration alone cannot produce worthy literature. It must aim at the welfare of the people and society. In fact, the society and individuals are the materials out of which literature is constructed. The outer world gets transformed within the author's mind and heart. These transformed elements become reality in literature and a source of our pleasure. "Literature must always be interesting; it must always have a structure and aesthetic purpose, a total coherence and effect. It must,
of course, stand in a recognizable relation to life, but relations are various: the life can be lightened or burlesqued or antithesized, it is in any case a selection, of a specially purposive sort, from life. We have to have knowledge independent of literature in order to know what the relation of a specific work to life may be. Literature is constructed out of our life experiences. Our fears, astonishments, imaginations and ideas on the other hand form romance. Novel and romance are the two very significant branches of literature. "The novel is the picture of real life and manners, and often the time in which it is written. The Romance, in lofty and elevated language, describes what never happened nor is likely to happen. The novels is realistic, the romance is poetic or epic. We should call it mythic." In realistic literature the romance has no place and therefore, the author points specific characters out of his own experience. The mind of the author is also projected in them.

Nothing is more interesting to a human being than human life itself. Therefore, the analyses, explanation and solution of the problems of life in literature make it more attractive to us. It is something like written argument for self-defence before the judiciary within ourselves. In literature we apologise for our false steps, give explanation for our short-comings and defend our actions or movements. Literature thus acts as a measure of self-defence. Mathematics is not literature because it has nothing to do with human heart. Some is true about science. Machines are the means of production but they produce essentially the life less objects. The inquiries about life have a vast span. They are spread all over the universe and constitute the real domain of literature.

Society and the life of the individuals can be expressed mainly through two mediums-literature and art. The artist can draw the portrait of an individual and he can express the state of anger, envy, pity etc. in a very realistic manner,
but it is literature which explains the reason behind the state of mind. Literature excels art in this matter. In all the civilized societies of the world literature is adorned because it explains the contemporary social educations. The great literary creations are those which contain the social, religious, economic and domestic values of their times and the authors of such books also become immortals like Balmiki, Vedavyas, Kalidas, Shakespeare, Milton, Tagore and others.

The form of literature changes essentially with the change in the temper of the age and society. The authors consider the social values and their books tell us about the social conditions as well as the levels of aspirations and achievements of the people during their times. Nearly one hundred years back Dinabandhu Mitra wrote his famous novel, *Nildarpan*, and it is still considered to be one of the authentic records of the social situations of Bengal during the period.

Man is not to change them in order to suit his temperament and ideas. This has made the people living in different parts of the Universe to dream about their various shapes and forms. The manmade environment is definitely more valuable to him than his basic nature and qualities. Man never feels himself as fully developed and so he tries to make his own self perfect through his own creations. Literature and art are the mental images of man and the results of his attempts for moulding his own nature and environment in accordance with his temperament and ideas.

In the wider sense literature includes even our day to day conversations and mode of expressing our feelings. It may appear strange but a closer analysis reveals that our casual expressions and momentary imaginations are also the products of some sort of feelings and the feeling or experience is the essence
of literature. Feeling alone, however, is not enough but when there is a synthesis between feeling and intelect, knowledge is born. With the growth of civilization when man felt the pleasure of creation and sensed about the beauty of nature and fragrance of earth, he developed colourful imaginations in his mind and like a bird his thought flaped its wings to go beyond his self. This became the starting point of his artistic creations. The archaeological researchological researches have found the existence of art and some form of writing even in the Neolithic Age. the script, however, was pictoral in form. the Neolithic men expressed their feelings through drawings and therefore, the details of those drawings were collected from the nature and instances of their every day living. In a crude way they painted the scene of hunting or other common activities. At the next stage of development the primitive men were drawing the pictures on earth with the help of sticks. The Egyptians achieved further perfection in this matter. They became successful to a great extent in expressing their thoughts by painting on the walls and on the leaves of Papyrus. Gradually the paper was made from the bark of Papyrus and this invention opened immense possibilities for the development of knowledge. Leather was also used for writing before the invention of paper and the Jews wrote the 'Old Testament' on leather. The Greek and Latin compositions of the fourteen century were also written on leather.

The invention of printing press in 1450 was another significant step towards the spread of literature and knowledge. It was invented in Germany but very soon spread in other parts of Europe. In 1476, the first printing press was established at Westminster, in England. After the invention of Printing press the number of books increased enormously and the diffusion of knowledge had been possible equally. The culture also changed more quickly during that period. Feudalism was replaced by Commercialism and at this stage the
forces of renaissance made their appearance. On the ruins of feudalism the thinkers of the new age tried to solve many problems which originated in their minds. The discovery of America, by Columbus extended the size of the world and affected the political as well as the economic structure of the European societies. The contemporary writers made almost an anatomical analysis of human life to solve the underlying mysteries. Due to those attempts literature was enriched and became more realistic.

The forces of renaissance made their first appearance in Italy but other parts of the world also made significant progress by that time. The historical records prove that the most ancient and glorious civilisation of the world originated in Asia and it enriched the societies of India, China, Egypt and Japan. Gautam Buddha of India and Confucius of China were the products of that superb culture. The Indians, even earlier than Buddha, were able to prove Vedas and Upanishads which prove the existence of a high order of culture in this land.

The scrutiny of literature also points out that the changes in the social order bring new values and they are responsible for the development of new trends in literature. For instance, the renaissance movement was mainly a revolution in thought and this resulted in the development of new ideas in literature. The industrial revolution brought in the sphere of material production and equally effected the literature to make it more inclined toward materialism. Literature is also conscious about the rights of the individuals in the society.

The relationship between society and literature is a two way traffic. With the advent of a new age literature changes itself accordingly. It also acts as the career of culture and a source of inspiration. The Greek literature and philosophy
not only influenced the society and culture of the Greeks and the Romans but at the same time inspired the forces of renaissance. Long before the national liberation movement was started in this country, the men of literature tried to make the people conscious about it and when it actually started those people made significant contributions to that. Rousseau's contribution in the French revolution and the effects of Tolstoy's writings on the great revolution of Russia cannot be ignored. The great epics of our land till today inspire a large number of people educated and uneducated in this country. Rabindra Nath Tagore is still living in the minds of the people of Bengal as well as in other parts of the country and outside it. Literature gathers such a tremendous force that it can bring changes as well as progress in the society.

The relationship between society and literature is exposed in both the literature of the elites and the literature for the mass. In the primitive age both society and literature had only one form i.e.; the mass form but as the culture and society advanced and become more and more complicated the people were divided on class lines and similarly the literature. These two forms of literature, in course of their evolution, sometimes come closer and influence each other. This, however, does not essentially mean the merger of the two. Both these types of course influence the thoughts of the people in their own ways.

The literature of a country does not always gather materials from indigenous sources and are often influenced by foreign elements. In other words the raw materials for literature are provided by the ideas of human minds and they often have extra-territorial jurisdictions. The same type of social structure, therefore, does not necessarily produce the same type of literature. This is more correct about the modern societies. During our time the forces of democracy and the improvements achieved in the mass media of communication have

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broken the regional barriers to a considerable extent. The diffusion of culture in the current century have been wide and it has increased the complications in literary forms. The literature of our country, for example, is no more confined to the problems and peculiarities of this land and the occurrences in other parts of the world can easily influence our writers and poets. The progress of science has made the world smaller and the conception of 'One world' is not a distant dream. The modern literature is neither purely local nor regional but in fact it is gradually becoming international in character.

Pitrim Sorokin has classified the literature as Ideational, and Sensate, Allegoric and Symbolic, Realistic, Naturalistic, Religious, Satirical, Secular and theatrical. "The literary work which deals with the 'invisible' world, supernatural and transcendental, and in which words and images are but symbols of this world, is, according to definition, Ideational literature. The work which depicts and describes empirical phenomena in their sensory aspect, where words and images have nothing but empirical meaning, is sensate literature. A considerable number of purely religious and magical literary works... are examples of the first type, purely realistic and naturalistic novels, dramas, lyrics are examples of the second." He further says, "Judged by modern realistic and naturalistic literature realism can be defined as a system which reproduces from reality only that which impresses the senses most directly, that is, the external and the material aspect of human beings and objects. The realistic style emerged on the levels of the major literature, only after the fourteenth century, in the form of realistic novel... and in part of comedies. Afterwards it developed so greatly that in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries it had a virtual monopoly." "Secular literature, deals with the religious topics, but deals with them either by way of dispute... or in a purely aesthetic or negative way." "Simultaneously with the realistic novel there arose to the level of conscious literature, the satirical, ironical and comical tale and novel. Now even within
the satirical literature itself, as it developed, there was manifest the same downward movement in its debasing, tearing to pieces, ridiculing, smashing, slandering progressively greater and more fundamental values." The Theatrical literature, "From its beginning it is a branch of the sensate literature. It has been developing progressively in sensate quality during the subsequent centuries, not only quantitatively but also qualitatively, ridiculing satirizing and stressing the comical and the negative aspects of the greater and greater values."

The above classifications of literature may be applicable to literature of the various countries of the world. A closer view reveals the fact that these forms or classifications are very intimately connected with the form of society and culture. As the culture attains maturity in the field of technological advancement the Ideational is replaced by the sensate type of culture. The theological orientation of culture which is connected with the Ideational type of literature, is replaced by more rational outlook when the advancements in the fields of science and technology are achieved. The secular idea in literature is seldom possible unless this idea first enters within the culture of the society. The satire is also an expression of social mind. The attacks made on the traditional values and great traditions indicate the emergence of new cultural pattern. The emergence of realism in the field of literature, as more or less a monopoly, during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, is quite parallel to the major advancements in the fields of science and technology during this period. In this connection we can quote the opinion of Warner, J. Chanman and Alvin Boskeff. According to them. There are many ways in which the sociology of arts and literature stands in the need of a historical perspective. The arts in the widest sense are the symbolic expression of a culture, and culture changes: therefore, are reflected in changing architectural, pictorial, musical and literary styles. " Egon, E. Bergel has pointed out," It is quite obvious that modern western Art in
all its major branches literature, paintings, sculpture, music-represents a radical break with the past, the emergence of a completely new style (or styles) and not merely a gradual change from previous periods. It is equally obvious that this radical change in the arts is parallel by similar radical configurations, and socio-economic conditions. The literature is influenced by the entire social forces viz. economic system, class structure, political organisations, the major institutions, dominant ideas, glories of the past and ideas about the future, contemporary realities and the emotions and aspirations of the people. The Marxist idea views literature as being determined by the economic conditions and the form of literature changes with the changing economic structure. There is no harm in accepting the economic factor as one of the variables but the idea of determinism forms the weakest part of Marxian system. "Being determines consciousness is the Marxist definition of the ultimate relation between matter and spirit. Whether or not this is the actual view of the artist it must, in fact, be the basis of his creative work. For all imaginative creation is a reflection of real world in which the creator lives. It is the result of his contact with the world and his love or hate for what he finds in that world." We cannot, however, isolate any single element in society and call it the final determinant of literature. In fact, whole of social order should be considered as having potentialities for determining the direction and character of it. All the material, emotional, conceptual and institutional elements within a society are equally potent to influence the literature of a particular period. According to Lenin, "Art belongs to the people. It ought to extend with deep roots into the very thick of the broad toiling masses. It ought to be intelligible to these masses and loved by them. And it ought to unify the feelings, thoughts and will of these masses, elevate them. It ought to arouse and develop artists among them." It shows that Lenin, unlike Marx, believed that the development of literature is possible, thought limited, even before we can achieve the equitable distribution
of wealth in the society. Communism according to Lenin, aims at educating the people in a particular way and to elevate their economic condition to such a higher level which can remove all obstacles the people will get sufficient leisure to creat superb literature. Therefore, "Viewed as a whole a body of literature like a body of magic or a system of law is part of the entire culture of a people. The characteristic qualities that distinguish it from other literature derive from the characteristic qualities of the life of the group. Its themes and problems emerge from group activites and group sanctions. It significance lies in the extent to which it expresses and enriches the totality of the culture."

The style in literature is also a social product. "Style is never the creation of a single person, many contribute to its emergence and the artist, although he is not forced to do so, adopts the style of his age and group. Style is thus an eminently social phenomenon. Style in some way expresses the philosophy, the feelings and the values of a generation. This, too is a social phenomenon and in great need of scientific analysis and explanation." Sociology of literature would thus focus upon the relationship between the literature and the components of social order of culture, literary themes and structure, its process of integration and change in relation to type of social structure, social form, its level of adjustment and changes.

Literature is always fed by the personal and impersonal forces within the society. Literature of a given time will directly or indirectly reveal the dominant spirit of the time though the mode of expression may differ according to the individual qualities of the authors. Moreover, the authors belonging to a particular age are the products of culture and this produces a group characteristic among them. "The great impulses behind literature, writes W.H. Hudson," may be grouped...under four heads; (1) Our desire for self expression (2) Our interest
in people and their doings. (3) Our interest in the world of reality in which we live..., and (4) Our love of form." The form and content of literature change with the age. Till the end of the nineteenth century our society and culture made a somewhat satisfactory compromise with the culture of the west and it also caused some minor re-adjustments in our values and changes in the cultural frame work. That compromise could not serve our purposes since the beginning of the current century. The scarcity of food, falling standard of health, social and national humiliations and the declining standard of education made the people of Bengal disappointed about their future. Though the spread of education was rapid during this period, it failed to enrich their culture. The frustrations of the people coincided with the growth of new trends in Bengali novels. On the whole the pattern was confusing and more emphasis was given on the instinctive aspect of human nature. The Kallol, sabuj Patra, and other groups of writers made the sex impulse of human being as the main theme of their novels. Like Freud, they also tried to connect the mysteries of human behaviours with the intricacies of sex instinct and did not hesitate to call it an omnipotent phenomenon of human nature.

There are two different views about the role of literature. One of the views holds that literature takes man beyond the limits of his day to day life and makes him forget about the pains and frustrations of worldly existence. Technically this is called idealism in literature and claims that the aim of literature is to inspire the people and enrich their thoughts. The opposite view is called realistic. The supporters of realism say that the literature must be founded upon the real life expression of the people. It should expose both the bright and the dark aspects in order to inspire the people to plan their lives in a better manner. Thus, we find, that inspite of the differences in these two views both admit
that literature is meant for life. In some quarters it is believed that literature of higher standard is not confined within the limits of any particular age or place and the great works of literature are eternal in their effects. The great classics of the world and the ancient epics and dramas are the examples of such literature. This view has been opposed by others who think that the human mind is the product of environment and the pattern of thinking as well as emotions of the people also change with the time and society. If the present society undergoes a radical change the contemporary norms and values will have on significance and the literature based on them will also lose its importance not because of any utilitarian consideration but due to our preference for the past. If literature, in fact, depends on the socially oriented mentality of the age, it can not possibly claim any perpetual form. Literature should be treated as the condensed form of social forces. It prepares the foundation and produces change in the realm of thought and inspires the actions of the people.

The unprecedented progress in the field of science in the modern age has produced marked changes in thought pattern of the contemporary people and it has expressed itself in literature. Due to the improvements made in the means of production we have been able to produce so much of wealth which was beyond the imagination of our predecessors but quite unfortunately we have not been able to achieve a satisfactory distribution of wealth among the people of our country and most of it have been accumulated in the hands of few people. As a result, those handful of persons mostly devoid of intellect and humanitarian qualities, have gathered enormous power and practically they have a monopoly over the entire resources of the nation. On the other hand large number of people have become paupers and developed an antagonism towards the state, society, culture and civilisation. This growing antagonism of the people have also affected the content of the contemporary literature.
Science, in other ways also, has affected the literature. Firstly, in this age of science the importance as well as the wages of the skilled labourers and technicians have increased. As a result much of the meritorious people are attracted towards the technical education and consequently in the field of literature we find an abundance of mediocres. The talent has shifted to the fields of technology and production and as such literature has been affected adversely. Secondly, the modern readers do not pay much attention to such readings which do not provide a scope for earning more money. This, of course, is a reflection of the growing materialism in the society and this tendency is marked in all the departments of fine arts. Thirdly, the literature has to depend more on television, radio, motion picture, and news papers for its survival. It is not very difficult to conclude that the literature which aims at being popular among the common people and to reach them through the mass media of communication, cannot retain a very high standard. The author, in order to make his works marketable, must be conscious about the level of taste of even the lowest class of the people in the society and if necessary lower down his genius to that extent. The readers are often interested in such literature which can provide more fun and recreation. On the other hand, the authors are interested in cash money. Finally, the acceleration of life has increased sufficiently due to the improvements made in the field of science and the life is becoming more mechanical. The complexities in our social life have also increased sufficiently. In such a situation, therefore, a compromise has been achieved and that has resulted in the growth of short stories, poems and articles. In Bengali literature also we find the same trend with some exceptions like Bimal Mitra, Buddhadev Basu and few others who have written large novels. The large size however, reminds us about the increasing complexities in our social life. Moreover, it will not be very much out of the way to mention that sometimes the readers
are interested in some consumers' surplus which they get from such novels.

The State, as social phenomenon, is also concerned about literature. In the modern age literature has been accepted as a very potent factor in the society and has been accepted as a very potent factor in the society and as such, the men in agency under the control of the common people. Like all other medias of mass communication they want to have control over literature. In our country, within these few years after independence such a tendency is marked obviously. The Government are interested in the formation of a group of writers who will support them and they give patronage to a class of literature as a means to this end. In future it may lead to the suppression of those writers who criticise the government or do not write such things which please them.

Literature works as an important institution in the society. The various literary devices are like the norms and conventions which can possibly develop only within the society. Moreover, the author is a social being and enjoys a particular social philosophy, like the Marxist, for example, are specially interested in it. They are not contented only with the knowledge about their relationship but at the same time predict or try to explain the relationship which the society should have with the literature in future. It is, however, extremely difficult to ascertain the extent of social order which is expresses in literature. In other words, we can not say conclusively whether the literature of a given period expresses the social situation correctly, fully or partially. Moreover, when one uses such terms, they need explanation. It is, therefore, advisable to avoid such evaluative criterion and try to understand the descriptive relationship between society and literature. This include the sociology of the writer; his status and the social ideology, the social content and purpose of literature, the economic implications of literary production, and finally the influence of society on literature.
The sociologist may study either of the three or all of them.

The writer should be considered as a social being and his social philosophy can be analysed by such variables as the family background, economic position etc. The biography can act as an important source of information about these phenomena. The attitude and ideology of the writer are the outcomes of his participation in the social and political issues of his time. The writers of certain age can be categorised in different classes on the basis of the knowledge about their origin, ideology, allegiance and their integration with the social order, leaving their class affiliations and the newly emerging group of intelligentsia accommodate the professionals from various classes. The Sociologist, interested in the study of literature, should try to find out the status of the writers in a given society, their economic conditions, their dependence on the government and other such important informations which reveal the writers as social products. In the earlier societies the writers were more dependent upon a particular social class and, naturally, followed the conventions of their patrons. The situation has, however, improved satisfactorily in the modern age. With an increase in the number of reading public their nature has become heterogenous and the relationship between the authors and their readers has become more indirect in nature. The intermediaries like, the literary associations, universities, academics, public cafes, the critics the literary magazines, and publishing houses etc; have come into existence between the writer and the readers and they exert sufficient influences.

The social content of literature reflects the taste of the time. It is not necessary for the writers to cover all the different stratifications of tastes within the society. Like the social classes their respective tastes are also stratified. Moreover, the taste is affected by such factors like the age, sex, and affiliation to the
specific group and association. Fashion is also an important determinant of taste. Study of the social content in literature should therefore include the dynamic aspect of the taste. This means the corelation, if any, between the changing social order and the tastes of the people, should be considered. When the writers fail to move with the changing society a hopeless contradiction may develop between their aims and the aims of the society.

Lastly, it should always be kept in mind that if the ideas contained in literature are contrary to the existing values, that may face total rejection by the people. Sometimes the imposition of a foreign style or manner of expression which has no root in the culture in question, makes the life of the literary work shorter. Whatever value the literary work contains—ethical, religious, political, or economic etc. they must be related to the social order. Because of this particular nature literature is taken as a social document which introduces the readers with the outlines of the social history. It should not be misunderstood only as an agency of propaganda. The author, left to his own, does not necessarily act as a propagandist in favour of any ideology. If this happens the spirit of literature is lost. Literature, therefore, should always act as the mirror of the society and an expression of the social forces.

Unfortunately the sociology of literature is still from being systematic. The volume of works already in this field is not insignificant but they are scattered no attempt, so far, has been made for any co-ordination. The approaches of the different authors very widely. Literature, however, has long been accepted as the out-come of social conditions and the earliest attempt to analyse it was mainly philosophical in nature. This was the period when sociology did not achieve the status of an emperical science. The idea about the economic determinism of literature advanced by Marx and Engels also failed to establish a satisfactory
relationship between the two. Sorokin claimed the literature as the integral part of the culture. Toynbee is also of this opinion. But inspite of all these attempts we find that not much have been achieved and a comprehensive sociology of literature is yet to be written.

The obvious difficulty in the sociological study of literature seems to be the lack of a quantitative method. At present statistics and quantitative methods are considered as more legitimate methods of sociology. Since Pareto's idea of Logico-Experimental method and Scientific Sociology appeared the trend has gone in favour of empirical investigation. The metaphysical and behaviouristic approaches have almost been discarded. It is not correct to think that the quantitative method can not be applied to study the relationship between society and literature. Sorokin's use of quantitative method, however primitive they might be, can be made refined. Another possibility is to study the number of registered borrowers in the public libraries in a city and to compare them with the total population. From such studies we can arrive at the conclusion about the response which a particular writer gets. In recent years the method of content analysis is also getting increased attention in this field. Content analysis has been developed within the last few decades for describing in systematic from the content of communications. This method points out that the data from all fields of communication may be treated as sociological data. "Berelson (1952) for instance, defines content analysis as a research technique for the objective, systematic, and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication."

The novel as a new form of literature, developed under the patronage of the capitalist society. The invention of the printing press helped the growth of novel to a great extent. Neither the nonarchy nor the feudal society could
lay the foundation of novel. Moreover, like the other art froms which preceded the novel, it did not originate with the intention of giving pleasure to the illiterate mass. The printing press of the capitalist society made the publication of the books easier and as a result the number of literature persons also increased. The publication of the newspapers, journals and magazines enlarged the scope of literature. The most significant phenomenon of the capitalist society, however, was the formation of the middle class. This newly created class of people were the real patrons of novel. Both the writers and the readers of novel came from this class. Therefore, novel can be described as a new invention in the field of literature and not simply the successor of ballad, epic or romance. It came as an expression of the new social mind. The middle class which gradually, occupied due to the spread of education among them, the dignified place of intelligentsia in the society, preferred the prose style over the poetry for the expression of their ideas. With the advent of capitalism, the social order became more and more complex. The growth of urban culture with different occupational classes was responsible for the complexity. The simultaneous development of science changed the outlook of the people and as a result the prose style became dominant over the poetry.

