

**Theodore Koditschek****Supplementary Notes to Chapter Six****Indian liberals and Greater Britain: the search for union through history**

**Note to Reader:** These supplementary notes consist primarily of extended references and explanations that were cut from the original book manuscript for reasons of space. In a few instances, however, they constitute more extended subordinate narratives (with accompanying references), which are related to the book's themes, but were left out because they would have deflected from the central argument and analysis of the volume. These supplementary notes are coordinated to the footnote numbers for chapter six of *Liberalism, Imperialism and the Historical Imagination: Nineteenth Century Visions of a Greater Britain*, (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2011).

1. Although Naoroji's presence at the Ethnological Society was unusual, and his scientific riposte to the racial scientists was virtually unique, he was no more than an exceptionally articulate and intrepid representative of a larger phenomenon -- an emerging, colored colonial bourgeoisie. As an early product of T.B. Macaulay's anglocentric curriculum, and of the college that bore Mountstuart Elphinstone's name, Naoroji was, on one level, a perfect embodiment of that "Indian in blood and colour, but English[man] in taste, opinion, and morals," whose advent Macaulay had prophesied. Throughout South Asia, West Africa, and the West Indies, men like Naoroji -- urbanized, sophisticated, and western educated -- were springing up to enter the professions, government service and (less frequently) business entrepreneurship. Yet, Naoroji's experience with the London ethnologists was itself evidence of the difficulties in the path of anyone of his "blood and color" who actually hoped to become "English in taste, opinion and morals," *à la* Macaulay. To those ethnologists in the audience who believed that race was an impassable bar to full assimilation, neither Naoroji's impressive accomplishments nor his formidable arguments were sufficient to make him a full-fledged Briton. R.P. Masani, *Dadabhai Naoroji: The Grand Old Man of India*, (Kavyalaya, Mysore, 1957).

This chapter examines the predicament of men like Naoroji; products of early nineteenth-century liberal imperialism, who were now, in the second half of the century, attempting to claim the inclusionary benefits that imperialism was no longer providing. Like Naoroji, these men turned to history to insert themselves in the narratives of human progress on a level that they regarded as commensurate

with their accomplishments and civilizational aims. Encountering a metropolitan reception that was at best skeptical, at worst hostile, they ardently assumed the mantle of liberal imperialism that the metropolitan politicians, historians, and ethnologists were abandoning. For his part, Naoroji did not hesitate to declare his unstinting loyalty to the British Empire. “The Spirit of British rule, the instinct of British justice,” he avowed, “decided that India was to be governed on the lines of British freedom and justice.” The result had been a century of intellectual awakening and economic growth. If racial prejudice had crept in as a blot on this sterling record, Naoroji “never faltered in my faith in the British character and [had] always believed that the time will come,” when the liberal principles of equality, opportunity and justice “will be realized.” Dadabhai Naoroji, *British Un-Rule in India*, (Swan Sonnenschein, London, 1901), quotes on vii, 121. “Education in [anglophone] history,” according to Ranajit Guha, “was thus designed as a servant’s education,” through which Bengalis were “taught to yield to the process of colonial appropriation.” Guha, *An Indian Historiography of India: A Nineteenth-Century Agenda and Its Implications*, (K P Bagchi, Calcutta, 1988), 21. The life and work of Naoroji, and the others treated in this chapter, suggest that the situation was more complex. See Gauri Viswanathan, *Masks of Conquest: Literary Study and British Rule in India*, (Columbia University Press, New York, 1989), especially 118-41.

2. For upwardly mobile Indians, like Naoroji, recognition by powerful Britons was desirable, even if it was not absolutely necessary for their self-esteem. For it was only through acknowledgement by the imperial masters that they could fully enter into Macaulay’s narrative of political enfranchisement, or complete Rammohun Roy’s vision of reciprocal spirituality. At the same time, they understood that it would be insufficient to become merely imitative, derivative creatures. Both self respect, and even acknowledgment by the master, required that they contribute some original element derived from their Indian history. Tapan Raychaudhuri has suggested that, encounters with western knowledge and culture played a “catalytic” role in the identity-formation of the nineteenth-century bhadralok. “Like a chemical process, they initiated changes which required a measure of autonomy. The end result was no simple synthesis, perfect or imperfect, of two different traditions nor an uncomplicated triumph of one culture over another. It was a new product essentially different from both the indigenous inheritance and the elements of western civilization that impinged on it.” Tapan Raychaudhuri, *Perceptions, Emotions, Sensibilities: Essays on India’s Colonial and Post-colonial Experiences*, (Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1999), 99. On the philosophy of recognition see Axel Honneth and Nancy Fraser, *Redistribution of Recognition?*, (Verso, New York, 2003), and Patchen Markell, *Bound by Recognition*, (Princeton University Press, Princeton, 2003).