The spread of urban civilisation is associated with the enlargement of middle class and due to the increasing percentage of literacy in this class, the volume of 'reading public' also increased and they become the patrons of novels as well as other forms of literature. Gradually the libraries were set up for the distribution of books among the readers and on the other hand, the growth of hotels, restaurants, tea shops, and coffee houses in the urban centres made the meeting of the diverse types of people possible. The women were interested in reading novels during their leisure and they too formed a substantial portion of the novel readers.
The development of capitalism was associated with the idea of individual freedom within the society—a new feature which proved very much congenial to the growth of novels. The progress of the individual is always linked with the development with the development of individual freedom within the society. The capitalism brought changes in the economic as well as the social structures. The emergence of a powerful class of capitalists, the spread of capitalism and the growth of 'industrial-urban' culture transformed the existing class structure within the society. The thinkers of this new society started searching for the solutions of new problems instead of those ethical and supernatural of the previous ages. The new society expressed itself in the bitter class struggle and clash of interests. With the decline of the forces of religion the people developed a secular outlook and the literature of the age became more realistic and conscious about the self and society. The novelists were interested in the different aspects of the society and they directed their attentions towards the evil spots within it viz. the criminals, prostitutes etc. The idea of 'individual freedom' brought changes in the status of women. They became restless and gradually prepared themselves ready for emancipation from the dominance of the males. A number of restrictions on their movements were withdrawn in accordance with the temperament of the age. The novelists took up their grievances and wrote about their unsatisfactory status, the dowry system, the illegitimate sexual union, the system of purchasing brides, right to divorce, and the romantic attachment between man and woman. According to Ian Watt the idea of individual freedom is the outcome of the philosophy of individualism which emerged as an important phenomenon of the capitalist society, "The secularisation of thought which accompanied the new philosophy tended in the same direction; it produced essentially men centred world, and one in which the individual was responsible for his own scale of moral and social values."

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In Bengali literature, the novel originated during the second half of the nineteenth century. Since the beginning of the eighteenth century the economic conditions of the people living on the banks of river Bhagirathi started changing and as a result of the establishment of trade centres of the traders belonging to the different nations of Europe in this region, the urban culture started growing gradually. Those traders appointed persons belonging to the upper caste Hindu society as 'Diwans' to run their trades smoothly. The employees used to get salaries from their employers but at the same time had no hesitation in earning money through all possible sources specially bribe. Within a short period those people became rich and started ignoring the social norms. At the same time the feudalism declined in Bengal and the unsatisfactory economic conditions of the feudal lords forced them to borrow money from the newly created rich people associated with the trading concerns. In short, these capitalists started dominating over the landed aristocracy. Finally, the defeat of Nawab Sirajudaulah in the battle of Palassy marked the victory of the traders over the monarchy or the feudal aristocracy. In the race for superemacy that followed the Britishers defeated the other European nations as well as the indigenous forces and consequently the establishment of the British rule over India brought the people of Bengal and other parts of the country in contact with the new ideas of Europe. The Britishers helped in the spread of Western education among the people of this country irrespective of religion, caste and sex. They established schools and colleges both for males and females and this increased the volume of the 'reading public'. The Christian missionaries at the same time, established the printing press at Srirampur, near Calcutta and finally, the educated people became more inclined towards the age of reason and rights of man. They preferred to give more importance to the cold reasonings than the romantic imaginations. They revolted against the inhuman superstitions of the past and accepted the new
values. This was the renaissance, it changed the literary ideas existing in the society and made the growth of the Bengali novels possible during the second half of the nineteenth century.

Several adverse phenomena, during this period, however, prevented the onward march of the Bengali novels to a great extent. The presence of colonial power in the country acted as a barrier and as a result the emancipation of the people and spread of education, more particularly in case of females, could not achieve a satisfactory target. In the absence of the freedom of association between the male and female the tale of romance in the novels were mostly told in European style. In those days of child marriage in Bengal, it was not possible for the novelists to find out beautiful young heroins for their stories other than the young widows. The urban middle class of Bengal also failed to reach that stage of consciousness which was marked in other countries of the world. Moreover, under the foreign domination the sense of Patriotism in Bengal developed but it could not be demarcated from the traditional religious beliefs of the people. On the whole a puritan outlook developed among the novelists. Benkim Chandra, as mentioned earlier, was pioneer among the novelists of Bengal but he could not differentiate between the ethics and literature and consequently failed to provide sufficient vigour to his works. Finally, the novels of that age considered the spread of growing nationalism in Bengal as their primary aim and the novelists could not do justice to the common people and their modes of living.

Novel is a specific form of literature and has become well recognised in the modern age. This does not, however, indicate the non-existence of any diversity of methods and manners in novels. Similarly all the novels do not create the equal reaction in the minds of their readers. Very often it is confused with the fiction and the two are considered as interchangeable or synonymous. In
fact, they are not such. The fictions are stories and so long the authors were telling stories they were fictions. In that sense it is the predecessor of the novels. The latter emerged as an unique literary form. The content of the novel is taken from the life of the people. In other words it is a description of life in the shape of a story, written in prose, which is totally or partly ficticious.

The charges levelled by some persons against the novelist as the reporter or propagandist of his materials is not correct. Neither they can possibly be called the photographers of real life and 'producing uninspired copy of unselected materials'. The detail of life which is given by the author is sometimes moulded according to the requirement of the plot. But in no case it is very far from reality. Some people consider the plot and a love episode as the two essential features of novel but there are many successful novels without them. There is no sense in insisting upon these features. Majority of the novels, of course, have these features but that does not make them essential for any novel. The portrayal of life, however, is a must and no fiction can be called a novel in the absence of the picture of real life. Apart from this there should be some logical relationships between the different parts of novel resulting either from the plot, the intention, or the attitude of the writer.

The novel cannot be defined easily but one can know a great deal about it. Various attempts have been made in the past to define it in a satisfactory manner but none of them could satisfy all the requirements. According to Lubbock, "The novel is a picture of life, and life is well known to us, but let us first of all realise it, and then using our taste, let us judge whether it is true, vivid, convincing like life, in fact." "The novel", write Muir and Ward, "If it be any thing, is contemporary history, an exact complete reproduction of the social surroundings of the age we live in." "The novel according to Scott-James, "Is an art because is exhibits something which the artist believes to be like
life, or true of life (not excluding the marvellous or the fantastic), and because he puts together these elements in an intelligible external form for no other purpose than to enable us to see what he has seen and to derive pleasure from it." They have also said, "The novel has been made a vehicle for the teaching of history the advocacy of the causes, the showing up of the abuses, and initiation in the secrets of sex." In English literature, "Feilding's off hand definition, 'A comic epic prose', is of course much too narrow in one direction, while Clara Reeve's it is written, is too narrow in another. There are other early efforts at a man. Professor Warren's statement, 'A novel is a fictious narrative which contains a plot, is dogmatic, and seems officially to ignore the general assumption that the novel has to be a portrayal of human life."

The novelist has to give the picture of the real life situation and it is the most important and perhaps the unavoidable item of his novel. Inspite of the drawbacks and failures, the novel as a form of literature acquaints us with the different types of people and their values. It often points out to the fact that reality is not that what we know from our conventional education. Sometimes the novel deals with the facts but most of the time the author deals with the things which are presented life facts by him. The purpose of the author is mainly to reproduce the contemporary society and not to create a new world in the minds of the readers. He should not however tell any such story which is not worthy to telling". A story must be worth the telling, that a good deal of life is not worth any such thing, and that they must not occupy the reader's time with what he can get at first hand anywhere about him. The picture must be worth making, the story worth telling, and what makes them worthwhile is precisely the pattern or the inscape." The experiences of the novelist about the world supplies him the materials for his novel, and the novelist interprets the real world around us. He may write the novel for one or more like the
development of the right conduct, to remove or expose the social evils, to
reform the characteristics of the age, or to simply provide entertainment to
his readers but whatever may be the reason he works out a model of life as
he observes or experiences it. His conclusions about the life of the individuals
are exposed in the characters he introduces in his novel. Apart from this the
novelist is motivated by the pleasure of his own creation. Like a child the
novelist plays with his characters. In other words, the choice of the characters
is to a great extent determined by the personality of the novelist and because
of this factory the characters invented by a particular author in his successive
novels bear much similarities. The novelist, therefore, in every case, presents
his own view about the life.

"The Novel", writes Walter Allen, "emerged from the under world of taste and
its development has been conditioned by this." In the words of Burghum, "It
is not the only single literary form to compete for popularity with the film and
radio; it is the only way in which, by consensus of critical opinion, a great
deal of distinguished work is produced. The number of good novelists today
is certainly larger than that of good dramatists and poets. The publication
of novel by Thomas Mann or John Steinbeck arouses the same sort of response
as was awakened at the restoration, by a new comedy of Dryden or Congreve
or in the Victorian period by a new volume of Tennyson's poems. It is an
important cultural event. Poetry, which had been for over twenty five centuries
the most significant literary form is of negligible public interest today. The
present century may be in error in rejecting so august a tradition, but the facts
are clear. Fiction has obviously superseded poetry as the literary form of
great prestige."

Novel originated out of the interest of men and women for their fellow men
and women." Contemporary novels are the mirror of the age, but a very special kind of mirror, a mirror that reflects not merely the external features of the age but also its inner face, its nervous system, the coursing of its blood and unconscious promptings and conflicts which sway it." It is concerned with the actions, events and objects of human life. In its own style every novel deals with some of the problems and a certain view of life. "Like the drama, the novel is concerned directly with life, with men and women, and their relationships, with the thoughts and feelings, the passions and motives by which they are governed and impelled with their joys and sorrows, their struggles, successors and failures. Since, then, the novelist's theme is life, in one or several of its innumerable aspects, it is impossible for him not to give expressly or by implication some suggestion at least, if nothing more than a suggestion, of the impression which life makes upon him. Every novel, on matter how trivial, may be said to rest upon a certain view of the world, to incorporate or cannot various general principles and thus to present a rough general philosophy of life."

The Marxists have made a distinction between the epic and the novel and claim that novel is the epic art form of modern bourgeois society. Novel could not have been written in the same social situation marked in the epic. The epic shows a particular balance between the characters which no more exists. Ralph Fox says, "We can even say that not only is the novel the most typical creation of the bourgeois literature, it is also its greatest creation. It is a new form. It did not exist, except in very rudimentary form, before that modern civilisation which began with the Renaissance and like every new art form it has served its purpose of extending and deepening human consciousness." Novel deals with the individual and his struggle against the society and nature which is the aftermath of the loss of balance between man and society. Robert Liddell has declared the function of the novelist, "To be conveying to the world in
the best chosen languages of the most thorough knowledge about human nature, and the happiest delineation of its varieties. If a novelist is to know the human nature thoroughly, and to think its varieties worth delineating, then his values must be, fundamentally, humanist values."

The novel, as an agency of mass literacy and a form of art, has no scope for accommodating anything unrealistic. "A novel itself is one complex pattern or Gestalt, made up component ones. In it are such a vast number of traits, all organised in subordinate systems that functions under the governance of a single meaningful structure, that the nearest similitude for a novel is a 'world'. This is a useful similitude because it reflects the rich multiplicity of the novel's elements and at the same time the Unity of the novel as a self-defining body. The novel's planetary orbit lies through different minds and different generation of mind, each exerting its special pushes and pulls upon the novel's substance, each interpreting it according the different spiritual constitution of each." The novelist has to honour the sentiment of his time and society. Consequently, the novels of the different epochs reveal district characteristics. In 1920s the novelists of Bengal, like Sarat Chandra, was influenced by the decaying village society and unsatisfactory status of women in the society. Almost during the same period the enthusiasm for the liberation of the country from the British domination also provided sufficient raw materials to the novelists. Bankim Chandra's 'Anand Math' was the first expression of the patriotic sentiment. Sarat Chandra's 'Pather Dabi' was no less significant in this matter. Rabindra Nath also could not escape from that influence. One of his popular novels 'Char Adhaya', like 'Pather Dabi' of Sarat Chandra, deals with the spirit of anarchism which appeared in the national freedom movement during the period. That was period of diverse problems but their nature was mainly intellectual. Due to the fusion of the ideas of East and West major transformation in the real of thought was
going on in this country. Rabindra Nath attempted to solve the problem arising out of the transition of culture during his own way. The Bengali literature was, however, fortunate to get a genius like Bankim during this period of transition. In his novels the idealism of the past and the prediction about the future are distinctly marked. He pointed out to the various evils within the Bengali society and ventured to analyse sympathetically the conditions of those oppressed classes of people in that society.

In the period after Rabindra Nath and Bankim and Sarat Chandra, the Bengali novels were affected by the World War, the national freedom movement, the fierce famin, the communal riot, achievement of independence, partition of the country, problem of the refugees, and the problem of unemployment. The diversities in Bengali novels increased and quite a number of Bengali novelists showed inquisitiveness about the tribal people viz; the Santhals, the Nagas, and the nomadic tribes. Others wrote about the distant countries like U.S.A., Burma, and the life in Andaman or the smaller islands in the Bay of Bengal. In short they included all the different sections of the people, the literature and illiterate, the lover and the trader, the saint and the householder, the rich and the poor, the ruralite and the Urbanite and the people belonging to the upper, middle and lower classes in the society.

Novels are more concerned with the reactions of the people towards the social order and give us an idea about the human nature, their pleasant and sublime sensations, as well as the thoughtful deliberations. The deep seated emotions of the human beings appear on the surface in appropriate social situations. Society is full of conflicts and contradictions. Novels aim at knowing the reactions of human mind toward them. When the crisis comes in society, the literary inspirations get new outlets but the crisis itself is not the subject matter of
novels rather they are concerned with the people who faces the crisis. The social problems are very much useful for the novels because they make the inner story of human life brighter.

Novels are connected with the social values. The values originate within the society with an intention for protect it, and they change with the time and situation. Divorce, for example, was a taboo in our society even in near past but now it is considered essential for the protection of married couple against the exploitation of one by the other. It is, therefore, incorrect to think that values will not have any position, however indirect it may be, in the novels. Moreover, the novels are also influenced by the individual values of the author which may be corollaries to the social values. The sensitivity toward the traditional values of our society has declined considerably during the current century as a result of increasing contradictions and westernisation. The Western impact and the doctrine of individual freedom which resulted out of it, has brought the question of the relationship between man and his society in the forefront. The question of dominance of one over the other has drawn the attention of the people. One opinion says that the growing individualism in this century has placed the individual over the society and it is not obligatory now for the novels to limit themselves within the social values. The other opinion says that however feasible the society might have become it is still having a value system and total abolition of value means destruction of the social order. In the absence of social value system the novel probably has no existence.

The novel may also be considered as the most democratic form of literature. It is democratic in the sense that it has the capacity to unfold all the external features and internal feelings of the different social classes without any reservation. Both the novelette, written on some social problem, and the epic novel, based
on the eternal enquiries of human life or the history of social life. Novel is the most powerful medium of objective analysis and novelists have always tried to find out new ways and means to make the analysis more effective and as a result many changes have occurred in the scope and technique of the novels. With the gradual increase in knowledge man develops new outlook towards life. Romanticism is replaced by reality. In the novels also we mark this transition. The earlier novels were more concerned with the ethical ideas but the trend of the modern novels is different. Secondly, unlike the earlier novels nowadays the novelists attempt a psychological probe into the individual's mind in order to explain the diversities within the society. Finally, the modern novels unlike their earlier counterparts, instead of giving more importance to the need of reformation of the individuals, try to understand life within the society.

In modern Bengali novels, we find the conflict of values because they are getting increasingly oriented to the values of the western society. At times it is shocking to the reader but there is a compromise in the sense that inspire of the differences in values in the different societies and ages the ultimate goal of human heart is same everywhere. If the novel or the novelist can probe into that innermost layer of human heart than the distinction of values can not reduce the worth of the novels. An experiment is going on since a very long period of time in Bengali society regarding the accommodation of western values. Total assimilation has not yet taken place and as such much of confusion have come in. The novels of the novelists must be aware of these critical and contradictory situations.

In Marxian ideas the heredity and biological factors are not given priority in the determination of human actions. It can therefore be called an environmentalistic interpretation of human behaviour. The Marxists trace the sources of motiva
in social organisation instead of the individual's organism. More specially, they believe that the motive forces originate from the economic system and the thought as well as the actions of the individuals are conditions accordingly. The different motives, essentially conflicting, and the course of history is determined by the struggle for power among these groups.

The real interests of a person or class, was recognised by Marx as different from the perceived interest. It is similar to the Freudian idea of unconscious and conscious motives. The Marxists, like the Freudians, emphasise upon the real and perceived interests. Marx cited the instance of the white collar workers in the factory. The real interest of this class of people is in fact similar to the factory workers. But they, due to their social and occupational positions, often betray their class interest and side with the employers.

According to the Marxists, therefore, the basic economic facts are the determinants of all beliefs, thoughts, philosophies, literature, arts, and the like and reflect the position of the individuals in their class structure. The ideologies are the mere reflections of class interest and are not identical with the Freudian idea of rationalisation.

The attraction for the opposite sex has only one real foundation and that is sexual desire and the aim-inhabited love relationship is nothing but a reinforcement adopted by the civilised society to put a barrier against the aggressive instincts of men. Man wants woman in the most primitive manner. No amount of sophistication can replace the primitive urge of man for women.

The unconditional surrender of romanticism to the reality reminds us of the Freudian concept of 'pleasure principle' and its clash with reality principle.
### TABLE 3

**A STRUCTURAL / CONTEXTUAL STUDY OF THE NOVELS BEARING THE FREUDIAN AND MARXIAN ANALYSIS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME OF THE AUTHOR AND NOVEL</th>
<th>DOMINANT TRAITS IN CHARACTERS</th>
<th>ASSORTED TREATMENT CONSISTENT WITH THE FREUDIAN AND MARXIAN IDEOLOGIES IN THE NOVELS.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Madame Bovary by Flaubert</td>
<td>Mother-Son relationship with Léon, Somewhat like an Oedipus complex.</td>
<td>In this relationship it is Emma who is the more, active partner, while Léon meekly accepts the gifts that Emma showers on him.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>With Rodolphe Emma seems to have the Electra complex.</td>
<td>With Rodolphe, Emma is the student while Rodolphe the dominant partner — the virile Sub-Byronic man.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>With Charles too, Emma is the dominant partner — as if she is the man.</td>
<td><em>After the wedding night Charles seemed a different man where as the bride gave not a hint of anything to anybody.</em> (P.23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bishabriksha</strong> by <strong>Bankim</strong></td>
<td>Emma a peasant's daughter refuses to accept her class and tries to rise above her surroundings.</td>
<td>She demands a better life — some peasants looking through the window pane at Vaubyessard reminds her of her class origins.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
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<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hira the maid servant whom Debendra uses goes mad, but curses him that he would not get whom he desired.</td>
<td>Bankim gives a Marxian angle for Hira states that Debendra had unjustly used her emotionally and demands as a true feminist why had he ruined her?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kundanandini the hapless widow whom Nagendra marries, in her death pangs demands of Nagendra — <em>for what fault of mine did you leave me?</em></td>
<td>This is an obvious instance of subaltern subversion when Kunda dies leaving Nagendra speech less for an answer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Suryamukhi the wronged wife leaves the house not willing to share her husband with another woman and live in the same house with her</td>
<td>Much like a Marxist - feminist ideologue Suryamukhi refuses to accept patriarchal codes and leaves Nagendra.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rajani by Bankim</td>
<td>Labanga does not admit any weakness on her part for Amarnath in this life. <em>You are none to me in this world. But if there is life beyond....</em></td>
<td>Labanga's subversive sentence reveals her inner want to authenticate her real love for a former admirer. The sentence leaves a lee way for further speculation that if she got a chance in her life Labanga just might authenticate her love for Amarnath. In the nineteenth century when devoted wives were expected to desire their husbands for the next seven lives to come, Labanga's utterance marks a modern note.</td>
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The Freudians believe, "A frigid woman either has no sexual urge at all or she is unable to get her satisfaction from cohabitation; the latter condition can be more exasperating as it is often accompanied by a strong sexual desire. Frigidity is always a neurotic symptom and as such it is sub-consciously arranged by the woman. It has a meaning and purpose in the pattern of woman's life. In short, frigidity is an insidious 'secret' weapon in the sex warfare the woman's struggle against her sense of inferiority and against the assumed superiority of her partner." This also indicates that in the female the sexuality is a psychological phenomenon. It is dependent upon a partner in the sense that sexuality in the female remains dormant until it is awakened by a male.

The character of Sita that for a woman to produce a child means 'creation in the truest sense, enriching the world materially'. The procreating function is the base from which the feminine character springs.

The Freudians claim that the differences between the male and female psychology can be explained on the basis of their sex difference and the attraction which one feels for the other is just a natural outcome of sex impulse. The following table (Table 3) presents the content analysis of some of the novels on the trends discussed above.

The story of the Durgeshnandini has its origins in the legends associated with a ruined castle which Bankim had heard about in his child-hood. Some of the characters are historical, but the work is a romance, a love story, set against the background of sixteenth-century Bengal during the confrontation between the Pathans and the Mughals. Durgeshnandini appeared to bengali readers as something exotic and marvellous mainly because of its dramatic
beginning and swift movement, both something new in the Indian narrative tradition.

*It was nearing the end of summer in the Bengali year 997. A lone horseman was travelling on the road from Bishnupur to Mandaran. The sun was going down on the horizon. Looking at it, he spurred his horse on a gallop. There were wide open spaces ahead. There was a possibility of thunderstorm, as it was wont during that time of the day, in case he got caught in one, being without shelter he would be faced with enormous hardship. No sooner had he crossed the open spaces than the sun went down. As time passed by, the sky became enveloped in dark blue clouds. So intense was the darkness in the very early hours of the night, that he found it extremely difficult to maintain a steady course. Lit by lightning the path was just visible to the traveller who somehow managed to move along it.*

This is now Durgeshnandini begins. Considering the enthusiasm it generated among Bengali readers in the mid-nineteenth century the observation of a Bengali critic that Bengali novel emerged on the road from Bishnupur to Mandaran seems very apposite. Jagat Singh, the hero of the novel, is lost in a thunderstorm, arrives at a temple, finds its door closed, knocks and finally breaks the door open only to find two beautiful women inside the temple. An introductory chapter such as this may appear too predictably melodramatic to the modern reader. But the nineteenth-century Bengali, tired of Sanskrit and Persian romances and of their cheap imitations, found it thrilling in an altogether new mode. The historical background of the novel is provided by the upsurge of the Pathan ruler Katlu Khan against the Mughal emperor Akbar. Man Singh, the Mughal general, sends his son Jagat to quell the rebels. On his way to Mandaran he meets Tilottama, the daughter of Birendra Singha, the chieftain of the castle of Mandaran, and falls in love with her at first sight. In a brief and straightforward
conversation between Jagat and Tilottama or rather Bimla, wife of Birendra, who poses as her attendant, Bankim delineates the dawning of the first love.

In a battle between the Pathan and the Mughal army, Jagat is seriously wounded and taken captive by Osman, a brave and gentle Pathan general. In the enemy tent Jagat receives good treatment. Ayesha, the beautiful daughter of Katlu Khan, nurses him and eventually falls in love with him. But Jagat, who is in love with Tilottama, gently refuses Ayesha—whose love for the captive arouses the jealousy of Osman. He challenges Jagat to a duel but is defeated.

The subplots and episodes centering around Birendra and Bimala are equally action-packed. The identity of Bimala is kept a heavily guarded secret, and only towards the end is it dramatically revealed. The struggle for power between the Pathans and the Mughals, too, has been deftly exploited by Bankim in creating a distinct rhythm into which have merged all the subplots: triangular love between Jagat, Osman and Ayesha; the complex relations between Birendra and Bimala and the ascetic Abhiram; the episode of Katlu Khan's execution of Birendra for his rebellion against the Pathans and Bimala's retribution. The story ends in a reunion between Jagat and Tilottama, but it is the frustrated Ayesha who adds a new dimension to an otherwise insipid denouement. Ayesha decides to kill herself, a decision seemingly normal, but finally resists the temptation and accepts her suffering with dignity and determination.

It was still night when Ayesha reached her apartments. Having changed her garments she came and stood beside the window through which a cool breeze was blowing. Thousands of stars lit the night sky, which appear softer and bluer than the raiments she had just call off. The leaves murmured as the wind softly touched upon the trees in the dark. An owl hooted on the roof-top.
Just below were the quiet waters of the moat silently reflecting the firmament above.

Ayesha sat besides the window for a long time, deep in thought. She slowly removed a ring from her finger. It contained poison. For a moment she thought, "I could quench all my thirst by drinking it". Then she asked, "was it for this that God sent me into this world? Why was I born a woman, if I cannot endure suffering?"

She replaced the ring. Again she removed it. She thought, "It is impossible for a woman to resist this temptation. It is best to remove it completely." With this, she cast the ring into the waters below.

If the beginning of Durgeshnandini with its dramatic opening is an innovation in Indian fiction, its tragic and yet life-affirming conclusion makes it even more significant.

Those who were familiar with English literature immediately realized the deeper affinity between Durgeshnandini and European romance, not just an external resemblance analysable in terms of plot and episode and chapter but a resemblance in mood and spirit. Soon after the publication of Durgeshnandini some critics charged Bankim with plagiarism, noticing its similarities with Walter Scott’s Ivanhoe.

When asked, Bankim said that he had not read Ivanhoe before writing Durgeshnandini. His friends thought his honesty unimpeachable, but since then, this charge has been repeated almost parrot-like.
Ivanhoe deals with an episode of twelfth-century England, a period of confusion and oppression when hostilities between Saxons and Normans still lingered. Durgeshnandanini is set against the background of the Pathan and Mughal conflicts in sixteenth-century Bengal. Despite this parallel, the plan and policy of the two writers are entirely different. Scott was more keen to portray, as Lukacs points out, 'the struggles and antagonism of history by means of characters who in their psychology and destiny always represent social trends and historical forces', but Bankim was hardly interested in representing social trends and historical forces. Durgeshnandanini does not represent any 'living human embodiment of historical social types' which according to Lukacs, is the secret of Scott's greatness, nor does it contain any reference to the forces changing and shaping the destiny of the people of that particular period. The two works are thus radically different.

The similarities are to be found at a more superficial level—for example, in themes of confrontation involving several political and religious groups: Mughals and Pathans and Hindus in one, and Normans, Saxons and Jews in the other. Both novels centre round a feudal social system with all its romantic associations. But Durgeshnandanini touches the problems of racial conflicts casually and marginally while Ivanhoe carefully exploits the situations arising out of the cultural differences between Normans and Saxons and Jews. Both novels recreate the past with some detail, there are tyrannical kings—John and Katlu Khan, as there are noble and chivalrous soldiers—Kind Richard and jagat Singh. Both Ivanhoe and Jagat Singh fulfil the requirements of a feudal order, both are brave and handsome, noble and humane, both are injured in battle and imprisoned in a castle, both are nursed by women who love them but whom they do not love. Again both the novels have co-heroes—Bois Guilbert and Osman, one a Norman and the other a Pathan. The most striking similarity...
is in the characters of Rebecca and Ayesha, as well as those of Rowena and Tilottama. Rowena and Tilottama, the heroines of the novels, are both beautiful and of noble lineage, but both weak and fragile as characters.

These similarities are not insignificant. But they do not deny the orginality of Durgeshnandini. The novel in India was born out of a tension between Western fiction and native traditions. Cowell described Durgeshnandini as the 'first attempt to transplant into India our own (i.e. Western) historical novel. He, however, did not realize that though the historical romance introduced by Bankim drew its inspiration from the West, it was also a product born out of the emotional requirements of the nineteenth century. Whether Bankim had read Ivanhoe before writing Durgeshnandini will long be debated and will continue to fascinate experts interested in the phenomenon of literary influence across languages, but the most important point is that Bankim, through his acquaintance with English literature, created a new genre which gave Bengal a new form of writing that it had been struggling to create.

Strictly speaking Durgeshnandini was not conceived as a historical novel, and Bankim never claimed that category for it. Jadunath Sarkar, in a scholarly introduction to this book, has observed that Bankim collected much of his material from Charles Stewart's History of Bengal and from Captain Alexander Dow's imperfect translation of a Persian work. Sarkar accepts Durgeshnandini as a historical novel because, as he argues, Bankim succeeded in creating the atmosphere of a particular period of history even though the novel contains some incorrect information. Perhaps Sarkar is right. If we make our definition of the historical novel too rigorous and insist on the correctness of every piece of information and on the authenticity of every one of the incidents, hardly any writing would qualify. A historical novel is a novel within a historical framework,
and not a factual historical account written in the form of a novel. What is important is not just correctness of information, though this is important, but the authenticity of the atmosphere of a given period and the probability of the action. In this sense *Durgeshnaandini* may be described as a historical novel. Such labels, of course, describe only the external features of a work of art and not its inner texture and deeper concerns. Bankim used historical material to create an illusion of a twilight zone where history and romance mingled freely. He did not intend to write a historical novel as such. He had more important reasons for using the framework of a historical romance.

Bengalis of the nineteenth century became familiar with the theme of pre-marital love in English literature. Sanskrit literature, of course, abounds in this theme but was too remote from contemporary life, wherein pre-marital love was nearly impossible. When the normal marriageable age of girls was five or six and of boys ten—Bankim himself was married at the age of eleven—pre-marital romance was absurd. It was the historical romance which provided scope for dealing with youthful and pre-marital life. It was a compromise, between what did not exist in life but what was possible in life. Nirad C. Chaudhuri, in *A Passage to England*, very rightly points out, "We in Bengal began to deal with love from the literature from English literature, and then taken over from literature to life." It may sound absurd that the idea of love came from literature into life, but so far as the pre-marital love is concerned it is true none the less.

Marriage was strictly utilitarian in Hindu society and love was secondary to marriage. The medieval Vaishnava lyrics sing of the tragic love of Radha. Radha's love for Krishna is immoral because it is extra-marital. The Hindu society tolerated such lyrics because of their theological framework which sanctified
them; the participants in the love are divinities, not mortals, and their actions defended as allegories. No other poetry, except the folk poetry, dealt with human love. European literature appeared as a great contrast against this background. It was a new experience for the English-educated Bengalis. They also wanted to recreate that experience in their own literature and found historical romance the most suitable instrument for it. Bengali historical romances are 'historical' only at their surface level, but in their deeper levels anachronistic, as they reflected contemporary emotional tensions rather than a historical past. When Ayesha declared with a flourish, pointing to Jagat, "This captive is the lord of my life", Bengali readers were thunderstruck by her candour and courage. This is the first voice of a mortal woman in modern Bengali fiction who takes her own decision, makes a choice of her own and consequently owns the responsibility of her decision. Such a woman was yet to emerge in the society. She was born in the imagination of Bankim.

Bankim used the framework of historical romance to express contemporary ideas in a covert form. Later it became a powerful tool for propagation of his religious and social ideas.

Bankim third novel Mrinalini written in 1869 is also a historical romance. But in this novel which takes the conquest of Bengal by Bakhtiyar Khilji in the beginning of the thirteenth century as its theme, Bankim was seriously prompted by historical enquiries. He could never subscribe to the popular belief that Khilji conquered Bengal with the help of seventeen horsemen. But he did not have enough evidence to disprove the current belief either. In Mrinalini he tried to reconstruct the probable circumstances that could have led the victory of the Pathan army and the defeat of Lakshman Sen, the last Hindu Kind of Bengal.
Mrinalini was written at a time when historical research was slowly emerging in Bengal. The European orientalists not only vindicated the Indian pride in their past by rediscovering the glory that was India, but gave Indian intellectuals an impetus for the study of Indian history. Rejendralal Mitra's Sivaji (1860) and Kings of Mewar (1861) are an evidence of Indian interest in historical characters which soon became national hero. The young intellectuals of this period considered study of history important not for intellectual enlightenment alone but more for their emotional requirement. Indian patriotism, including Bankim's was nourished by the Indian pride for the past which was primarily a Hindu past.

Bankim was born at a time when history was written by men of perception and of great literary ability. These historians were interested in the prose and poetry of the lost time and had the imagination to recreate the past. It was long before Bury claimed that history was "science, no more and no less". It was the time of "literary history" when books of Macaulay and Carlyle were as popular as novels. "History after all is the true poetry", wrote Carlyle. He claimed, "reality, if rightly interpreted is grander than fiction, may even in the right interpretation of Reality and History, does genuine poetry lie...." Such a view of history may not be welcomed by the modern historians, it inspired none the less writers and poets and dramatists of the last century and historical novel reached a spectacular height not only in Indian languages but in Europe as well. G.M. Trevelyan, one of the strong advocates of 'literary history', once wrote that, "in the matter of reality there is no difference between drops off and is swallowed up into the poetic past". Bankim was nurtured in this atmosphere of 'literary history'. His flight into the past was not an attempt to escape from the prosaic reality but was an attempt to integrate the past.
with the present. His historical novels project the present in an illusory framework of the past.

In its initial phase of growth, patriotism in Bengal was intimately connected with reactions of the past. Rangalal Banerji's *Padmini Upakhyan* (1858) is the story of the siege of Chitor by Alauddin Khilji who was enamoured of the beauty of Padmini, the queen of Chitor. Apparently it describes a confrontation between a Muslim kind and a Hindu Rajput chieftain, but its basic framework implies struggle between the invader and the invaded. The Rajput soldiers singing the song of freedom. It was absurd for the Rajput soldier to sing *swadhinata hinatay ke banchite chay he ke banchite chay* (who wants to live without freedom), a song inspired by Thomas Moore's

From life without freedom

Oh, who would not fly?

For one day of freedom

Oh, who would not die?

Similar anachronisms became a regular feature of Bengali historical novels and poems and plays simply because the writers found those forms most congenial for the expressions of contemporary aspirations. The invader-invaded framework employed in Bengali novels and plays in the last century, however, was often misinterpreted resulting in an unfortunate bitterness between the Hindus and the Muslims. The danger was inherent in the framework itself and writers using it exposed themselves to Muslim criticism.

Any evaluation of *Mrinalini*, however, must not be conditioned by Bankim's reaction to the Muslim conquest of Bengal. It has a historical background but the characters of the novel are imaginary. The story invokes the spirit
of a clearly identifiable time, and although it contains a strong element of patriotism, instances of racial hatred are none there. The main theme of the novel, as it is in the earlier novels of Bankim, is love.

*Mrinalini* has two distinct subplots: one dealing with Hemchandra and Mrinalini, and the other with Pashupati and Manorama. Madhabacharya, a brahmin, who still hopes to revive Hindu kingdom in India, sends his disciple Hemchandra, the prince of Magadha, to Delhi to kill Khilji. Hemchandra, however, comes back without completing his mission. He is then asked to go to Nabadwip to help Lakshman Sen, the king of Bengal, who is threatened by an imminent Muslim invasion. On way to Nabadwip Hemchandra wants to meet Mrinalini with whom he is in deep love. His failure to reach the appointed place causes great humiliation to Mrinalini and expulsion from the house she has been living. After a long period of separation she is finally reunited with her lover.

On reaching Nabadwip Hemachandra discovers that the king is totally dependent on his highly ambitious minister Pashupati who has been secretly helping the Muslims to overthrow the king. Pashupati married many years ago but on the very night of his marriage his bride had to leave the city with her father because of some exigency. Since then no trace has been found of his wife, and Pashupati preferred to remain single. He, however, is in love with Manorama, a young widow. Manorama disapproves of his secret pact with the Muslim general and condemns him for his treachery against the king. Pashupati continues to help the Muslims even though he undergoes severe emotional strain caused by Manorama’s repugnance for him. Bankim slowly reveals to the readers that Manorama is actually the lost bride of Pashupati though both of them are ignorant of that fact. Despite Manorama's pleadings, Pashupati helps the Muslim army to enter the city of Nabadwip to fulfil his long-cherished ambition.
to become the king of Bengal. But the moment Khilji overthrows Lakshman Sen, he also insists that Pashupati must embrace Islam before he is coronated. The new condition imposed by Khilji brings Pashupati to senses with a rude shock. Being apprehensive of his intentions, Khilji puts him into the prison and that very night the city of Nabadwip is sacked and plundered by his army. Pashupati manages to escape from the prison and enters the city to rescue Manorama.

... at every step he stumbled over a dead body, at every step he splashed over blood-soaked slushy mud. He found houses on either side of the roads deserted, some burnt to ashes, some still in flames, their doors broken, windows smashed, streets littered with corpses. He could hear piteous cries for help from people still struggling for life. "I am the cause of this devastation; I deserve death", he thought.

Pashupati reaches Manorama's house only to find it engulfed in blazing fire. He raves like a mad animal and enters into the temple and shouts at the image of the goddess in wild rage till the temple begins to crumble. He drops down senseless amidst fire and smoke.

Bankim has grafted the story of Pashupati and Manorama with that of Hemachandra and Mrinalini with considerable success and has been able to create sustained interest in the development of the story against a tumultuous period of historical change.

Mrinalini, the heroine of the novel, is very similar to Tilottama of Durgeshnandini, though she is a slight improvement on her. She belongs to that class of sacrificing characters whom Bankim observed in the novels of Jane Austen, who suffer
silently and nobly for their lovers. Girijaya, the attendant of Mrinalini, retains some of the qualities of Bimala. The most important character in the novel, however, is Manorama whom one critic describes as the Mona Lisa of literature. She is enigmatic in nature: now playful and childlike, and then suddenly earnest and grave. Almost like Euripides's Iphigenia she changes swiftly from one realm of experience to another. But there is no chronological change in her: the youth and the age, playful innocence and worldly wisdom both reside in her person simultaneously. She is indeed a girl and woman rolled into one. She attracts and fascinates but eludes and mystifies all logic and understanding.

Manorama is the long lost wife of Pashupati but none of them is aware of that. When she comes to know of the secret pact between Pashupati and Khilji to allow the Muslim army to enter the city without any resistance, she tells him, "You win the kingdom, you lose me.... How can I love a traitor." But Manorama has not been presented as a patriot of any kind. And yet her rebuke to Pashupati is more than a lover's complaint. It is the nineteenth-century Indian patriot speaking through her on a low key.

Manorama's relation with Pashupati has even more contemporary significance when one takes note of the fact that she has been introduced as a widow in the story. Her love for Pashupati is immoral according to the codes of Hindu society. Bankim's own attitude towards Vidyasagar who launched the widow remarriage movement in 1856 was clearly ambivalent. In an article published in 1872 Bankim wrote very critically against Vidyasagar that it was inhuman to deny a widow the right to remarry when the same right is granted to a widower. But in the heart of heart Bankim never approved of widow remarriage. His innate conservatism stood like a rock. In Mrinalini Bankim presents the issue in the form of a debate between Hemchandra and Manorama. One can
very well see how Bankim is chained around the rock of conventional morality and yet how much he desires to be free from it.

Hemchandra like a typical protagonist of Bankim's time speaks eloquently to Manoroma: "Chastity is the greatest virtue for women.... Being a widow you shouldn't think of any one. If you do so you are condemned for ever, not only in this life but also in the next. If you happen to love someone, forget him." Like Romeo when asked by Benvolio, "Be rul'd by me, forget to think of her", Manoroma replies almost in the same language, "O teach me how I should forget to think." Hemchandra admits the power of love but at the same time declares priggishly, "one must sacrifice love for the sake of dharma and what dharma is not. I am possessed. I only know that there cannot be love without dharma." The debate between Hemchandra and Manoroma is actually a manifestation of Bankim's own dilemma. He does not know which side is to be defended, love or dharma. That Manoroma is actually the lost wife of Pashupati is but a mere contrivance and concession to contemporary social sensibilities. Hemchandra's pontifications sound hollow and feeble in the face of Manoroma's outburst.

From now begins a new life of Bankim. All major characters created by Bankim are torn between their individual passion and social authority, between love and dharma. Mrinalini is the first work of Bankim where this tension between an artist and a social thinker surfaced so clearly. We do not know enough facts of Bankim's life to understand the cause of this tension. Perhaps we will never know Bankim the man, perhaps it is impossible to know why Bankim was haunted by this particular theme, but his novels unmistakably show that Bankim, like Manoroma, realized that conventions were but straws against the rushing wave that love is. All of his characters at some time or the other
passionately felt.

Let Rome in Tiber melt, and the wide arch

Of the rag'd empire fall. Here is my space.

Dante, possessed by Beatrice's love, declared: *Incipit vita nova. Ecce deus fortior me, qui veniens dominabatur mini*—(from today) begins a new life. Look this god is mightier than me, he has dominated me. Bankim could have said, "This god is mightier than me, but dharma is greater than this god."

Around July 1980 Bankim started writing *Ananda Math* which was first serialized in *Bangadarshan* and only after substantial changes it was published as a book in December 1882. Like his previous four novels, *Ananda Math*, too, has a complicated theme of love, of temptation and of atonement; but its dominating note is patriotism and revolt. This is the first novel of Bankim in which one finds a prologue which sets the high serious tone of the novel.

A wide interminable forest. Most of the trees are sals, but other kinds are not wanting. Treetop mingling with treetop, foliage melting into foliage, the interminable lines progress, without crevice, without gap, without even a way for the light to enter, league after league and again after league the boundless ocean of leaves advances, tossing wave upon wave in the wind. Underneath thick darkness, even at midday the light is dim and uncertain; a scat of terrific gloom. There the foot of man never treads, there, except the illimitable rustle of the leaves and the cry of wild beasts and birds, no sound is heard.

In this interminable, impenetrable wilderness of blind gloom, it is night. The hour is midnight, and a very dark midnight; even outside the woodland it is dark and nothing can be seen. Within the forest the piles of gloom
are like the darkness in the womb of the earth itself.

Birds and beasts are utterly and motionlessly still. What hundreds of thousands, what millions of birds, beasts, insects, flying things have their dwelling within that forest. But not one is giving forth a sound. Rather the darkness is within the imagination; but inconceivable is that noiseless stillness of the ever-murmurous, ever noisefilled earth. In that limitless empty forest, in the solid darkness of that midnight, in that unimaginable silence, there was a sound: 'Shall the desire of my heart ever be fulfilled?'

After that sound the forest reaches sank again into stillness. Who would have said then that a human sound had ever been heard in those wilds? A little while after, the sound came again, again the voice of man rang forth troubling the hush: 'Shall the desire of my heart ever be fulfilled?'

Three times the wide sea of darkness was thus shaken. Then the answer came:

'What is the stake put down?'
The first voice replied, 'I have staked my life and all its riches.' The echo answered, 'Life! it is a small thing which all can sacrifice.'

'What else is there? What more can I gave?'
This was the answer, 'Thy soul's worship.'

Although this prologue does not have any nexus with the plot, it adds to the meaning of the text and focuses on the distinctive feature of Bankim's patriotism, which is not only free from racial hatred and enhancement of prosperity of one's own country at the cost of others', but a manifestation of one's love for mankind and God.
Ananda Math, though based on certain historical events is not a historical novel. The dreadful famine of 1770, in which one-third of Bengal's population had perished, forms the background to the story. Bankim collected most of his material from Hunter's The Annals of Rural Bengal (1868). The first chapter of the novel, for example, recreates the horrors of the famine on the basis of materials given in these few lines in Hunter's.

All though the stifling summer of 1770 the people went on dying. The husbandman sold their cattle, they sold their implements of agriculture, they devoured their seed-grain, they sold their sons and daughters, till at length no buyer of children could be found, they ate the leaves of trees and the grass of the field, and in June 1770 the Resident at the Durbar affirmed that the living were feeding on the dead. Day and night a torrent of famished and disease-stricken wretches poured into great cities.

Bankim's knowledge and imagination worked in perfect balance. The story starts with a sinister note—with the description of the village Padachihna, completely deserted by its inhabitants. 'No wayfarers are to be seen in the highways, no bathers in the lake, no human forms at door and threshold, no birds on the trees, no cattle in the pastures, only the burning ground dogs and jackals crowd.' Bankim slowly focuses on a big mansion, silent and dark, where two inhabitants, a man and wife, are still left. Without even introducing them Bankim goes into the general background of the famine and its causes. Soon he returns to the characters and introduces them as Mahendra, a rich householder, and his wife Kalyani. The whole village is deserted, many have fled to other places in search of food, and many more have already died of hunger and of disease. Mahendra, too, decides to leave the village and go to the city. After walking
miles in the hot summer day, they finally reach an inn which is also completely forlorn. The first chapter thus introduces the general aspect of the famine by its emphasis on depopulation and the ravages caused by it. The 'dehumanizing' atmosphere is further intensified in the next chapter. Mahendra goes out in search of some milk for their baby daughter, leaving behind his wife and child in the lonely inn. Suddenly Kalyani sees something like a shadow, which seemed to her to have the shape of a man, a naked and terrifying, human shape. It lifts its finger summoning to someone outside. Then just such another shadow comes in and then comes another and yet another. These spectre-like figures, who are robbers, carry Kalyani and her daughter into the forest. They take her gold ornaments and divide the booty. But they are hardly satisfied with the loot. They are as hungry as any one else in the famine-stricken village. They refuse to accept gold or silver. What they want is rice. The leader tries to pacify them but their voices soar high, they start abusing him and kill him. Then in their madness they decide to eat the dead man's flesh. 'Those spectre-like emaciated dark figures started laughing hysterically, clapping their hands and dancing with delicious joy.'

Taking advantage of this diversion, Kalyani escapes from the forest and is finally rescued by Satyananda, an ascetic, who takes her and the child to a monastery in the heart of the forest. The ascetic is the leader of the Vaishnav Army, consisting of devoted youngmen dedicated to the cause of rescuing the country from political anarchy. Bankim, however, keeps his readers in suspense and does not disclose the identity of the ascetic but only reveals that the followers of this ascetic are also 'robbers'. One of them says, 'Who is not a robber today? All the peasants of the village have turned into robbers because of hunger.'
The first six chapters of the novel are constructed with great skill depicting the horror and pathos of the great famine, introducing characters one by one, though not identifying them clearly, and maintaining a suspense throughout the narrative. Along with it Bankim also maintains a contrast between the horror of famine and the beauty and freshness of nature. It is a contrast between the 'dehumanization' on the one hand and the lively nature on the other. The locale of the story which has been chosen very carefully seeks to emphasize this aspect. Kalyani leaves a depopulated village, reaches a bandit-infested place near a forest, and again finds human love and affection in a monastery. Bankim goes back to history in the seventh chapter and gives a matter-of-fact account of the political anarchy in Bengal and its effect on the life of the people. The facts provided by him in this chapter are collected from authentic sources but he is not primarily interested in facts; he integrates them with his imagination to create an atmosphere where facts and fiction mingle freely.

Mahendra comes back to the inn, but finding it totally deserted, he starts looking for his wife and daughter, and proceeds towards the city. On his way he finds a heavily-guarded fleet of bullock-carts, carrying taxes, paid in cash and kind, to the treasury of the East India Company in Calcutta. The guards mistake Mahendra for a dacoit and arrest him. After a while they arrest another man, Bhabananda, a disciple of the ascetic. Bhabananda, however, tears himself free and unties Mahendra too. Then suddenly the guards are ambushed by Bhabananda's companions who kill the British officers and a number of guards, and loot the boxes containing money and foodgrains. Mahendra is puzzled by their manner and style of operation but feels both admiration and repugnance for this group of dacoits. He is told by Bhabananda that his family is safe and if he wants to meet his wife he may follow him. Unwillingly, Mahendra follows him, all the time thinking, 'what kind of dacoits are they?'
it is a full-moon night. As they travel across the field, Mahendra notices a change in Bhabananda who tries to be friendly and to initiate a conversation. But Mahendra decides to keep quiet as if to rebuke the dacoit. So Bhabananda begins to sing to himself:

"Vande Mataram
Mother I bow to thee
Rich with thy hurrying streams
Bright with thy orchards gleam
Cool with thy winds of delight
Dark fields waving, Mother of might
Mother free.

Mahendra had never heard such a song. He wondered at the meaning of the song and asked, 'Who is Mother?' Bhabananda did not reply but continued to sing:

Glory of moon-light dreams
Over thy branches and lordly streams
Clad in thy blossoming trees,
Mother, giver of ease
Laughing low and sweet
Mother, I kiss thy feet
Speaker sweet and low
Mother to thee I bow.

Mahendra said, 'This is country, this is not Mother.' Bhabananda replied, 'We know of no other mother. Motherland is superior to heaven. We have neither mothers nor fathers, neither brothers nor friends, neither wives nor children.'
neither any home nor any land. We have only one mother—richly-watered, richly-ruited, cooled by breeze and green with fields.

Mahendra understood and said, 'I understand. Please sing again'.
Bhabananda sang the song.
Mahendra watched that the bandit was in tears while singing the song.
'Who are you?' asked Mahendra.
'We are her santan (children),' replied Bhabananda.
'Whose children?'
'We are the children of Mother.'
'Do children commit theft and robbery to worship Mother?'
'We do not steal or rob.'
'But you have just looted a carriage.'
'Is that robbery? Whose wealth did we rob?'
'Why, the king's.'
'But the king must have his portion.'
'The king who does not protect his subjects is no king.'
'You will one day be blown away by the guns of the sepoys.'
'You cannot die more than once.'

Mahendra, overwhelmed by the passionate words of Bhabananda, feels inclined to join the santans but realizes that he cannot do so unless he shuns his moorings with his family. At present he is too eager to meet his wife and daughter.

Mahendra is led into the forest in the 'Ananda Math' (the Abbey of Bliss) where he meets Satyananda, the leader, who takes him inside the temple. There Mahendra finds an image of a mother-goddess—a beautiful, shapely, bejewelled image of Jagaddhatri—in a chamber. Mahendra asks, 'Who is she?' The ascetic
explains, 'Mother What once she was.' Then Mahendra is led into another chamber where he finds an image of the dark and dreadful Kali. The ascetic exclaims, 'Look, what the mother has come to Kali, the dark mother. She is naked because the country is impoverished. The country has now been turned into a cremation ground, so the mother is now garlanded with skulls.' Finally, as Mahendra is led into yet another chamber through a tunnel, 'suddenly the light of the morning sun touches their eyes. Sweet songs of birds are heard from all directions. Here they see a golden image of a goddess stretching her ten arms, looking radiant in the tender light of the morning. The ascetic bows down before the image and says, 'There is she, what mother will become.'

Mahendra meets his family but is soon separated from them. The devices used in separating them are rather mechanical and unconvincing, and the narrative shows its first serious flaw. The novelist, however, achieves his threefold purpose. Once Mahendra is separated from Kalyani and gets the impression that she and the child are dead, he decides to join the army of the sanats. Secondly, Bankim introduces Jibananda, an important member of the Sanatan Army. He finds the child beside Kalyani's unconscious body thinks the mother dead, and takes the child, to his sister's house. According to the rules of 'Anand a Math', sanatans are prohibited from meeting their wives until the salvation of the country. But Jibananda meets his wife, Shanti, who has been living with his sister. And this meeting of the husband and wife opens up a new possibility in the story. The third thing accomplished by Bankim is the emergence of another subplot involving Kalyani and Bhabananda, who discovers her body and brings her back to life by administering some herbal medicine. Thus in part one, consisting of eighteen chapters, Bankim lays the foundation of the novel.
The first part of the novel ends with a general account of the rampage of the Sanatan Army, mostly against the Muslims, and its eventual defeat by British forces. The second part shows the preparations made for a bigger attack upon British soldiers. Shanti, wife of Jibananda, is now drawn into the fray and she joins the sanatans. Mahendra, too, is initiated into the sanatan doctrine. He goes back to his village; his house is now turned into an arsenal of the sanatans. This part of the novel gathers momentum and culminates into a tremendous force in the next. Bankim returns to the historical background again and connects the different episodes in the life of individuals with the general events of history. The only thing that mars the high serious tone of the action is the frivolities of Shanti as places, particularly her encounter with Captain Thomas. But an ample compensation comes through a deft handling of the subplot involving Kalyani and Bhabananda. According to the rules violation of spurned by Kalyani he has no other alternative but to die. Sacred vows by a sanatan is death, and Bhabananda's infatuation for Kalyani is such a violation. The silent agony of Bhabananda and the cold refusal of Kalyani, both described with utmost terseness, have a severe beauty.

But Bankim appears to have lost all control over the action in the fourth part of the novel, where he changes his direction without any genuine need from within and the story starts moving awkwardly. The fourth part starts with a description of the frenzy of the santans consequent upon their victory over the British and Muslim soldiers. This could have been the logical end of the novel. But Bankim's attempt to reconcile with the actual historical fact, i.e. the British rule over the country, and the pledges of the santans to fight unto death till the country is freed creates a difficult situation. In the last but one chapter of Ananda Math, one finds Shanti moving in the battleground which looks gruesome under the bright moon of a cold winter night, discovers the
body of her husband, Jibananda. One feels that Bankim could have saved the novel even at this stage. But from nowhere appears a superman-like figure in the person of a physician who resuscitates Jibananda.

An element of mystery has been lurking behind the action throughout the narrative, at times the mystery has almost reached the border of miracles, such as the resuscitation of Kalyani by Bhabananda. Satyananda's movements quite often resemble those of omniscient sleuths in crime-fictions, but the appearance of this strange physician is the height of illogicality, which not only spoils the grandeur of a structure so meticulously built, but effaces the historicity of the action and introduces an irrelevance in the narrative. The last chapter records a grim and pathetic struggle between this supernatural physician who commands Satyananda to surrender, give up the hope of liberation of motherland and welcome the British rule and Satyananda, the leader of the Sanatam Army who refuses to obey him. The peroration of the superman is not without substance but certainly an interpolation in the story. The superman says:

Whatever will happen be for the best. There is no hope of a revival of the true faith if the English do not become the rulers of the country.... The Hindu faith does not consist in the worship of the three hundred and thirty million gods, which is a vulgar form of religion, and the cause of the degeneration of real Hinduism. True Hinduism is based on knowledge and not on Action. Knowledge is of two kinds—external and internal. Internal knowledge constitutes the essential part of Hinduism. But internal knowledge cannot grow without a development of external knowledge. The spiritual cannot be known unless one knows the material. External knowledge has long disappeared from the country and with it has disappeared the true Hinduism. To receive Hinduism to its purity it is necessary to propagate external knowledge. There is no
one in the country capable of doing that. We are not able to do that. The English are well-versed in external knowledge and they are expert teachers too. Therefore, we shall make them kings. English education will impart external knowledge to the people of this country and thus enable them to understand the spiritual knowledge, virtue and strength, British kingdom will remain indestructible.

But even after this long peroration Satyananda asks a question, which every reader of this novel finds pertinent, 'If your intention was to introduce the English rule in the country, and if you think it is beneficial why did you then encourage us in this cruel warfare?' The superman gives a strange reply:

The English are now traders. They are interested only in accumulating wealth and not inclined to accept the responsibility of the administration of the country. But now, because of the sanatan revolt they will be obliged to take on that responsibility... The sanatan revolt will lead to the coronation of the English. Come, now, if you have the true knowledge you will comprehend everything.

This enigmatic admonition fails to convince Satyananda, who finds it hard to accept. His eyes sparkle in anger and his body trembles with passion. He cries out, 'I shall rather drench the soil of my country with enemy's blood'. The superman however almost physically drags him out and Bankim concludes the novel with an obscure allegorical passage. However profound that may be it cannot conceal the failure of the artist. The resistance offered by Satyananda to the superman in the last few paragraphs keeps the hopes of the reader alive. He can see for himself Bankim's pathetic struggle against heavy odds: the artist bleeds the screams like Satyananda as he finds his 'Ananda Math', the Abbey of Bliss, fall apart. But the struggle of the Santan's will not go to waste for as Turner says that in martyrdom lies the martyr's greatest victory. So,
do the santans gear for battle like many Krishnas, so that even in death they might live. In dying, they will be memorable as examples to call upon many other Worriers.

The question, which intrigues the reader of *Ananda Math*, is why should there be a sudden change in the tone and scheme of the novel. Is it simply an artistic failure? Or is it something else? In order to understand that, one has to take several facts into consideration. In the foreword to the first edition of *Ananda Math* (i.e. when it was first published as a book) Bankim wrote that three topics were explained in the book:

(a) Sometimes a Bengali wife is her husband's chief support and sometimes she is not. (b) Social revolution is often self-torture and the revolutionaries are often self-destructive. (c) The English have rescued Bengal from anarchy.

If we accept this then the book can be summarily dismissed as totally irrelevant. One can only reluctantly accept that Bankim tried to demonstrate the validity of the first issue through the characters of Shanti and Kalyani, but the novel does not give the impression that 'social revolutions are either "self-torture" or the revolutionaries are "self-destructive." ' The third issue, the redemption of Bengal from anarchy by the English, has not been dealt with in the novel until the last chapter which contains the superman's lecture. One wonders if Bankim really wanted to eulogize the British rule in Bengal, why did he then glorify the *sanatans* or the *sannyasi* rebelling of 1773 at all, what is the significance of the secret organization of the *sanatans*—an innovation of Bankim—and their vows, and of the song *Vande Mataram*? Strangely enough Bankim does not mention at all that one of the aims of the book is to instill the feeling of patriotism among his readers.
Neither when *Ananda Math* was first published in *Bangadarshān*, nor when its first edition appeared, did Bankim mention that the novel derived its material from the *sannyasi* revolt. Only two years later, did he admit the connection between the novel and the *sannyasi* revolt and incorporated a few excerpts from Hunter's *Annals* and Glieg's *Memoirs of Warren Hastings* in the third edition of the book. Even a casual reader cannot but notice that Bankim's santans are different from the historical *sannyasis* in significant ways. We know from the official accounts that 'a set of lawless bandits, known under the name of Sannyasis or Faqirs have long infested these countries, and under pretence of religious pilgrimage, have been accustomed to traverse the chief parts of Bengal, beginning, stealing and plundering wherever they go, and as it best suits their convenience to practise.' It is also known that 'in the year subsequent to the famine, there ranks were swollen by a crowd of starving peasants who had neither seeds nor implements to recommence cultivation with, and the cold weather of 1772 brought them down upon the harvest fields of lower Bengal, burning, plundering, ravaging in bodies of fifty thousand men.' The collectors called out the army but after a temporary success they were 'at length totally defeated, and Captain Thomas with almost the whole party, cut-off.' Warren Hastings reported that Captain Edwardes lost his life at the hands of the *sannyasi*. In another letter, Warren Hastings informs that the *sannyasis* 'have neither towns, houses nor families, but rove continually from place to place, recruiting their members with the healthiest children they can steal in the countries through which they pass.... They are all pilgrims, and are held by all castes of Gentoos in great veneration.... They are hardy, bold and enthusiastic to a degree of surprising merit.'

The *sannyasis* were mostly from eastern U P. and Bihar (and none from Bengal).
Most of them were illiterate, Saivas by religion and their area of operation was north Bengal and Bihar. The sanayasis of Ananda Math, on the other hand, were educated, Vaishnavas by religion, intensely patriotic and mostly inhabitants of Birbhum in West Bengal. Bankim, however, carefully used two historical incidents—one, the general social and economic conditions of Bengal during the famine of 1770 and the common man's support to the rebellious sannyasis; and another, the two skirmishes, one of 31 December 1772, and the other of 1 March 1773 in which Captain Thomas and Captain Edwardes were killed respectively.

If Bankim intended to demonstrate how the British redeemed Bengal from anarchy, why did he take great pains in creating the patriotic sanatans. The sannyasis as described in the official reports would have certainly been more appropriate for his purpose. Why did he choose those relevant facts from the sannyasi revolt which were positively anti-British? The sanatans killed two English captains and a large number of soldiers, but Bankim does not condemn their actions but treats them as heroes. And how does he treat the British characters? Except occasional praises for English courage and leadership, they are generally subjected to mortification, insults and unsavoury jokes. Their Bengali is ridiculous, their general behaviour undignified. Shanti's clownish behaviour with the English captains is deliberately insulting. Were these the people fated to redeem Bengal from anarchy, the people who could be so easily humiliated and humbled by a group of santans?

Bankim also claims to have demonstrated in the novel that social revolution is a self-torture and the revolutionaries are often self-destructive. But this precisely what he has not demonstrated. Sanatans are dedicated to their cause, spartan in their habits and true to their vows. The Sanatan Army is a secret
organization with a strict code of conduct. Once ordained they are expected to follow the rules like committed soldiers. The solemn description of initiation ceremony of Mahendra and Shanti where they take vows to forego all worldly pleasures, to forget caste-disinautions against the revolutionaries are Bankim's afterthought.

The oath-taking ceremony is Bankim's innovation. He must have read about such secret societies in Europe and certainly had the knowledge of the secret societies in Bengal that came up under the inspiration of the Carbonaries. Tagore mentions in his autobiography that a society was formed in Calcutta around 1872. This particular society evolved a code language and formulated some exotic rules but did not grow into a strong organization. However, this is an indication of the growing influence of Mazzini on the young Indian mind. Nabagopal Mitra (1840?-1894), the founder of the Hindu Mela (an annual fair for the promotion of national feeling among the Hindus) was one of its active members, and Rabindranath Tagore wrote his first patriotic poem during his association with it. In 1875 the Indian Association was founded in Calcutta. Surendranath Banerji, one of its sponsors, admitted that they derived their inspiration from the life of Mazzini. Four years later Yogendranath Vidyabhushan (1845-1905), the editor of the Bengali monthly, Arya Darshan, in the preface to the biography of Mazzini wrote, 'among the various elements that consititute our moral nature the most important is the spirit of sacrifice for the motherland. Only when the Indians are prepared to lay down their lives for their country, the chain of foreign rule will snap through divine grace. As a result of long slavery the Italians lost their spirit of nationalism, were disunited, and became victims of mutual hatred and suspicion.... Only when great patriots like Mazzini inspired them and taught them to suffer for the cause of freedom, did the foreign rule come to an end. If lives of such men can inspire a few Indians to unite 1
shall consider my labours well rewarded.' Bankim knew about the Carbonaries and most probably also about the secret society known as Camorra, a society in Naples, whose activities came to be known around 1830. The members of Carbonary addressed one another as 'buoni cugini' (good cousin) and God as the 'grand master'. Carbonaries included many gifted men like Count Federico Confalonieri, a Voltairean sceptic, and Sivio Pellico, a religious poet. Bankim's santan are not illiterate plunderers but men of religious sensibilities and of high moral character. In fact, the ordaining ceremony of the sanatans shows clearly that the conception of Ananda math took some secret society as its model. Professor S.C. Sengupta has given a very interesting peice of information about a society called Delphic Priesthood which like that of the Carbonaries fought for the unification of Italy in the nineteenth century. The motto and creed of this society described in the following lines suggest a possible parallel to the song *Vande Mataram*:

The Delphic Priest, the patriotic priest, the priest militant spoke thus: My mother has the sea for her mantle, high mountains for her sceptre. When asked who his mother was he replied, 'The lady with the dark tresses, whose gifts are beauty, wisdom and formerly strength, whose dowry is a flourishing garden full of fragrant flowers, where bloom the olive and the vine, and who now groans, stabbed to the heart.'

Although the song was published in the novel *Ananda math* as a part of the narrative, it was conceived as a lyric and it has a distinct structure of its own. *Vandemaratam* was compared around 1875.

According to some scholars, Bankim requested the reputed singer Jadu Bhatta to set music to the lyric. But there is little evidence to support the statement.
It is Rabindranath Tagore who composed the music of Vandemataram and sang it in the presence of Bankim. The song was first sung in public in 1896, two years after Bankim's death, in the twelfth session of the Indian National Congress under the presidency of Rahimutullah Sayani in Calcutta. The singer was none else than Rabindranath Tagore. Vandemataram, then, as it is preserved today in the people's memory is a creation of two persons; its text belongs to Bankim and its music to Tagore.

Soon after the publication of the song it attracted the notice of several writers and critics. It inspired a picture of Mother India by Harishchandra Haldar which was printed in 1885 in a journal called Balak. In 1886 Hemachandra Banerji wrote a poem, 'Rakhi Bandhan', wherein he included the first two stanzas of Vandemataram. Hemchandra hailed it as the song of the people of India.

Popularity of the song Vandemataram grew even more during the non-cooperation movement launched by Mahatma Gandhi. It was sung by the Hindus as well as the Muslims without any theological qualms. It is difficult to determine precisely the time when the Muslims registered their protest against Vandamataram and branded it as idolatrous. It is quite likely, however, that certain sections of Muslims and some reservations about it during the Swadeshi movement. A pamphlet called 'Lal Istahar' (The Red Pamphlet) was issued during a riot in 1906-07 in East Bengal urging the Muslims not to use Vandemataram as a slogan. The period between 31 December 1906 when the Muslim League came into existence and 25th May 1909 when the demand of the Muslim League for a separate electorate for the Muslims was accepted, the Hindu-Muslim bitterness was slowly mounting up and the cultural differences between the two communities. The Swadeshi movement which acted as a lever for the revival of the Hindu literary past and helped emergence of Hindus. It was
possible that many Muslims considered Vandemataram offensive to their sensibilities but there is little evidence to substantiate it. Since the twenties of this century, however, Muslim objections to the song began to be pronounced. In the Calcutta riot of 1921 Vandemataram was used as a slogan by the Hindus, probably for the first time, against the Muslim rioters and from this time onwards Vandemataram began to be used as the war-cry of the Hindu fanatics.

By 1935 members of the Muslim League became more vocal in their protest against Vandemataram and a bonfire of Ananda Math was made in the streets of Calcutta. In 1938 Mohammad Ali Jinnah demanded that the song must be given up by the Congress. It is mainly because of the Muslim opposition to the song the working committee of the Indian National Congress appointed a sub-committee consisting of Maulana Ab'ul Kalam Azad, Jawaharlal Nehru, Subhash Chandra Bose and Narendra Dev to examine all the current national songs and to seek the advice of Rabindranath Tagore in finally selecting a song as the national anthem. The resolution was drafted by Nehru himself. Paying glowing tributes to Vandemataram, Nehru wrote:

"During the past thirty years, innumerable instances of sacrifice and suffering all over the country have been associated with 'Bande Mataram' and men and women have not hesitated to face death even with that cry on their lips". The song and the words thus became symbolic of national resistance to British imperialism in Bengal especially, and generally in other parts of India. The words 'Bande Mataram' became a slogan of power which inspired our people, and a greeting which will ever reminded us of our struggle for national freedom.

Gradually the use of the first two stanzas of the song spread to other provinces and a certain national significance began to be attached to them. The rest
of the song was very seldom used and is even now known to few persons. These two stanzas described in tender language the beauty of the motherland and the abundance of her gifts. There was nothing absolutely in them to which objection could be taken from the religious or any other point of view.

It appears that Nehru accepted the opinion of Rabindranath Tagore to whom the sub-committee had referred the matter. The working committee accepted the Poet’s suggestion and recommended the first two stanzas of the song be accepted as the national anthem.

Vandemataram
sujalam suphalam
malayaja sitalam
sasyasyamalam
mataram

subhrajyotsanpulakita yaminim
phullakusumita drumadalasobhinim
suhasinim sumadhirabhasinim
sukhadam varadam mataram

I bow to three, Mother
richly-watered, richly-fruited
cool with the winds of the south
dark with the crops of the harvests
the Mother.

Her nights rejoicing in the glory of the moonlight.
Opinion is almost unanimous on the point that Bankim's fame as a novelist was truly established only with the publication of *Bishabriksha* (1873). It may well be true furthermore that till the late 1860s or so, it was Deenabandhu Mitra and not Bankim who was the most widely read of Bengali literary figures. It is quite interesting on the other hand that a very popular novel like *Bishabriksha* underwent only eight reprints in Bankim's lifetime to thirteen in the case of *Durgeshundini*. This is largely explained by the variation in the number of copies printed her edition—a good index perhaps to the fluctuating public response towards Bankim the novelist. The July 1874 edition of *Durgeshundini* for instance shows 1000 copies as against only 200 in the next edition of 1876 but picking up rapidly again by 1879 (1500 copies). Such detailed information is not available in the case of *Bishabriksha* but even presuming no real increase in the number of copies for every subsequent edition, the demand probably marginally outstripped supply—the time-lag between various editions of *Bishabriksha* is not only shorter but also more evenly spaced.

The period between 1869-73 constitutes the first phase of Bankim's writings (and speeches) in English, the second phase beginning with the controversy with Rev. Hastie (1882) and furthermore the *Letter on Hinduism* (1882) is really an extension of his arguments in the *Dharamatattwa, Krishnacharitra and Debtattu O Hindudharma* the three major works on Hinduism produced between 1884-85. The bulk of his Bengali writings came between 1872-9, in the next four years he wrote as many as six but for anyone looking for signs of change in Bankim's literary profile, I would refer to the period 1868-9 when

her lands clothed beautifully with her trees in flowering bloom
sweet of laughter, sweet of speech
the Mother, giver of boons, giver of bliss.
he was writing his third novel, *Mrinalini*. It is with *Mrinalini* (1869) that Bankim turns from the portrayal of man as the master of his destiny or else of the unaffected innocence of man amidst nature so evident in *Durgesnandini* (1865) and *Kapalkundala* (1866), to a position when grim tragedy and preconceived destiny always threatens to overtake his characters. It is also at this stage that he begins to show signs of uneasiness with his vast knowledge of European history, philosophy and sciences. It is not easy to relate these changes with any important event in Bankim's life; his first wife had died as early as 1859, his mother was to die in 1870 and by 1868-9, Bankim had put in only a little more than ten years of service, not enough one presumes, for a person to be greatly disgruntled with it. Nonetheless even though these linkages cannot be established with any degree of certainty, the time framework in which they occurred is important. This notion of an intellectual divide in his life and literary career has naturally encouraged authors to emphasize the 'polarity' between the two Bankims — one a 'poet and stylist', the other a 'prophet and nation-builder'. Brojendranath Bandopadhyay and Sajanikanta Das writing in 1942 showed greater finesse by trying to suggest well-identifiable periods in his evolution from an 'angry youngman' ('Santiparva'). But is it possible that the period 1872-89 alone constitutes one such representative period. What did Bankim really write before 1872 and what after 1889? What appears to be a perceptible transformation in Bankim's personality or world-view may also be understood in terms of the flowering of a latent consciousness. From this vantage point, one has to admit that changes in Bankim occur gradually and over an extended period of time if we are also to accept that they are not merely cosmetic. Bankim himself depicted his life as being full of struggle—a struggle which he attributed as much to the conflicts created in man's mind as to those thrust upon him by the outside world. It is from this perspective perhaps that one can do greater justice to Bankim the man and the artist, for no time framework,
however big or small can satisfactorily explain the complex juxtaposition of reason and faith, brusqueness and brilliant sensitivity. Outside his marital life, I should nonetheless like to draw attention to two passages occurring in *Durgeshnandini* and *Chandrasekhar* respectively, free translation of which are produced below:

Have you in your adolescence watched through the eyes of love, the sedate and soft radiance of a teenage girl? Have you ever had the pleasure of seeing a girl, even a momentary glimpse of whom imparts enough sweetness to last a lifetime? and again......

It appears as though childhood romances are always illfated. How many of those whom you had loved as a child reappear actually in your youthful dreams? Or even live long enough for that?

It is not just possible that Bankim loved his child-bride deeply and continued to privately mourn her loss? Nirad Chaudhuri thinks otherwise, for by his argument, Bankim would not have married a second time and certainly not so soon, if he had truly loved his first wife. Dante's love for Beatrice increased after she had passed away and the same may be the case with Bankim who perhaps wished to keep alive the image of the first woman in his life by marrying a second. That true love is often elusive, painful and seldom realized in flesh and blood is suggested at many places in Bankim's novels of which *Rajani* is but one example. Spurned in love, Amarnath tries to sublimate his grief by ensuring that the woman he cannot for some reason marry, is nonetheless suitably married elsewhere. There is a strong possibility of Bankim's being intensely in love with love itself.

There is however, another interesting line of argument that I would like to develop. Bankim himself leaves a valuable clue by hinting candidly at the 'evil and misleading'
influences on him in his early youth. He also allegedly confessed that there was an autobiographical element in the novel *Bishabrikha* and those familiar with its storyline would realize that he was in all probability hinting at the character of Nagendra who succumbs to the temptations of flesh but is ultimately happily reunited with his first wife (Suryamukhi). Bankim confessed before Nabin Sen that he could not bear the *Bishabrikha* being read out to him for it very strongly reminded him of his wife. His close friends like Akshay Chandra apparently thought Suryamukhi was none other than his wife. It is quite possible therefore, that there was an extremely significant feminine influence upon Bankim out-side his marital life with Rajlakshmi Debi about which he remained guilt-ridden but which also contributed to the great respect which he now had for his wife.

The evidence for either of these theories I admit, is quit patchy and inconclusive but at least they help us to understand better the conflicting position Bankim often took on woman as an object of love and sexual attraction and woman as keeper of the household, between woman as the symbol of idyllic beauty and woman as the source of comfort and conjugal happiness, between the captivating, sublime power of love and of its brutal consequences. It is my surmise that these conflicting judgements were derivatives of the different images in which he perceived the two woman in his life—be it his two wives or the mysterious woman about whom Bankim has only hinted. His first wife for example who died at the age of fifteen may have personified love in its ideal aspect, unburdened with domestic responsibilities; his second wife on the other hand gave Bankim all that he expected of a (Hindu) wife — fidelity, patience and fortitude. There is no way in which Bankim could have underplayed Rajlakshmi Debi's role. It was she who really saw him through the travails of his life, was the mother of his children and provided the much needed strength and
stability that served as a perfect counterfoil to the irritability and the great nervous energy of Bankim. It is actually of her that he writes:

The woman is the exemplar of kindness and forgiveness. She represents God's most sublime creation—his very shadow on earth.... The woman represents light of which man is a mere shadow. Can light ever forsake its shadow.

Does it not appear from the above that Bankim may have sometime committed an indiscretion and was consequently tormented by a sense of guilt? It is not also true that every single novel of Bankim's from 1869 onwards simultaneously depicts love and the conquest of love, the fragility of conjugal life and also its ultimate triumph?

While every novel after Mrinalini talks of the recentless, painful and invincible power of love, one can also see that human suffering on this account has tended to shift from innocent drama to fairly contrived plots. There is an element of tragedy in Kapalkundala but a tragedy that is not the end-product of moral conclusions. There is a perceptible difference between Ayesha's attraction for Jagat Singh (Durgeshnandini) and Kundanandini's for Nagendra (Bishabriksha) even though they are ultimately equally frustrated in love. Beginning again from Mrinalini, we are increasingly exposed not so much to what love can attain but to what it cannot. Questions of (female) chastity or fidelity too now begin to acquire a moralizing tone:

There is no greater duty (dharma) for the woman than absolute fidelity towards her husband... she who is unfaithful is no better than a sow.
In Chandrakekhar, Shaibalini has to undergo an ordeal through hell, and celestial beings shower ridicule upon her for having revealed her (extrap-material) love for Protop, however platonic that might be. In India, Upendra succumbs to India's seduction but his eyes strangely reflect 'unbound love and affection'. In this case too, conjugal love and fidelity has triumphed because Upendra at that point of time had no means of knowing that the woman before him was only his wife in disguise. In Bishbriksha, there is no public outrage at Nagendra's marrying the widow Kundanandini (a theme to which we shall soon return) but both Nagendra and Suryamukhi (the first wife) having realized that mistakes—he for having been led astray and she at not thwarting her husband's second marriage—there is no place for Kundanandini every through she remained a legally wedded wife. Did Bankim thereby wish to state that he was not very sympathetic to the idea multiple marriages? Perhaps, but that incidentally is not the moral of the story. Kunda's ultimately ending her life may also possible be attributed to her injured ego but ever allowing for that, a conclusion different from the one offered by Bankim was quite possible within the structure of the novel—it is only Bankim's artistry and skills as a writer that makes one think that there was not Kundanandini's fate evidently was to serve as a grim reminder of the tragic consequence of unbridled human passion.

His conclusion accordingly also begin to go beyond the objectivity of the novelist—Bankim need not have added the highly pontifical passage at the end of the novel Bishabrikha. It is quite extraneous to the plot and does not effect any improvement in his art. In Mrinalini itself we have Hemchandra admonishing Monograma:

Love is no less important than eating, sleeping or the pursuit of knowledge but it is certainly inferior to dharma. A woman's greatest virtue lies in being
faithful and therefore I say, 'Conquer love!' Be careful Manorama!... human error grows out of passion... error in turns leads to neglect of one's duties and therefore to the fall of man!

If this is didacticism, it began well before 1882.

Although guided very often by traditional perceptions of a woman's assigned place at home and in the wider society, Bankim was also quite sensitive to the injustice inflicted upon women. Brojeswar (Debi Chaudhurai) whose filial loyalties force him to unjustify desert his first wife (Prafulla) has also the good sense to realize that there were after all, few things as precious as a good wife. In Krishnakanter Will, Bankim clearly takes the side of the wronged woman for Bhramar has the courage and conviction to say that her respect for her husband Govindlal could be in force only as long as he was worthy of the respect. At a time when the Babu's patronizing the public woman was an accepted fact in average bhadralok households and when (as Bankim himself observes) women rarely met their husbands until after nightfall, this was indeed a remarkable statement. It is not Bankim but later day critics who have found in Bhramar (of Krishnakanter Will) an uncharacteristic ego that will not allow her to meekly accept her fate. Without a healthy respect for women running alongside his conservative viewpoint, Bankim would not have felt more sorry for Iswar Gupta than for his wife Durgamoni Debi even though he knew that both must have equally suffered from a very unhappy conjugal life. What made Bankim fall back so often on the question of marital fidelity, more so in the case of the wife? It does not seem as though a very satisfactory answer can emerge purely in terms of an existing tradition. Notions of the woman's fidelity were not new to Bengali Hindu society, in Bankim's time they were probably considerably reinforced by the interpenetration of mid-nineteenth century Victorian attitudes and a Brahmanical value-system.
Romesh C. Dutt dedicated Sansar (1886) a novel clearly favouring widow marriage, to both Vidayasar and Bankim. This is a trifle surprising because after 1872 (Confessions of Young Bengal) one finds Bankim not only apathetic to widow marriage but sometimes positively hostile. It ought to be remembered that even in the Samya (1879) considered to be his most radical piece of writing, Bankim does not accept the idea of widow marriage as readily as he accepts that of female education. Chandicharan Sen, a brahmo munsef at Krishnanager and an author of some repute, once remarked that in his experience Hindu widow were unchaste. Bankim retaliated with characteristic sarcasm quite oblivious of the fact that he himself had been guilty of an equally uncharitable remark not so long back. The Samya argues that a widow who was unchaste and loved her deceased husband would hardly marry a second time - an argument not without sinister implications for by such a standard a widow who decided to remarry was both unkind and unchaste. That 'virtuous' bhadralok society shunned such marriages in hinted at by Bankim in quite a few places. In Bishbrikha Debendra seized by a reforming zeal, is able to arrange some widow marriage but only among the lowest castes and in Debi Chaudhurani Phulmoni falls from womanly virtue not simply because she was widowed so early but also because she comes from the despicable classes.

Bankim's views on polygamy were more balance and cannot be simply labeled as being conservative. That he was somewhat averse to the idea of multiple marriages is understandable not only from stray references in his writings but even otherwise in terms of his sense of social justice.
and proportion. Thus Shyama, Nabakumar's sister (in Kapalakundala) is said to lead the life of a widow without actually being widowed, since she was wedded to a kulin. Bankim was also aware of the possibility that Brojeswar's marriage to three women (Debi Chaudhurani) might easily be misconstrued (especially by Western critics) as evidence of the author's support to polygamous practice. There is no reason to disbelieve Bankim when he says that that was not the substance on which he staked his novel and while ultimately he may not have been very convincing or successful with what he set out to do, it can be said in his defence that the landed rich man's marrying more than once was in any case not an uncommon occurrence in mind or late eighteenth century Bengal.

Where Bankim definitely sounds biased is in his attempt to make an arbitrary and unconvincing distinction between multiple marriages in men and women—an argument incidentally also echoed by Tagore. His views on a propitious age of marriage for females likewise makes interesting reading because Bankim's opposition to premature marriages apparently sprang more from Malthusian arguments than from any genuine convictions on the social abuses that this perpetrated. Nonetheless we must also remember his support to the Age of Consent Bill (1891)—an act which would indirectly serve to discourage early marriages and at one place apparently, Bankim takes 15-16 to be the upper age-limit for marriage in the case of girls, a fairly high limit considering the fact that in one of Sarat Chandra's short stories, thirteen is considered an alarming age for a female to remain unmarried.

It is evident that Bankim's critique of Vidyasagar's campaign against polygamy did not arise out of his support to the system itself but from
the serious reservations he had on the methodology adopted or the tools of analysis chosen for this purpose. Bankim was rather unhappy with Vidyasagar's resorting to Shastric interpretations and he was also quite correct in arguing that social usages or customs probably played a greater role in influencing the daily life of the Hindu than Shastric advice or injunctions. However, in pressing this particular point too often, Bankim also somewhat misjudged Vidyasagar.

_Debi Chaudhurani_ (1884) and _Sitaram_ (1887), were overtly connected with his gospels of 'anusilan' and 'nishkam dharma' and when confronted with such staggering evidence, one is naturally led to locate the ideological divide in Bankim somewhere around 1882-3. One wonders if purely in terms of chronology, this had anything to do with the fact that Jadav Chandra died in 1881 but on the other hand, I have also found explicit references to what Bankim ultimately meant by 'anusilan' in an essay written as early as 1874. It is also equally certain that some of his ideas relating to Godhead—such as his belief in the divinity of Krishna—were long-standing values in Bankim Chandra. Several friends and contemporaries of Bankim have testified to his fervent attachment to the family deity of Kanthalpara (a representation of Krishna) even as a child. Akshay Sarkar for example writes of Bankim's veneration for this deity, of his belief in its supernatural powers (the supernatural abounds in Bankim's novels) and how the _Krishnacharitra_ was but a blossoming of this childhood faith.

That Bankim revealed a theistic bent of mind but also believed that
theories of Godhood were not opposed to reason was possibly the source of some of his confusion. But his position here is not any different from the one taken by a section of the Brahmns, namely Rajnarain Basu who in the 1870s was keen on constructing a 'science' of religion. In Bankim's case ironically, since his writings were relatively free of religious jargon and abstract argument the conflict between God as revealed to the faithful and as constructed with the aid of reason only tends to become sharper. The following statements occurring within only a few passages of each other are perhaps a case in point.

Later day critics of Bankim have gone to great lengths in drawing attention to the fact that his Anusilan dharma was, at its core, an idea borrowed from the West. In the Preface to the Krishnacharitra, Bankim frankly acknowledged that his reading into western religion and philosophy had only strengthened his intrinsic belief in the ideal of Sri Krishna.164

Although his religious philosophy revolved essentially around a formless (Nirakar) Brahman, Bankim was also equally concerned (a good analogy here may be the work of Herder) with the social anthropology of culture wherein the continuance of popular traditions ensured a nation's cultural autonomy and self-expression. There was no doubt a degree of complacence in these arguments for surely, folk-perceptions of Hindu deities did not necessarily correspond to what Bankim took them to be, just as his rendering of Krishna had little incommoll with popular modes of Krishna worship. It was Bankim's eagerness to create simultaneously God in a dual framework of reason and faith, science and supra-consciousness that

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ultimately led to seek the impossible—to prove that Krishna was God transformed into man and also to prove alongside that he was a historical figure.

Clearly then, Bankim believed in theories of Avatarhood and argued that to deny the possibility of God's assuming a human form only amounted to putting an unreasonable restriction on the unrestricted powers of an Almighty God. But, did not the fact that he should be compelled to assume such forms Himself and not ordain chosen men to accomplish His mission on earth in itself constitute a practical constraint on his power? And was it not also quite likely that a rationally proven Krishna appealed to the head but failed to win over the heart?

On the other hand the works of Gustave Flaubert (1821-80) fall into two separate groups: the early writing, the works of his maturity. The former he never published; no doubt he looked upon some of them at least as sources to draw on if need be and to be destroyed.... some time. They never were; had they been, later generations would have been the poorer, for they give a valuable insight into the development of Flaubert as a writer, with precocious literary gifts.

The early writings comprise, inter alia: Opuscules Historiques (1835 and 1836); Rêve d'Enfer (1837) and Smarh (1839); an essay entitled Une leçon d'histoire naturelle, Genre Commis (1837); a number of short stories; two auto biographical fragments, Mémories d'un fou (1838), and Novembre (1842) a full scale novel: L'Education Sentimentale, first version (1845).
With their wide variety of subject the juvenalia reflect the literary fashions of the day. ... 'Expansions dernières du Romantisme arrivant jusqu'à nous et qui, comprimées par le milieu provincial, faisaient dans nos cervelles d'étranges bouillonnements....', writes Flaubert of himself and his friends at school. The romance of history, ecstatic visions, pseudo-sociological analysis in the manner of the popular.... 'physiologies', romantic tales that recall at every turn Hugo and George Sand, Balzac and Musset. 'Nous méritions peu d'éloges.... 

Mais quelle haine de toute platitude! Quels élans vers la grandeur! Quel respect des maîtres! Flaubert was to remain faithful throughout his life to some at least of his youthful idols: Hugo, Balzac; he was to become a devoted friend and correspondent of George Sand.

Already something of the pattern and characteristics of the mature works is apparent; the cruelty and violence of Salammbô in the historical sketches, the chaotic visions and temptations of St. Antony in those of Smarh, inspired by Edgar Quinet's Ahasverus (1833); an early image of Emma Bovary in the heroine of Passion et Vertu (1837), a mentality that sours every experience: Elle pensait aux sensations qu'elle avait éprouvées et ne trouvait en y pensant rien que déception et amertume. O ce n'est pas ce que j'avais rêvé disait-elle; in the Genre Commis the irony that was to play about the ineffable Homais and that pathetic couple Bouvard and Pécuchet.

Most important of all the early works, however, are the autobiographical pieces and the first novel. The corrosive scepticism of later years is apparent in the seventeen-year-old author of Mémories d'un fou. What a compelling indictment of man, of life's futility! The escape to art as the only compensation is already developed: S'il y a sur la terre et parmi les néants une croyance qu'on adore, s'il est quelque chose de saint, de pur, de sublime, quelqu
chose qui aille à ce désir immodéré de l'infini et du vague que nous appelons âme, c'est l'art.

Into this background of romantic anguish is entwined, like a delicate thread, the story of Maria. This is the first allusion to Elisa Foucauld, whom Flaubert met at Trouville in the summer of 1836 - a brief encounter, but the impression made on the youthful Gustave is apparent: *Elle partit le matin, nous le soir; elle partit et je ne la revis plus. Adieu pour toujours! Elle partit comme la poussière de la route qui s'envola derrière ses pas....* The sadness of the parting gathers force by the repetition of *elle partit ....., first the fact, then the result for himself, and then, the emotion resolves itself in a simile. The probably softened the writer's pain; similes have that cathartic effect on the emotions; they relieve tension. To the reader, the image conveys the sense of desolation forcibly. Already Flaubert the stylist is alert; already he understands what the reader of *Madame Bovary* in particular will understand so well, how to create a vigorous image in the reader's mind, and stimulate his emotion.

Flaubert was to meet the Schlesingers again in Paris; Elisa's memory was to remain with him throughout his life and have important consequences for his work.

If the *Memories d'un fou* recall Flaubert's adolescent years, *Novembre* offers us the image of him on the threshold of manhood. The title of this compelling piece of self-analysis scarcely suggests that divine moment, which Flaubert seems to have enjoyed as much as others, but it is symbolic of his melancholy dissatisfaction engendered partly perhaps by all dislike of the legal studies he had just embarked on in deference to his family's wishes, partly by the lusts of the flesh.
The first version of L'Education Sentimentale (February 1843-January-1845) is a veiled confession. In the character of Henry Gosselin, the young provincial, who comes to Paris without enthusiasm to study law, the reader recognizes Flaubert. Heney's love for Emilie Renaud, their New York escapade, the taste of harsh reality that killed romance, their return to France and to the even flow of their respective lives have little or no relation with Flaubert's personal experience; that little may or may not reflect the truth of his relationship with Elisa Schlesinger whom he had met again in 1843.

Be that as it may, Flaubert has obeyed the almost inevitable law that obliges the young novelist to draw upon his own fund of ideas and feelings for want of the broad experience of life that time, observation and percipience alone may give. The element of confession is to be sought in the analysis both of Henry and of his friend Jules. As a novel, the work serves to show by comparison the strides Flaubert was to make as an artist in the years separating this version from the second, and, incidentally, the artistic standards that forbade him to publish a work many other authors would have thought worthy. But in the attitudes of Henry and Jules towards life, in the development of their artistic ideas, we can see much of Flaubert's own progress from youth to maturity, his sentimental education in the broadest sense.

Starry-eyed provincial at the outset ('Mais Henry.... croyait encore... à toute la réalité du bonheur de la vie, époque d'illusions, où l'amour bourgeoise dans l'âme), Henry learns that love is transient, he becomes a man of the world, cynically indifferent to events and happier in consequence. 'il se résigna à la perte de sa belle passion évanouie... comprenant bien qu'il entrait alors dans une autre période de sa vie et que l'amour aussi est un drame complet...
qui a son premier acte... et son cinquième enfant, où il doit mourir... pour faire place ensuite au vaudeville ou à quelque autre comédie plus sérieuse et tout aussi bouffonne. He develops, in short, into a society hedonist with artistic ideas as shallow as the attitudes of the Parisian circles he moves in.

Jules's narrower provincial life provides him with parallel disappointments. Deceived by the actress Lucinde, frustrated in his ambitions as a playwright, he becomes harsh and embittered: 'Ile s'était endurci... s'était presque pétrifié le cœur... His reflections lead him to a determinist philosophy but he finds an abundant compensation in art: 'n'y a-t-il pas au monde une manière quelconque d'arriver à la conscience de la vérité? Si l'art était pour lui ce moyen, il devait le prendre. Et même aurait-il eu cette idée de l'art,... sans les douleurs préparatoires qu'il avait subies?'

From this point, the novel develops into a comparison between the artistic attitudes of the two friends. As an essay in analysis it is searching and gives a foretaste of the pitiless dissection Emma Bovary will be subjected to, but in the process the illusion of reality, in so far as the novel had succeeded in creating it for the reader, fades. Only the incident of the stray dog that attaches itself to Jules, in spite of the latter's efforts to drive it away, provides a momentary and brilliant flame of vitality by its precision of detail. Yet in relation to the story the incident of the stray dog that attaches itself to Jules, in spite of the latter's efforts to drive it away, provides a momentary and brilliant flame of vitality by its precision of detail. Yet in relation to the story the incident seems gratuitous and the reader books for some symbolic purpose; with the hindsight provided by a knowledge of Madame Bovary he may see a parallel in the case of the beggar whose three separate appearances are like some grotesque commentary at a moment of emotional tension, as unwelcome as a worm in

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an apple or a leering skull in the background of a beautiful young woman's portrait. But the beggar incidents are skilfully interwoven, they serve to underline now Emma's attitude of defiant desperation (her last five-franc piece thrown to him), now the smugness of Monsieur Homais, even his last appearance, as Emma lies dying, contrived though it is, is motivated by the offer Homais had made to him in an unguarded moment of *une promenade antiphlogistique de sa composition*, and his croaking song has a hideous relevance to Emma's tragedy.

If specific proof were needed of development in Flaubert's skill between 1845 and 1857 these parallel cases would provide it. In fact the incident of the dog, however excellent in itself, has no other purpose than to make Jules reflect more deeply than hitherto, to look with more attention beyond the surface of things at their inner significance and relationships: 'dans tout ce qui s'était passé entre lui et le monstre, dans tout ce qui se rattachait à cette aventure, il y avait quelque chose de si intime, de si profond, de si net en même temps qu'il fallait bien reconnaître une réalité d'une autre espèce et aussi réelle que la vulgaire cependant, tout en semblant la contredire. Or ce que l'existence offre de tangible, de sensible, disparaissait à sa pensée, comme secondaire et inutile et comme une illusion qui n'en est que la superficie. Jules's conceptions about art as a reflection of life are now transformed; away with Romanticism and its tawdry trappings! Salvation must be found in objective observation of detail, in rigorous analysis, not in personal emotion but in knowledge.

At this stage the comparison between Henry and Jules is all to the advantage of the latter, Flaubert, ceasing to identify himself with Henry, has evidently migrated into the skin of Jules; or more precisely there is something of him in both their attitudes: the cynical pessimism that leads Henry after the bankruptcy
of his relationship with Emilie to expect from life 'quelque autre comédie plus sérieuse et tout aussi bouffonne... ' and Jules's new percipience.

None of the other characters is subject to the same exercise of intellectual dissection as Henry and Jules. But in a narrow compass some of them have a certain vividness: the worthy M. Renaud, concerned above all with the good name of his coaching establishment, Emilie, at least in the early part of the book, and Morel—a first sketch of the circumspect Martinon of the second version.

Alvarés and Mendés and the plodding German Shahutnischbach, whose name suggests a prodigious sneeze and the sort of grotesque joke Flaubert enjoyed, are all figures of fun with little significance. Yet they, like the others, are all neatly pigeon-holed at the end, so that the reader is not left wondering what becomes of them. This neatness in tying up all loose ends is very marked in Madame Bovary and L'Education Sentimentale (II); it is part of Flaubert's technique for creating in a reader's mind the illusion of, as it were, 'falling in with' a given number of people whose lives, relationships and fortunes he witnesses for a space. At the end, no abrupt cutting off but a gentle fading out; reader and characters lose sight of each other as though in a mist, and the reader returns to his own point in time without a sense of discontinuity. Some characters sink, inevitably (Charles Bovary, Dussardier), most go on, as we do, with the motley—quelque autre comédie plus sérieuse, et tout aussi bouffonne

But the real significance of L'Education Sentimentale (I) is its bearing on Flaubert's own development. Here is the record of the moral and intellectual transformation that occurred in Flaubert between 1842 and 1844, the period
of his legal studies and of his sojourn in Paris, of the first attack of his nervous illness, whatever that was. The Romantic pessimist of the early works is transformed, behold him now, all thoughts of the law or any other 'useful' career set aside, ready to enter the priesthood of art—not without trepidation: 'O l'Art, l'Art, quel gouffre et que nous sommes petits pour y descendre....'

Circumstances abetted him. After the deaths in quick succession of her husband, the renowned Rouen surgeon, and of her daughter Caroline in child-birth, Madame Flaubert, with her grand daughter, also Caroline, withdrew to the seclusion of Croisset, seldom to leave it; Gustave went to live with them.

Thereafter, apart from occasional trips of Paris where he kept a flat, a walking tour in Brittany (1847) with his friend Maxime Du Camp, his tour in the Near East, also with Maxime Du Camp (November 1849 - May 1851), the journey to North Africa (April—June 1858) and other minor trips (London, September 1851, Brussels, 1871, Brittany 1875), nothing, save the brutal if short interlude of the war of 1870, was to interrupt the hermit of Croisset in his titanic struggle with words and metaphors, phrases, periods, paragraphs, seeking, in the quiet watches of the night, to give formal perfection to his visions of the past or the present. 'J'arriverai peut-être un jour à produire une belle chose! car tout cède, n'est-ce pas, à la continuité d'un sentiment énergique. Chaque rêve finit par trouver sa forme...;

Not unnaturally, perhaps, the provincial hermit he had become and was so determinedly to remain began by creating a hermit after his own image, assailed with temptations, some of them not dissimilar from those of the author of Novembre, with visions like those of Smarh, perhaps naturally, his friends, Maxime Du Camp and Louis Bouilhet, found this lyrical effusion tedious. Du Camp records
that they advised him to burn it. Flaubert did not, and many years later he was to publish a third and final version, in the meantime he did adopt their other suggestion, namely to look for material in contemporary life, not however before satisfying a long-cherished wish, that of visiting the Near East, where he departed in the company of Maxime Du Camp. Emma Bovary, as yet anonymous, went tool, for when the two travellers were at Wadi-Halfa on 22 May 1851, Flaubert suddenly remarked: 'Faitrouvé! Je l'appellerai Emma Bovary. Whilst exploring Upper Egypt and registering scenes that were to emerge from his memory later when writing Salammô, his thoughts were evidently in Normandy. According to Du Camp, Bouilhet had suggested as a theme the life of Madame Delamare, wife of a doctor practising at Ry, Normandy; a disordered life ending in suicide by poison. The similarity between the story of Delphine Delamare and Emma Bovary is evident, with Yonville-l'Abbaye for Ry. But hard on the heels of this conclusion comes another source equally convincing, namely the manuscript left to Flaubert by Madame Pradier. Perhaps other sources will be discovered; apart from the suicide which not all adulteresses resort to, the theme apparently is banal enough.

A whole substructure of real events indeed seems to exist to Madame Bovary (1857); the same is true of Le Rouge et le Noir, if to a lesser extent, and no doubt of many other great works. The fact may be interesting; is it significant? Only in so far as it serves to show what an artist makes of the material life provides, how successfully he convinces the reader that underlying the events there exist a mind and heart, co-ordinating them into an understandable pattern of behaviour. That Du Camp and Bouilhet had correctly judged which way public taste was moving is independently confirmed by Baudelaire, who in a perceptive and laudatory article on Madame Bovary analyses the reasons that could have determined a choice of subject so different from the established
pattern.

The public's thirst for romantic characters, charged with a dynamism beyond human measure, imposing their wills and whims upon a society decked out in a historical or contemporary setting, had been slaked. Flaubert himself in Madame Bovary gives an ironic commentary on the romantic tinsel with which Emma Rouault, thanks to the 'decayed gentlewoman' who mended the linen at the convent school, had adorned her imagination: 'Ce n'étaient qu'amours, amants, amantes, dames persécutées s'évanouissant dans des pavillons solitaires, postillons qu'on tue à tous les relais, chevaux qu'on crève à toutes les pages... messieurs [the italics are Flaubert's] braves comme des lions, doux commes des agneaux, vertueux comme on ne l'est pas, toujours bien mis et qui pleurent comme des urnes...' The novel as an art-form must, if it was to recapture public favour, break new ground, search for the unheroic hero, be a mirror of the drab and even the sordid.

That adultery was scarcely a new subject, may be true from the Bible down to Balzac, Stendhal and George Sand, of Bouvard, Flaubert will later write: 'Il s'enthousiasma pour les belles adultery et les nobles amants, aurait voulu être Jacques, Simon, Bénédict, Lélio et habiter Venise!' But in all these cases the subject is really incidental, the interest is in a hero, driven by passions that defy social conventions, demand and obtain great sacrifices shown in their turn to have redemptive power. The study of adultery in itself, the mentalities and circumstances that combine to produce it, its effect on the mentalities and live of those concerned were new... and shocking. Hence the legal proceedings against Flaubert.

So new was this subject that it was to attract other writers in the wake of
Flaubert, two other novels on the same theme come to mind—Tolstoy's Anna Karenina (1873-6) and Fontane's Effi Briest (1895). That the author of War and Peace should place his heroine in a large canvas with many other characters and independent if intertwining themes is characteristic. Anna Karenina herself is a sympathetic character, generous, kind, impulsive. She and Vronsky, her lover, become progressively isolated from the society they belong to, as a result of their relationship; more and more they are compelled to look to each other for solace and comfort; nor have they the spiritual and intellectual resources to stand the test, shown as the inevitable consequence of their initial decision to flaunt society openly. Anna's suicide is seen to be grimly inevitable, her predicament is human, her fate tragic, both because the author has succeeded in showing it to be inexorable and because the reader's sympathy remains with her, against the rigid inhumanity of Karenin.

Fontane's novel scarcely compares in human or artistic value with either of the other two. The kittenish Effi, her friends, her parents, the elderly Baron von Innstetten whom she is married off to as a good match, in spite of the difference in age, are unconvincing characters. The mechanism of the story is too apparent. When early on Effi confesses to her mother that with all her admiration of the Baron something about him makes her fear him, when she admits she can put up with anything except boredom, when we then learn that she will have to live in the wilds of Pomerania, we can almost guess the rest: the lover—Crampas; the guilty secret, the letters discovered years later; the duel (exit Crampas); death of Effi.

Fontane has a moral: the effects of a rigid class code that forces Instetten to act as he does, in spite of the time lag, and that Crampas, Effi, Instetten himself and the child Annie are in their several ways all victims. But the effects
on the mental attitudes of the characters of this rigid class code are poorly studied. Effi's death-bed words to her mother are most edifying; in everything Instetten was right! - 'es tregt mir daran dass er erfahrt, wie mir hier in meinen Krankheitstagen, ... klar geworden, dass er in allem recht gehandelt.' Effi speaks like a textbook, like a character from Paul Bourget or Henri Bordeaux. We know where Fontane stands, nor can we forget him to identify ourselves with the characters.

Flaubert's canvas is much smaller than Tolstoy's; unlike Anna Karenina who is out of the story for long periods, Emma and/or Charles seldom cease claiming the attention of the reader; hence a concentration akin to that of a Racinian tragedy. But Emma's fate lacks the tragic inevitability of Anna's, nor is she, as Effi is supposed to be, the victim of a class code; she is the victim of the petty financial operations of Lheureux, as well as of her own romantic ideas. But for her financial ineptitude she might, as it were, be still alive as others like her no doubt are. The plea of defence counsel in the case brought against Flaubert, that there was a moral lesson in Emma's fate, could apply only to the second point, and on both, if lesson there be, the facts of the story point to prudence and good sense, not virtue, as the essential. Flaubert's approach to the subject, however, is neither that of a moralist like Tolstoy nor of a moralizer like Fontane; moral issues are irrelevant. His concern is to present facts, the sordid affairs of an adulteress in the drab surroundings of small provincial town life, with an accompaniment of sordid little schemes by some, the pretentiousness of others, the obtuse lack of imagination of the husband, the callous egotism of most; no spark of chivalry, no more than a flicker perhaps of charity in the dog-like fidelity of Justin weeping salt tears over the grave in the cemetery—Lestiboudois' potato patch, by the way. To crown all, the ironic contrast between the physical decline of the well-meaning Charles, undermined by grief, and
the upward progress of the worthless Homais. The heart cries out in anguish at the devastating cruelty of it, what better proof could there be that Flaubert has achieved his purpose of compelling the reader's belief in a 'slice of life', objectively presented with all its harsh reality?

He achieves it by his artistic integrity, his concern for accuracy; the story is firmly rooted in both place and time — Normandy and the 1840's; the care for detail compels our absorbed presence at every scene; can we escape from any phase of Emma's slow agony by arsenical poisoning down to the last hideous detail: *et alors un flot de liqueurs noirs sortit, comme un vomissement de sa bouche...*, the portrayal of the main characters, above all the rigorous anatomy of Emma's mentality, the emergence in her psyche of false values and their progressive growth in a vapid personality, barren of intellectual resources; the mechanism of the spiritual and material degradation works with subtle precision. All the characters live as individuals, one at least—and others might qualify: Emma herself, Charles...—but one has graduated to the highest level of character creation—the type; Homais is a product of nineteenth-century France, the archetype of the petit-bourgeois, anti-clerical, in the first rank of the 'progressive' gadarene swine, devotee of Beranger. 'Monsieur' Homais had his living counterpart—'Monsieur' Thiers. The comparison is unfair to Thiers who had courage, who played a historic role in the 1870's and was one of the architects of the Third Republic (quite the most successful to date); that image of him remains full of years, dignity (a little pinched perhaps) and honour. But an earlier image? The journalistic historian fighting Napoleon's battles from his study chair. If the dates were not wrong one could imagine to judge from one of his letters that Flaubert had that image of Thiers in mind when he conceived Homais: 'L'Histore du Consulat... je pousse des rugissements. Il n'est pas possible d'être plus foncièrement médiocre et bourgeois que ce monsieur-là. Quel style!
et quelle philosophie! In the 1840's the hour of political power had not yet struck for Monsieur Homais and his kidney, but if in 1877 the famous '16 mai' was to fail, it was because an army of provincial Homais ready to scatter the 'Establishment' of the day was on the march towards the citadels of power; later again that army was to find its perfect political image in the Radical-Socialist party and the masonic lodges. Yes, Monsieur Homais is indeed rooted in nineteenth-century French history, but he is more; the bulging folds of his prudential egotism and unconscious smugness cover a whole area of the human ego.

Flaubert's craftsmanship takes many other forms: the wealth of details fitting into each other like marquetry, none of them gratuitous, all contributing to the development of the story. To take but one example: Homais's explosion of wrath in Emma's presence at Justin's carelessness gives Emma two bits of information that appear gratuitous at that moment: the existence of the jar of arsenic in the 'Capharnaum', where the key is kept. At the crisis these facts re-emerge suddenly on the conscious level of her mind, but how could she get possession of the key without the influence she wields on Justin by the distant adoration she has unintentionally inspired in him? Both facts are unimportant and are 'planted' with perfect naturalness, both are indispensable to the climax.

No author repays close textual analysis better than Flaubert—another proof of craftsmanship. A good example is the lunch-time scene at the Lion d'Or after the Bovarys' arrival at Yonville, the pseudo-intellectual conversation between Emma and Léon, the verbose interruptions of Homais, the whole punctuated by the banging door and the clatter of Artemise's clogs on the tiled floor; a composite picture where the artist's every touch is important and rich in suggestion: Emma's personality prepared to open like a flower at discovering in such an
unpromising place a twin-soul able to accompany her on her pathetic flights to higher things, the different levels the participants move on in the same conversation, each according to his nature and experience.

Emma's interview with Bournisien brings out, if anything more sharply, the tragic irony of a conversation where two people fail to make contact because they are not on the same wave-length. Nor should we omit the agricultural show which Flaubert handles like a concerto, the speeches from the platform and the band providing the orchestra, Emma and Rodolphe the violin, nor Emma's reverie as she sits on the boulevard seat in Rouen, her inner monologue provides an excellent example of Flaubert's care in composition, the 'style indirect libre', which Flaubert popularized, makes the reader move unawares from the external world: Rouen, the boulevard, the convent wall, the shade of the trees, to the internal world of Emma's nostalgic dreams and bitter sense of the vanity of it all, until suddenly both she (and he) are recalled to awareness of the surroundings by the clanging of the convent bell: 'un rôle métallique.... 'Emma, her thoughts, her surroundings, from one whole, so skilfully are the latter presented to the reader through her experience.

Flaubert's craftsmanship is also visible by his skilful exploitation of events or objects as symbols. Far be it from him, as author, to intervene personally (as Balzac does not hesitate to do) for fear the reader has failed in attention or percipience ('Je trouve même qu'un romancier n'a pas le droit d'exprimer son opinion [the italics are Flaubert's] sur quoi que ce soit. Est-ce que le bon Dieu l'a jamais dite, son opinion?); instead he has recourse to symbols that are there for the reader to pick up, and drift away in reverie: the role of the beggar, the faded wedding bouquet consumed in the flames, its embers rising 'comme des papillons noirs', the flaking plaster statue of the curé in
the garden, later smashed, and so on.

Then there is Flaubert the master of language. To the extent that the reader himself has struggled with sentences too long, too heavy with repetitions, too laden with relative clauses divorced from their antecedents, sentences cursed with floating present participles unrelated to the subject of the verb; if he has ever groped despairingly for the exact word, sought for a metaphor to give vigour to his 'thought', or considered at all accurately his tense sequence and has then passed from a mere sentence to the relationship of sentences to each other, their rhythm, their sound, their evocative power, the length of paragraphs; to the extent that he has ever suffered under the weight of these problems he will have some measure of 'les affres de l'art', 'les affres du style' that Flaubert groans about.

When, after a flight to nineteenth-century Normandy on Flaubert's magic carpet, the reader returns to awareness of himself and his own surroundings, he will be grateful for Flaubert's smooth percepption, for the precise word: 'il s'en allait ruminant son bonheur...', 'Un rale metallique...', for the metaphors and similes: 'il se sentit triste comme une maison démeublee...', 'la conversation de Charles était plate comme un trottoir...', 'l'ennui, araignée silencieuse, filait sa toile...', for the use of tenses, notably the pictorial imperfect, for the rigorous avoidance of relative clauses.

Flaubert's artistry in form and substance, achieved at so great a cost, has the smooth solidity of polished marble, the detached, multi-coloured, rounded perfection of a soap bubble floating in the still air.

We may admire all this and yet venture in the end to hazard one question:
is Emma Bovary fully convincing as a product of her milieu, in the same way for example as Anna Karenina is of hers? The analysis of her mentality is impeccable: 'Que de fois j'ai senti à mes meilleurs moments le froid scalpel qui m'entrait dans la chair! Bovary... sera sous ce rapport la somme de ma science psychologique...'. Indeed, yes. We all know that her particular attitude of mind (D'où venait donc cette insuffisance de la vie, cette pourriture instantanée des choses où elle s'appuyait...?; 'témissant toute félicité à la vouloir trop grande') has been isolated, docketed-le bovarysme, which drives its victim for ever to seek, condemns him never to find. In the critical essay already referred to, Baudelaire claims for ingenious reasons that Emma has the mentality of a man - this young woman, with, as they say, ideas above her station. Can the education of the convent, which is the alleged motivation, have itself produced such a result? "Il faut, par un effort d'esprit, se transporter dans ses personnages, et non les attirer à soi..." Flaubert, seeker if ever there was one after a perfection he could not find, may perhaps be taxed with some infidelity to his principle; did he not after all say 'Madame Bovary, c'est moi'?

From Yonville to ancient Carthage is a big leap. Several factors explain it. Ever since his childhood he had enjoyed reading history. Michelet's Histoire romaine had greatly impressed him; he had learnt fragments of it by heart, and in 1846 he had written to Maxime Du Camp: 'J'ai relu l'Histoire romaine de Michelet; l'Antiquité me donne le vertige... Quelques jours je m'en donnerai une saoullée...'. Then there was his discouragement at the treatment Madame Bovary had received at the hands of the government. 'On ne saura jamais ce qu'il fallut être triste pour entreprendre de ressusciter Carthage'.

The impressions of the Near East, of Egypt in particular, were vivid in his mind. Anxious as he was to avoid the sort of political interference he believed
had occurred over Madame Bovary, we can understand his welcoming the advice from his friend Gautier who himself was to turn to ancient times for inspiration, with some success: 'Prouve la variété de ta plume, ne refais pas le même roman. Va-t-en rêver sur les ruines de Troie ou sur les ruines de Carthage.'

A few months after the publication of Madame Bovary Flaubert began sketching a plan of Salammô. Not until the sixth was he satisfied; he started writing the novel on 1 September, but soon found he could make no satisfactory headway, without going to see for himself; his journey to North Africa ensued (April to June 1858), not for archaeological exploration — after Scipio's destruction of Carthage, the remains of the ancient Phoenician city are vestigial — but to get visual impressions of the country, to gaze from the heights of Sidi-Bou-Said on the site where Hamilcar's ships were once fitted out to fight the Romans, on the rocky defiles and desert tracks he was to people with the mercenary hordes under Matho in their struggle with the Phoenicians, destroyed in the very spot where centuries later Rommel's Afrikakorps was finally defeated.

As an imaginative archaeological reconstitution, Salammbo (1862) may be remarkable; as a novel its impact is much more debatable and Flaubert himself indirectly suggests the reason: 'Les métaphores m'inquiètent peu à vrai dire... mais ce qui me turlupine, c'est le côté psychologique de mon histoire.' The characters remain mysterious, over-simplified or lacking inner life. Salammbô herself is no more interesting as a character than the rest. With a flicker of surprise we note in her a faint resemblance to Emma: 'Alors elle examina le zaimph; et quand elle l'eut bien contemplé elle fut surprise de ne pas avoir ce bonheur qu'elle s'imaginait autrefois. Elled restait melancolique dans son reve accompli. Either Flaubert was so intent on giving concrete form to his vision of ancient
Carthage that he lost interest in the characters, or alternatively these were too shadowy for him to penetrate the mystery time had wrapped about them; whichever is the reason they are little more than figures in a highly coloured pageant, where the dramatic interest, if such it is, is provided by no more than an adventure story, of epic proportions admittedly, but without the merit of being fast moving, and full of hideous cruelty (diverse crucifixions, the death of Matho), dwelt upon, it seems, with delectation.

The labours of research Flaubert had undertaken could not give life to the pageant, but they at least gave Flaubert the satisfaction of being able to refute, with chapter and verse, criticisms and suggested inaccuracies misguidedly put forward by Sainte-Beuve (the opposition must oppose, the critic must criticize) who was much less competent on the matter than Flaubert. Such must be the satisfaction (rare) of the scholar. Like the poems of Leconte de Lisle, which it so much resembled in spirit, Salammbo is the sort of book that lent itself to richly illustrated luxury editions by artists with a similarly ornate vision. Composers, too, were attracted—Berlioz (1803-69), but he did not live to realize his intention, and Reyer (1823-1909). Nor were film-producers slow to appreciate the potentialities of its gorgeous pageantry.

Something of the transference of emphasis evident in Salammbo from character to scene occurs in the second version of L'Education Sentimentale, to which Flaubert was to devote over five years (April 1864—May 1869). In complexity of structure and care for detail Flaubert surpasses here anything he had hitherto accomplished. The 'planting of clues' which become effective later is more subtle and more continuous than in Madame Bovary; like the spectator of a 'thriller' the reader needs to be on the alert if he is to notice a host of details that assume their full importance slowly as the vast panorama unfolds.
There are two levels of interest, skillfully interlocked, the level of the characters, and that of the historical events. At the centre of the former, the Frédéric Moreau, M. and Madame Arnoux. Underlying the mysterious attitude of Marie Arnoux to Frédéric and the cordial yet equivocal relationship between Frédéric and Arnoux, the enterprising but in the end unsuccessful business tycoon with artistic interests, are the vivid memories of Flaubert's relationship with Maurice and Elisa Schlesinger. Like a delicate thread now hidden, now reappearing, the love story of Frédéric and Marie Arnoux runs through the whole novel, full of reticence and unspoken thoughts, the pair never meet, as it were, on the same emotional or spiritual plane: unfulfilment is the key-word, culminating in the auction room scene where Marie's poor effects are up for sale, and Frédéric finally breaks with Madame Dambreuse, goaded as he is to a semblance of energetic action by the latter's triumphant cruelty and by a nostalgic sense of 'might-have been's. The story is a searing contribution, subdued yet eloquent, to the chronicle of frustration the novel sets out to be.

Marie Arnoux has a certain remoteness throughout the novel, perhaps this arises from the character of Elisa or from the mystery, as yet unresolved, of her relationship with her first husband Emile Judeé and his tacit acceptance of the triangular situation with Maurice Schlesinger. Arnoux himself is more clearly delineated and seems to correspond closely with the reality of Maurice.

What of Frédéric? If we set aside his relationship with M. and Madame Arnoux, he seems to reflect less of Flaubert personally than Henry Gosseline and Jules of the first version did, in whom we have seen a record of Flaubert's intellectual development. Admittedly a Flaubertian pessimism hangs about Frédéric like a damp mist ('Frédéric s'enfonçait dans sa tristesse...', un matin qu'il ruminait
sa mélancolie...'; 'Ma vie est si triste', a catena of passages in support of that assertion is easy to make), but the reader may justifiably derive the impression that Frédéric is observed from the outside, that he is therefore less a projection of his creator's inner self than the 'personal' novels of the Romantic generation were of their authors, that he is a phenomenon like any other, studied with detachment.

This novel of Flaubert's, with its theme — Romantic indeed—sustains a note of sorrow throughout, which calls up memories of Werther, Obermann, Rene, Adolphe, Amaury, Jacques, Dominique and their like, the passive and melancholic generation of Romantics, and in a second group, the ambitious go-getters, Lucien de Rubempré, Julien Sorel, Fabrice, Lucien Leuwen, Rastignac. But whether the defeat that overcomes most of them arises from metaphysical anguish (e.g. Oberman, René) or is a result of energies misdirected (e.g. Lucien de Rubempré, Julien Sorel), the overriding impression is of vigorous characters, at least in their pride (e.g. René, Lara Manfred) or their thought (Obermann, Adolphe, Amaury) or their actions (Jean Sbogar, Lucien de Rubempré, Vautrin, Julien Sorel) — some of the 'go-getters' (Rastignac and Co.) achieve positive results. Nor should we forget that amongst the Romantic men of action, some, full of moral uprightness, are out to punish wrong-doers, and thus conveniently avenge society as well as themselves (Dumas père's heroes).

Flaubert, with the strong Romantic influences of his youth, has evidently not created Frederic and his friends without a back-ward look at the Romantic heroes, but the impression they convey is different. Frederic is irresolute; he has not even the energy in despair (like Werther) to commit suicide: 'Des nues sombres couraient sur la face de la lune. Il la contempla, en rêvant à la grandeur des espaces, à la misère de la vie, au néant de tout! Le jour
parut, ses dents claquaient; et, à moitié endormi, mouillé par le brouillard et tout plein de larmes, il se demanda pourquoi n'en pas finir? Rien qu'un mouvement à faire! Le poids de son front l'entraînait, il voyait son cadavre flottant sur l'eau; Frédéric se pencha. Le parapet était un peu large, et ce fut par lassitude qu'il n'essaya pas de le franchir. Deslauriers is indeed full of ambition—a second Rastignac to the fray! So are others—Arnoux first and foremost.

But, one way or another, all seem to be overwhelmed by forces too big for them: Frédéric and Deslauriers are borne down by the flaws in their own nature: 'J'avais trop de logique, et toi de sentiment', a mysterious 'Hoodoo' brings all Arnoux's schemes to nought; Hussonnet, the publicity man, is futile, Regimbart, the café politician, vainly vituperative, Pellerin, the artist, full of words rather than performance. Dussardier, the only attractive character in the book, belongs to the group of men destined to be exploited by everyone: 'Il y a des hommes n'ayant pour mission parmi les autres que de servir d'intermédiaires; on les franchit comme les ponts et l'on va plus loin.' He is killed in the end—supreme irony—by his friend, that sinister Cato, Sénécal. This little event, one of millions that add up to a fleeting moment in the life of a big city, could be taken as particularly symbolic of the whole book. Sénécal turned policeman cuts down Dussardier, in defence of order; he has abdicated his personality and acts as the blind agent of a higher power.

There is no sense in all this of fulfilment, even tragic; the key-words are abdication, frustration, hopelessness; the overriding impact, melancholy depression; and admirably Flaubert conveys it: 'Alors, il frissonna, pris d'une tristesse glaciale comme s'il avait aperçu des mondes entiers de misère et de désespoir, un réchaud de charbon près d'un lit de sangle, et les cadavres de la Morgue en tablier de cuir, avec le robinet d'eau froide qui coule sur leurs cheveux.'
The impact is all the stronger because we are not witnessing so much a series of individual defeats as the bankruptcy of a generation, irremediable, hopeless, the Romantic generation that had seen its dreams finally swept away by the 'June Days'. So much for individual hopes and desires.

The importance of contemporaneous events in *L'Education Sentimentale* (II) needs no emphasizing. In the first two parts, historical events are kept in the background, but are skilfully suggested for example by the person of M. Dambreuse, aristocrat (alias Cte d'Ambreuse) turned high bourgeois, he represents in his person the 'Establishments' of both Restoration and July Monarchy, the latter actively promoting and exploiting for its own advantage (Frederic could have had his 'cut' too, for the asking) the industrial revolution. In Part III history comes into the foreground, as the story moves on to 1884 the individuals concerned seem dwarfed, submerged by the flood of events. At that very time Frederic characteristically goes off to Fontainebleau with Rosanette, Paris becoming the prey of the mob, vast impersonal force: 'le ciel orageux chauffait l'électricité de la multitude, elle tourbillonnait sur elle-même, indécise, avec un large balancement de houle; et l'on sentait dans ses profondeurs une forces incalculable et comme l'énergic d'un élément.' The scenes Flaubert evokes from the euphoric February revolution to the 'June Days' are drawn from his personal experience, from other eye-witness' accounts, from newspapers. In the historical frescoes Flaubert paints, one omission is striking: the renewal of influence enjoyed by the Catholic Church in and after 1848; what reader of *L'Education Sentimentale* (II) would suspect it? Indeed, if anything, the impression would be the other way. Mere oversight? Or was it distasteful to the Voltairian liberal that Flaubert was, to see the prestige of Rome so high, to recall the selfless heroism of Monseigneur Affre, Archbishop of Paris, killed by a stray bullet whilst attempting to stop the fighting? If so, he missed an
opportunity of bringing out the irony (so dear to him) of events, by portraying
the bourgeoisie after the 'June Days' returning to the Roman fold, as an insurance
against red revolution, and more ironic still, the chorus of adulation showered
on Napoleon III by the clergy, superior and inferior. Not that irony is lacking
in the kaleidoscope of events Flaubert portrays: the tragi-comedy of the 'Clubs'
with a Spanish patriot from Barcelona as fraternal delegate addressing the unruly
audience in his native tongue none can understand, old Roque, to restore his
morale, shooting down a helpless prisoner asking for bread; the glistening luxury,
after the troubles, of the dinner at the Dambreuses, with the guests exchanging
horror stories. Flaubert treats both sides with impartial contempt: 'le fanatisme
des intérêts équilibre les délires du besoin, l'aristocratie eut les fureurs de la
crapule et le bonnet de cotton ne se montra pas moins hideux que le bonnet
rouge.'

Most generations have their burden of pessimisms, but its focus, like that of
optimism, tends to shift. In the Romantic generation, pessimism was metaphysical,
the individual marked out for suffering being the centre of interest; conversely
the current of messianic optimism was also a form of egotism, the individual
seeing himself as the instrument of providence, as the bearer of a message
of good tidings.

The pessimism that oozes from the second version of _L'Education Sentimentale_
in the portrayal both of individuals and of events reflects the attitudes of the
post-1848 generation as well as Flaubert's. The individual seemed no longer
to hold the centre of the stage as the Romantics liked to think. Satisfaction,
even of a sour kind, could no longer be obtained from the contemplation of
one's own suffering, nor salvation in the expenditure of energy or the exercise
of the individual will, it must be sought in knowledge. Science was the order
of the day and, as in the previous generation, a conflict occurs between optimists and pessimists, the former proclaiming the inestimable benefits that science has in store, the latter, with Flaubert in the van, asking what it could teach except that man was a clog in the universal mechanism, subject to the laws of nature, which takes no notice of mice or men. Thus, bankruptcy of Romanticism and abdication of the individual, therein lies a lesson the Naturalists were to follow, and we can understand what Banville meant when in reference to Flaubert's novel he claimed that from it 'tout le roman contemporain était sorti.' If the first version of the novel has a clear relationship with the title, the second is more like a vast ironic commentary on the idea of education, both sentimental and political; it might more fittingly and on a different level of awareness recall Balzac's famous novel: *Illusions Perdues.*

With another set of unheroic heroes behind him, Flaubert took up again what he regarded as the central work of his life: 'Au milieu de mes chagrins, j'achève mon Saint Antoine. C'est l'oeuvre de toute ma vie puisque la première idée m'en est venue en 1845 à Génes devant un tableau de Breughel et depuis... je n'ai cesse d'y songer et de faire des lectures afférentes'.

He had set aside the first version (1849) in deference to the views of Maxime Du Camp and Louis Bouilhet; he had abandoned a second version (1856); the third he succeeded in completing (1872). He was free here to give rein to his powerful imagination and to portray St. Anthony assailed in his desert refuge by divine temptations. For a saintly hermit, the most dangerous is that of religious doubts on the nature of God, the meaning of life and death. The devil obligingly conjures up visions before St. Anthony's feverish eyes that indeed suggest a nightmare picture by Brueghel or fore-shadow some surrealist canvas by Salvador Dali. In his final assaults the devil takes on two forms...
simultaneously, an old hag (death) and a young woman (lust), whose conflicting attractions recall passages from *Memoires d'un fou* and *November*; 'Viens', cries the old hag, 'je suis la consolation, le repos, l'oubli, l'éternelle sérénité!', and the other: 'Je suis l'endormeuse, la joie, la vie, le bonheur inépuisable'.

But St. Anthony rejects them both and seems to break through at last to the underlying and final truth: 'Encore une fois c'est le Diable, et sous son double aspect—l'esprit de formation et l'esprit de destruction. Aucun des deux ne m'épouvante. Je repousse le bonheur, et je me sens éternel.'

One question still troubles him: if there be some ultimate uniform substance of life, why the variety of ephemeral forms? The final visions are of a jumble of forms with the spirit of life pulsating through them all. The nightmare resolves itself in joy. St. Anthony experiences a sense of liberation: 'O bonheur! bonheur! j'ai vu naître la vie, j'ai vu le mouvement commencer...'. His concluding message appears to be that under the endless and meaningless succession of varied and ephemeral forms matter itself contains the principle of life; in a word, materialism.

The message lacks originality, perhaps importance, for anyone other than Flaubert; for him it appears to underpin the sense of the ephemeral so strongly developed in him and which on the levels of life he is concerned with as an artist, drives him on urgently to capture the fleeting moment, the fading illusion, and imprison them in formal beauty, like an insect in a crystal, for ever.

Barely two months after he finished *La Tentation de Saint Antoine*, Flaubert was writing to Madame des Genettes about his projects: 'Je vais commencer un livre qui va m'occuper pendant plusieurs années...'. He was diverted from
his intention by a reawakening interest in the theatre. One previous attempt in collaboration with Louis Bouilhet, Le Château des Coeurs (1863), had been refused by a succession of theatre managers. Louis Bouilhet had left the scenario for another play with the title of Le Sexe Faible which, Flaubert, for the sake of Bouilhet's heir, agreed to write (1873). It was no more successful than Le Château des Coeurs. Undeterred, Flaubert then wrote a play of his own, Le Candidat (1874), which did at least get on the stage, only to be a resounding failure. At a time when politics had sprung once more into vigorous life the subject was topical enough, but Flaubert had not reckoned with political passions. His characteristically objective attitude could please no one; was the author a royalist, a Bonapartist, a republican? In the absence of a clear answer from beyond the footlights, the critics were all equally dissatisfied. Flaubert withdrew the piece after four performances. He was free to return to his 'deux bonshommes Bouvard et Pécuchet', the epitome of 'petit bourgeois' pretentiousness and stupidity.

Flaubert's natural pessimism was increased at this time by the death not only of his mother, but of a number of friends; financial difficulties assailed him. He who had never written with an eye for gain or popularity, suddenly found himself obliged to think of both. He was only in his early fifties, but old age and certainly a real sense of solitude was seeping in on the 'hermit of Croisset'. Is there not a strong personal note in the description of the two friends' life in the country, at a particular moment of defeat: 'Donc ils vivaient dans cet ennui de la campagne, si lourd quand le ciel blanc caresse de sa monotonie un coeur sans espoir.' Does not the singular here, rather than the plural—'les coeurs', suggest that Flaubert's thought has switched from 'ces deux bonshommes' to himself? The suspicion is strengthened by the next sentence, where instead of the descriptive 'ils écoutaient', which would be natural if the writer had
the image of the two friends in his mind, he writes: 'On écoute le pas d'un homme en sabots... ou les gouttes de la pluie tomber du toit par terre. De temps à autre, une feuille morte vient frôler la vitre, puis tournoie, s'enva...'. Both the impersonal 'on' and the present tense lend force to the view that Flaubert's thought was turned in on himself.

If only Bouvard et Pécuchet could have afforded him some emotional relief. But Flaubert appreciated the formidable nature of his project and for the remainder of his life he was to be torn between his determination to personify his idea of the overwhelming force of human stupidity, of bourgeois mediocrity, and the difficulty of giving interest to a story that does not progress psychologically, where the responses of ardour and discouragement follow each other in regular succession. Bouvard et Pécuchet was to be the final and most eloquent orchestration of an idea which, ever since the days of his Léçon d'histoire naturelle, Genre Commis, had been a 'leitmotif of his novels—the efforts of Bouvard and Pecuchet to be farmers, horticulturists, chemists, archaeologists, literary and dramatic critics, amateur actors, economists, gymnasts, magnetizers, quacks, foster-parents and pedagogues get them nowhere—another tale of bankruptcy, just as Madame Bovary and L'Education Sentimentale (II) had been, with this difference; bankruptcy is on the plane of feeling in these two works, on the plane of intellect in Bouvard. The two friends are not drawn so much in hatred as with a detached contempt; their defeat is the price of their belief that knowledge and scientific skills of any kind can be acquired for the asking, without immense effort and method. Their efforts are so obviously inadequate that they are grotesque and this gives a certain vitality, the vitality of caricature. Occasional scenes reward the plodding reader, notably when the wave of euphory, moving outwards from Paris after the success of the February Revolution, hits the little village of Chavignolles where the two friends live. 'Bouffon' would
doubtless have been Flaubert's word to describe the scene.

In the autumn of 1875, groaning at the difficulties of his novel, he seeks relief elsewhere—La légende de St. Julien L'Hospitalier. The contrast between this story and Bouvard suggests an image of Flaubert escaping to the remote solitude of a medieval church from some restaurant, filled with the smell of 'caporal' tobacco, fried fat and 'pinard', the platitudes of the surfeited customers, as they sit meditatively picking their teeth, buzzing in Flaubert's ears.

From the medieval scene and mentality, Flaubert roams still further back in time to the days of Herod Antipas, and endeavours to throw some light on the psychological mechanism of that ruler, of his ageing unloved wife Herodias and Salome, her daughter.

Of the Trois contes (1877) the most successful is Un Coeur Simple, evoking his own childhood reminiscences of people and scenes from Pont-l'Evêque and Trouville. The story is a tender but unsentimentalized study of Félicité, faithful servant of Madame Aubain, whom she survives and mourns we might wonder why, but for the habit of humble souls to accept as their lot in this world the heartlessness shown to them, giving pathetic fidelity in return. Félicité recalls Catherine Leroux in Madame Bovary, but is a more finished portrait.

The pattern of Flaubert's mature works gave rise to the theory popularized by Emile Faguet of the two natures uneasily harnessed in him, the Romantic and the Realist, each demanding recognition and receiving it alternately, the former with Salammbô, La Tentation, La Légende de St Julien and Herodias, the latter with Madame Bovary, L'Education Sentimentale (II), Bouvard et Pécuchet, and Un Coeur Simple; a tidy notion, deluding in its clarity, and
scarcely corresponding with the facts.

In his youth Flaubert had been strongly influenced by the Romantic fashions and tastes of the time; he was the first to recognize it; the early autobiographical works and in particular the analysis of Henry Gosselin and Jules in *L'Education Sentimentale* (1), make the point where maturity for him begins; thereafter, his works should not be thought of as in two categories: Romantic and Realist, according to the time background: past or contemporary; in all of them the same attitude to art is apparent, transcending the demands of this or that literary school, rooted in an uncompromising pessimism. Various factors may have contributed to that: the Rouen hospital — grey depressing background of his formative years, the materialist ideas he imbibed in the family circle, Romantic literary influences, the tragedy of his love for Elisa Schlesinger, the epileptic condition(?) that hung over him; later, post 1848 depressions, the spiritual loneliness of this provincial 'Alceste', living in what the seventeenth century would doubtless have referred to as 'un désert', financial misfortunes, critics' attacks. But underlying all these factors, which, with the exception of the nerve malady, have their parallels in the lives of most men who do not all take the same pessimistic road, is the nature of the man, a mystery inevitably. What is not a mystery is the resultant attitude to life: 'la vie après tout n'est elle pas une indigestion continue?' Down the years, his correspondence is studded with similar reflexions, like black pearls: 'L'homme est un composé instable, et la terre une planète bien inférieure... —ephemeral forms, with no purpose, a succession of illusions: 'Je ne crois seulement qu'à l'éternité d'une chose, c'est à celle de l'illusion, qui est la vraie vérité. Toutes les autres ne sont que relations.'

The escape to art does not appear inevitable in these circumstances; fatalistic
inertia might equally ensue, but for Flaubert art provided the necessary psychological compensation, the only plane where true joys are to be found, a kind of revenge perhaps, the only revenge a man can have for the hopelessness of the human situation: out of the grim non-sense of the world to build the sense, the ordered beauty of a work of art. C'est une chose délicieuse que d'écrire, que de ne plus être soi, mais de circuler dans toute la création dont on parle. Aujourd'hui, par exemple, homme et femme, tout ensemble, amant et maîtresse à la fois, je me suis promené à cheval dans une forêt par une après-midi d'automne sous les feuilles jaunes, et j'étais les chevaux, les feuilles, le vent, les paroles qu'on se disait et le soleil rouge qui faisait s'entrefermer leurs paupières noyés d'amour. At least, one joy was not denied him—artistic creation.

For Flaubert this dedication to literature implied intensity of observation, historical accuracy, immense care for form, both linguistic and in plot construction. In this conjunction of qualities Realist writers and critics of the day, content to see no further than the surface to things, found their reasons for pigeon-holing him as a Realist, and Flaubert found his for rejecting that view indignantly: 'j'exècre... le réalisme', to us he appears more as a high-priest of art for art's sake: 'L'homme n'est rien, l'oeuvre est tout.... Je recherche par-dessus tout la beauté'.

It is a commonplace that French Romantic poets devoted much energy to revealing and analysing their own feelings and experiences. But interest in the self went beyond this superficial egoism. A more authentic form of self-analysis is to be found in certain early prose works. Senancour in Oberman (1804) proclaims that 'a man's real life is within him', but takes the view that, in the determination of who or what he is, a man cannot consider himself in total isolation: 'An isolated being is never perfect, his existence is incomplete'. As Matthew Arnold
succinctly puts it in his notes to his poem 'Stanzas in memory of the author of Obermann':

_Though Obermann, a collection of letters from Switzerland treating almost entirely of nature and of the human soul, may be called a sork of sentiment, Senancour has a gravity and severity which distinguish him from all other writers of the sentimental school. The world is with him in his solitude farless than it is with them; of all writers he is the most perfectly isolated and the least attiitudinising... The stir of all the main forces by which modern life is and has been impelled lives in the letters of Obermann; the dissolving agencies of the eighteenth century, the fiery storm of the French Revolution, the first faint promise and dawn of that new world which our own time is but now more fully bringing to light—all these are to be felt, almost to be touched there._

There are in _Oberman_ no definitive answers to the problem of knowledge, but there is a clear assertion of the relationship between the problems of the individual and those of his environment and époque.

Senancour also touches upon the issue raised by Chateaubriand in his _Mémoires d'Outre-Tombe_—that of the continuity of the self. Certain introspective novelists of the period, Sainte-Beuve in _Volupté_ (1834) and Fromentin in _Dominique_ (1863), pragmatically assume the consistency of the human personality. Senancour at least recognises the importance of inconsistency within an individual's experience. Chateaubriand considers the significance of such inconsistency at a rather deeper level: 'If man did but confine his changes to change of place! But his life and his heart must be always changing too'. In _Mémoires d'Outre-Tombe_ he
constantly finds that his personality is subject to the law of flux. Familiar and once important objects, events or places lose their value in a different temporal context: 'Dieppe is empty of my self, it was another me, a self of days long gone by, who once inhabited this place, and this self has passed, for our past dies before we do.'

Yet the attempt to come to terms with this discontinuity of the self without stepping outside the psychological limits of the self—though it is implicit, as will be seen, in Constant's Adolphe, only became important at the end of the century, in the work of André Gide and later of Marcel Proust. Instead, certain writers, notably Gautier, explore the idea that the discontinuity can be transcended on a supernatural plane. Charles Nodier (1780-1844), with Smarra (1821), Trilby (1822) and La Fée aux miettes (1832), had already linked such relevant issues as the nature of dreams and the definition of sanity with the supernatural in the form of popular Gothic fantasy. But his malignant sprites do not have the symbolic value of, say, Christina Rossetti's 'Goblin Market'. He plainly uses the supernatural as a literary device. Gautier in some of his Contes fantastiques (1831-52) and in Spirite (1865) studies the relation of the self and the supernatural in a much more serious fashion. He suggests that the conscious mind conceals a mysterious alternative reality in which conventional time and distance cease to apply, allowing man not only to be coherent with earlier states of his own self but also to commune with other souls. In Arria Marcella the hero Octavien has a great potential love that he cannot realise in the context of physical reality.

However, though Octavien's desire momentarily brings to life the vanished world of Pompeii and the exotic figure of the Roman courtesan, he is denied the consummation of his passion and returns to a discontented and distracted life in the present: Gautier sardonically marries him off to a very practical English-
woman called Ellen. This frustration of union is significant. It occurs in many of Gautier's stories, is implicit in some of his poems and essential to his finest novel, *Mademoiselle de Maupin* (1835-6), where the sexual ambiguities of Shakespeare's *As You Like It* are used to symbolise the self yearning for a completion in love which is not attainable because reality is never totally transcended.

Malivert will achieve the ultimate harmony, denied to Louis Lambert in Balzac's novel of that name, by a process of gradual purification similar to that undergone by the androgynous Séraphita-Séraphitus in Balzac's *Seraphita*. The problems of the self, for Gautier, can only be solved by abandoning the call of reality altogether and looking to the mysterious possibilities of the world beyond.

The idea that happiness lies in the exclusion of the physical world and the attainment of a new sphere accessible only to the self is not one only cultivated by writers interested in the fantastic. Its greatest exponent among 'realists' is Flaubert, whose *Three Tales* has as its central and underlying image that of man shedding his contacts with society in the pursuit, conscious or not, of sainthood. The three stories are very different in matter, each relating superficially to one of Flaubert's novels. The first, 'A Simple Heart', it set, like *Madame Bovary* and *Education sentimentale*, in mid-nineteenth-century France. It describes the uneventful life of a peasant, Felicity, from girlhood to decrepit old age and death. The second, 'The Legend of Saint Julian the Hospitaller', is, like *La Tentation de St. Antoine*, an apparently straight-faced retelling of a Christian legend. The third, 'Herodias', takes place, like *Salammbô*, in antiquity, and shows Herod Antipas, the events leading to the famous dance of Salome, and the death of John the Baptist. The differences in subject are, however, less significant than the unity of meaning. In 'A Simple Heart' we witness the
stripping bare of a human soul. In youth Felicity has her one love affair thwarted, the object of her affections, Theodore, prefers to marry a rich old woman who can buy him out of conscription into the army. When Felicity's would-be lover is taken away, she goes into the service of Mme Aubain. Each person to whom she gives herself willingly is taken away from her: Mme Aubain's children, Paul and Virginie, whom Felicity adores, go away to school; her nephew Victor, on whom she has lavished great affection, goes to sea as a cabin-boy and dies. Virginie contracts consumption and also dies. Felicity turns her attention to refugees, to the chronic sick, and eventually to a parrot, Loulou, first alive, later stuffed. When the natural course of events has torn from her everybody to whom she has ever become emotionally attached—Paul being married and Mme Aubain dead—the process of deprivation and isolation is not complete. For already Felicity has begun to experience that deprivation of the senses not unusual in old age, firstly a growing deafness, later blindness. At the same time she has retained a naive religious faith, in which her one remaining possession, the stuffed parrot, has become inextricably confused with the image of the Holy Ghost. The whole tale thus moves relentlessly through the process of denying Felicity all lasting and meaningful contact with the world outside herself—though 'meaningful' is a relative term, for the people involved, Theodore, the children, Victor and Mme Aubain, have only exploited her for their own profit. At the climax of the action, Felicity dedicates her one remaining possession, Loulou, to the religion with which she indentified him, by sending him to be carried in the procession for the Fete-Dieu. The famous final tableau, which has to be described to her by a neighbour, is really only accessible to her through her one remaining intact sense, smell: 'A blue vapour climbed up into Felicity's room. She strained her nostrils forward, drawing it in with a mystical sensuality.' As she dies, the apotheosis of the parrot Holy Spirit welcomes her to the supreme happiness. Dispossession
of the things of this world has been identified with the attainment of the ultimate spiritual experience: '... and as she breathed her last breath, she thought she saw in the heavens opening above her a gigantic parrot soaring above her head'.

This process of gradual isolation is speeded up in the case of St. Julian. Flaubert sticks fairly closely to the traditional form of the legend. The young Julian, who is an ardent huntsman, flees his family to avoid a prophecy that he will kill his own parents. He becomes rich and famous in exile, marries, but fulfils the prophecy by a terrible error. His crime is eventually expiated by service as hermit and ferryman, and he is received into heaven. In Flaubert's telling of the tale, the worldly and spiritual aspects of Julian's character are polarised from the start in his father's vision that the child will become a general and his mother's that he will become a saint. But he is soon torn from his family by the threat posed in the prophecy, and the attempt to achieve an alternative physical happiness is brought to an end by the frenzied murder of the old people who turn out to be his parents. As a hermit, Julian lives in the total seclusion from reality which the narrow walls of his hut aptly symbolise. His ascension to heaven is the natural climax to the process of purification.

In Herodias the case is more complex, for the figure parallel to Felicity and Julian is already completely isolated from physical ties throughout the story; this is John the Baptist—who is incarcerated in the deepest dungeon of Herod's palace at Machaerus. Apart from Samuel Beckett, no one has yet succeeded in making so complete a case of claustration the subject of a work of art. Flaubert uses John as an ever-present force rather than a central character, contrasting him with Herod, who is also a study in claustration but the complete antithesis to John. For Herod suffers from all the earthly bonds. He is politically confined in his citadel, though he burns within for power and
conquests, as is symbolised by the pent-up vigour of the white stallions stabled deep inside the citadel. Equally, he is subject to the tyranny of the flesh, in the person of Salome; his lust for her overrides his religious scruples and leads him to sacrifice John. This contrast between John the ascetic and Herod the indulger is portrayed against a series of set-pieces recording the tensions and frustrations of politics, and the domination of gluttony and sexual greed over finer instinct, in a wide range of Roman and Jewish characters. Only John, by his death, achieves the happiness that others seek in material ends.

Or does he? Here is the nub of the problem. If in each of his tales Flaubert presents a figure who attains sainthood via a retreat into the self, it is not without carefully established ambiguity as to the value of the religious experience achieved. From the start of 'A Simple Heart' Felicity is shown as naive, not to say stupid. If her desire to be shown on the map the whereabouts of Victor's house in Havana is used to satirise the nasty lawyer who makes fun of the innocent peasant, it is also a reminder of the limits of her intelligence. So that it is no surprise if her acceptance of religious doctrine and practice is unthinking. The confusion between parrot and cheap coloured postcards of the Holy Ghost leads to the delusion of the final image, the gigantic parrot hovering in heaven. And the tentative 'she thought she saw' stresses the individual, unvouchsafed nature of the vision.

In the case of St. Julian, a similar undermining of the metaphysical element in the story is ever more thoroughly carried out by the possible psychological interpretations left open by Flaubert. Julian's father has his vision of the child's future after a very heavy party; Julian's mother has hers in the exhausted state following childbirth. Julian's first act of destruction, the killing of a mouse in church, shows the child to have a straightforward sadistic streak. Is Julian
perhaps something of an hysteric? Are the stag's prophecy, the mystic hunt before his parents' death and the final encounter with Christ not attributable to physical conditions and psychological malaise? Again, as with A Simple Heart, the final image is almost comic. Julian soars up to heaven in the arms of a Christ who has swelled until he bursts through the roof of the hermit's hut. The apotheosis is, to say the least, dubiously acceptable:

Then the leper clasped him; and suddenly his eyes took on the brightness of the stars; his hair grew as long as the rays of the sun; the breath from his nostrils was as sweet as the scent of roses; a cloud of incense rose up from the room, the waters were singing. Yet an abundance of exquisite pleasure flooded down upon the soul of the swooning Julian, and he in whose arms he was so tightly held grew even bigger until his head and his feet touched the two walls of the hut. The roof flew off, the firmament unrolled; and Julian rose up towards the blue void, face to face with Our Lord Jesus Christ, who was carrying him up into heaven.

It is in Herodias that the universal validity of individual religious experience is most thoroughly questioned. The climax to the story, John's decapitation, is the pendant to the portrait of a banquet which, not unlike a scene in Voltaire's Zadig, reduces all religious and philosophical beliefs to the same level by representing their adherents as similarly superstitious and intolerant. Flaubert takes care that the group of banqueters includes one Christian, for whom Iaokanann is the reincarnation of the prophet Elijah. The single-mindedness of John the Baptist and the sincerity of his self-sacrifice are not called into doubt. The truth of his revelation is quietly put into the perspective of other such beliefs and claims. The scene prepares us, in some measure, for the end of the tale.
The apotheosis of John apparently concludes the story on a triumphant note. Had the last words been these, there would have been no doubt of the positive value of the message:

*One of the men said to him: 'Console yourself! He has descended among the dead to announce the coming of Christ.' Now the Essenian understood those words: 'I must diminish, that he may grow.'*

*And all three of them, taking the head of laokinann, set off in the direction of Galilee.*

But there is one more sentence, completely deflating the solemnity of the occasion: 'As it was very theavy, they carried it alternately.' By this grotesque touch, the apotheosis, like that of Julian and Felicity, is reduced once more to an experience valid only for the individual himself.

Flaubert, in the *Trois contes*, suggests that, only within the self, purified of contrat with the pressures and the attractions of the external world, is happiness and fulfilment possible, but that the religious experience which is the focus for such self-claustration is an entirely illusory one. If we compare the achievements of Felicity, Julian and John with those, in the novels, of Emma Bovary, Frédéric Moreau or St. Antony, it is clear that the view of the self propounded in the *Troiscontes* is consistent with that of the other works. Emma tries to translate her dissatisfaction with things as they are into a series of conventional images of happiness, and then to impose these images upon the people around her. Frederic, his friend Deslauriers, and the whole generation for whom they are symbols, also try to match the yearnings of the inner self to the requirements of the external world. Such attempts are doomed to failure. Only St. Antony
learns the deceptiveness of the material world and the senses through which
he has contact with it. He struggles through to the final victory, the vision
of Christ:

At last dawn came; and as when one lifts back the curtains of a tabernacle,
golden clouds curling back in broad spirals uncovered the sky.

In the very middle, in the disc of the sun itself, shone the face of
Jesus Christ.

This final vision is merely the ultimate delusion. To Flaubert the only meaningful
world is indeed the inner world of the self, but its fulfilment can only be at
the price of transcendent self-deception.

As important to the development of prose fiction as the invasion of the self
into the subject matter of stories and novels was the effect of the techniques
of fiction introduced in order to express the limitations of individually perceived
reality. The first modern novel, in this sense, is probably Benjamin Constant's
Adolphe (1816). The eighteenth century had never questioned the assumption
that character patterns are predictable and closely related to the social milieu
in which a character evolves. A man develops linearly, affected only by new
external inclusions. The realities of the world about him are capable of accurate
analysis and record by the perceptive individual. When, in early nineteenth-
century fiction, such as Chateaubriand's Rene (1805), a character is introduced
who retrospectively reviews the actions and emotions of his own youth, there
is no suggestion of a discontinuity between the past and present character of
the narrator, nor is there any hint that the world about him can be seen differently
from the way he sees it (cf Thackeray's Henry Esmond). Adolphe, however,
despite its early date, poses exactly those problems.

If everything that Adolphe sees and feels is coloured by his own personality, how much more true is this of the characters of Flaubert's novels. Constant suggests that the external world exerts harmful pressures upon the inner man. Flaubert suggests that it offers dangerous distractions. For Emma Bovary and Frédéric Moreau see the world as their moods dictate, reality becoming thereby a strictly relative concept. Our appreciation of Madame Bovary as a novel depends upon our awareness of the multiplicity of points of view so orchestrated that no one character has a truer vision of the world than any other. In the novels of Stendhal or Balzac, as in most nineteenth-century English novels, the surface of society is carefully conveyed to us by the author, however critical he may be of that surface. The world therefore is a unity. For Flaubert there are no such truths, only questions of perspective. Madame Bovary explores not merely the disastrous gap between Emma's view of reality and an actual reality, but the gap between Emma's view of reality and an actual reality, but the gap between the conspiracy of society to call certain things reality and the attempt of Emma herself, hampered by the limitations of conventional language, to penetrate beyond the world of agreed conventions to inner truths valid perhaps only for herself. Some-what of a blend of Dorothea and Rosamund in George Eliot's Middlemarch, Emma dimly perceives the possibility of a higher communion of souls, but to achieve it she wrongly attempts to mould each man she meets—dull but loyal Charles, philandering Rodolphe, weak and pretentious Léon—to her own ideal image. By a revolutionary technique Flaubert allows us to see this process of miscomprehension as it takes place, for we view the world for a substantial part of the central portion of the novel from Emma's own viewpoint. This technique is equally important in Education sentimentale. There it often matters little what a person or event really is, but merely how Frédéric
perceives them. Mme Arnoux, his ideal woman, might seem to us a dull, virtuous and not particularly intelligent middle-class housewife, that is certainly how she seems to one of the other characters in the novel—though not one whose opinions we should care to share. But for Frederic the aura that surrounds her on his first sight of her is never dispelled:

She was like the women in Romantic novels. He would not have wished to add or substract a single detail in her person. The universe had just, on a sudden, grown broader. She was the point of light on which the totality of things was converging.

Frederic's whole progress though life is governed by such visions. But whereas in his moments of frustration or disillusion the prostitute Rosantte may seem trivial or the banker's wife Mme Dambreuse may look like a crystallised apricot, Mme Arnoux, whom he barely attempts to posses on a physical level, retains almost to the last that same luminosity of his first vision.

In confining the reader within the perspective of one or more characters, what Constant and Flaubert have in common, despite differences of subject matter and style, is the emphasis they give to the distorting power of language. For language is the entity which, by appearing to identify common elements in all men's experience, disguises the unique nature of individual perceptions. Writing on religion Constant said:

All our inmost feelings seem to elude the grasp of language. The rebellious world, by the very fact of generalising what it expresses, serves to designate and to distinguish, rather than to define. As an instrument of the mind it is only good at conveying the notions of
the mind. it fails in anything which has to do with the senses, on
the one hand, or the soul, on the other.

His views accord closely with the key passage in Madame Bovary where
the reader is warned against accepting too readily that hostile judgement of
Emma that her own woman's-magazine silliness seems to justify. Emma, in
her rendezvous with Rodolphe, has been becoming more and more reliant on
the sentimental cliché to convey the strength of her emotions, to the point where
the conventional protestations of affection seem to her sated lover merely tiresome

Emma was like all mistresses; and the charm of novelty, dropping
gradually away like a garment, revealed the eternal monotony of passion,
which always takes the same forms and use the same language.

At which point, Flaubert, in a rare example of authorial intervention, steps in
not only to criticise Rodolphe, whose thoughts he has just transcribed, but
also to defend explicitly his own point of view:

So full of experience as he was, he could not distinguish the difference
in the emotions beneath the similarity of the expression; as if the
fullness of the soul did not sometimes brim over in the emptiest of
metaphors, since no one ever, can give the exact measure of his needs
nor his ideas, nor his sorrows, and human speech is like a cracked
cauldron on which one beats out tunes for the bears to dance to,
when one is trying to bring tears to the eyes of the stars.

Thus Constant and Flaubert both hit upon that corrupting power of language
which purports to communicate while preventing meaningful communication. The viewpoint of the individual is the only valid psychological standpoint from which to examine a fictional world, but that individual’s whole interpretation of the world must itself be regarded with suspicion, as it is subject to deformation by the very words in which it is couched. For a novelist this is an extreme position at which to arrive. (It was to be explored further by Marcel Proust, Virginia Woolf and their heirs, in the following century.) For poets it was a view readily shared by many of Flaubert’s contemporaries. It is to the great poets of the period that one must look for the fullest attempt to re-order the world according to the perceptions of the self, and for the widest exploration of new collocations of linguistic elements designed to distort as little as possible the substance and these perceptions.
NOTES

1. Including in Bankim Rachanavali III, ed.


6. Sudipto Kaviraj — Signs of Madness.

7. Reference to Chandrasekhar.

8. Tapan Roy Choudhury, Europe Recondired, op. cit., p. 113 - 121.


10. Debi Choudhurani, op. cit.


14. By November 1869 as we know, he had already written as many as three novels. Furthermore, between June 1871 and April 1872 apparently he was also vested with the powers of the Collector at Murshidabad and the time he might have been ruly subjected to unfair treatment was between 1872-3 (when he was DM & DC Class II) and 1884 when he was much belatedly appointed DM & DC Class I. It took Nabin Chandra Sen eight years to make the grade from Class II to Class I (compared to Bankim's twelve) but the point that is more important
for us is that Bankim's career as a novelist was by no means contingent on his success in office.

15. In his essay Bahuvivaha (1873) Bankim also shows an undue sarcasm by arguing that in his campaign against multiple marriages, Vidyasagar also ought to have represented the Muslims. In the context of mid or late nineteenth century society however, it was quite pointless to talk about a Universal Civil Marriage Code. Widow marriages had been prevalent in Hindu society—no matter at what level and under the circumstances, formal legal recognition not only amounted to giving a rational practice the validity that it could not have obtained from any other source, but also represented a step forward in removing anomalies between law and long-standing social practices. The Lex Loci Act (Act XXI) of 1850 and Act III of 1872 were in one sense not only an attempt to remove legal disabilities created by a previous act of government, but was also broadly related to the question of civic liberties. Thus to grant a person the freedom to choose his religious faith without simultaneously ensuring that his property-rights remained unaffected, was pointless from the viewpoint of both technicality and social justice. The Age of Consent Act was ultimately necessary because the married woman by virtue of an existing law, was entirely left at the mercy of the husband and other sexual offenders.

16. Bankim misjudged Vidyasagar whose main effort evidently was to reduce as far as possible, the gap between statute and social acceptance. Further, by digging into the Shastras, Vidyasagar was also able to expose such usages or customs that had over a period of time gained the sanctity of Shastric injunctions. It is a trifle surprising that Bankim took an exception to this for this was precisely his argument in the Krishnacharitra where he claims to have separated the historical core of the Mahabharata war and the 'true' facts surrounding the personality of Krishna from the layers and layers of fictitious material heaped upon them over the ages. Bankim was quite right again in presuming that resorting to Shastras was in itself an ambivalent position and could be used either way—to invalidate a barbaric custom or to perpetrate another, equally obnoxious. the entire orthodox viewpoint during the Age of Consent Bill controversy upholding the sanctity of the Garbhadan ceremony (which amounted to marrying off the female even before she attained puberty) bears testimony to precisely such possibilities. At the same time however, it was not enough to say with Bankim that social customs like multiple marriages
would tend to go out with the spread of education and other moral or material changes in society. It is one thing to say that the female child ought to be educated, it is quite another to make universal education a part of the statute books; it is one thing to expect dowries to go out of vogue with social advancement, it is quite another to make giving or taking of dowries punishable under law. Ironically, Bankim himself appears to concede this for in the Samya he argued that a legal redressal of a woman's restricted property-rights was crucial for her future social advancement.

17. Bankim of course was never as bitterly anti-Brahmo as say the Bangabasi writers like Jogendra Chandra Basu and Idranath Bandopadhyay but like them he was also quite unhappy at the superficiality often attached to reform and reformers. That the zeal for reform did not always come from the heart is shown in Kashnakanter Will where Hiralal threatens to marry a widow if denied his share of ancestral property, in Bishabriksha too there is visible superficiality in the reform work undertaken by Debendra. In Mrinalini and Bishabriksha Bankim is even prepared to go to the extent of casting oblique references to Vidyasagar to prove how overzealous and self-righteous men use their newly acquired power to offend long-standing social sensibilities and conventions. Both Pashupati and Nagendra after all, threaten to overcome social resistance to their marrying a widow largely on the basis of their personal status and power. It is thus that Nagendra's marriage to the widow Kundandini goes virtually unnoticed and Upendra, Indira's husband clearly confesses how spending a little money in the right places will save them from a lot of embarrassment that might otherwise befall them on their return to the village. Bankim was strongly influenced by ideas of individual liberty and free will but he was also at the same time, quite concerned at the erosion of social authority.

Between the time he finished writing Kapalakundala (1866) and writing the first series of essays for the Bongodarshan (1872-5), Bankim's worldview too was changing appreciably. Kapalkundala reveals an optimism and exuberance unparalleled in the subsequent writings of Bankim:

The world is an abode of joy.... it is this happiness that men seek, not misery. Unhappiness is an exception not the rule.

By the time he wrote the essay Gyan (knowledge) sometime in the
early 1870s, this optimism is sadly missing:

_The world is full of sorrow..... if at all you attain some happiness it is only after a relentless struggle with nature.... nature is far more powerful than man can ever be...... life surely, is an abode of misery._

Hereinafter such sentiments are regularly repeated in _Bishabriksha_, in the essay _Patanga_ (Moth) and climaxing perhaps in the dramatic utterances of Aurangzeb who suddenly realizes that even Emperor of the world can be terribly unhappy. One finds it quite difficult to explain why Bankim should hint so pointedly at the fragility of happiness but it certainly does not seem as though Bankim gave vent to his frustration and bitterness connected with his official career by beginning to write novels especially those cast in a tragic mould.

18. The difference between Emma, who sees every relation as first, as new and original, and Charles, Rodolphe, Léon and Lheureux, for whom she is never the first establishes a binary opposition Emma/men.