3. In Calcutta, and a few other cities of its kind, the bhadralok were congregating together in numbers that approached a critical mass. From one perspective, this urbanized group - surrounded by streetcars, gas-lights, well-trimmed parks, and

neo- classical architecture - was scarcely distinguishable from the bourgeois citizenry of any English provincial Victorian city. Like their Anglo-Saxon counterparts these men worked in offices, gave to charities, and joined together with one another in voluntary associations, both religious and secular. For a comparison see, Theodore Koditschek, *Class Formation and Urban Industrial Society: Bradford, 1750-1850*, (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1990); Patrick Joyce, *The Rule of Freedom: Liberalism and the Modern City*, (Verso, London, 2003); and Sumit Sarkar, "The City Imagined: Calcutta of the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries," *Writing Social History*, (Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1997), 159-185.

There were however three important differences. First, where the English bourgeois stood at the head of a largely urbanized, industrializing society, the Bengali bhadralok remained an isolated island of capitalist cosmopolitanism in a still overwhelmingly rural, poor, pre-industrial world. Secondly, where the English bourgeois was now an enfranchised citizen, with electoral rights, and the freedom to manage his own civic affairs, the Bengali bhadralok was still a colonial subject, without access to representative institutions, and with only limited rights to political expression of any kind. Finally, where the English bourgeois was likely to be an entrepreneurial businessman, responsible for his own economic empowerment, most members of the bhadralok were becoming servile dependents, employed in some relatively menial bureaucratic capacity by a burgeoning colonial state. It is only in this context that the extraordinarily rapid expansion of facilities for English education makes sense. Even Macaulay could scarcely have imagined that a mere fifty years after his *Minute on Education*, English schools would have proliferated like mushrooms, to be capped by an illustrious Calcutta University, garnering over 1300 entrants, and graduating over 250 BAs per year. But was this bustling embrace of English language and culture the final ornament of anglicization? Or was it a desperate attempt on the part of an under-employed, over-educated and socially anomalous urban petit bourgeoisie to secure some place in the employment of their colonial masters, by learning the language, and aping the manners of the metropolitan elite? For various answers see Bruce T. McCully, *English Education and the Origins of Indian Nationalism*, (Peter Smith, Gloucester, 1966); Tapan Raychaudhuri, *Europe Reconsidered: Perceptions of the West in Nineteenth Century Bengal*, (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2002), 11; Viswanathan, *Masks of Conquest*, 142-65; Andrew Sartori, "Emancipation as Heteronomy: The Crisis of Liberalism in Later Nineteenth Century Bengal," *Journal of Historical Sociology*, (XVI, 1, 2004), 56-86. For figures on university matriculation see Anil Seal, *The Emergence of Indian Nationalism; Competition and Collaboration in the later Nineteenth Century*, (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1968). Figures calculated from Table 47 on page 355.

The answer seems to have been a bit of both. For the great majority, a lifetime of filing forms was the only reward for learning English. For a small minority of exceptionally talented and privileged men, however, anglicization offered a window into a wider liberal culture, and a chance to re-situate India's place in the history of

progress. Picking up the modernizing baton of Rammohun Roy, they carried it forward into an era when India was actually beginning to exhibit some marks of modernity -- railways, telegraphs, steamers, sewer systems, and (a few) factories. Yet where Roy's engagement with British liberalism followed hard upon his achievement of economic independence, this new bhadralok generation found itself increasingly dependent on the imperial master, not only for access to new ideas and education, but also for incomes and livelihoods. The current consensus holds that, with the tightening of British control over the colonial economy in the second half of the nineteenth century, entrepreneurial opportunities for native Bengalis diminished (although they increased in other areas, such as Bombay). This resulted in a growing dependence on official employment, supplemented in some cases by small absentee Zamindari rents from (usually subdivided) estates in the countryside. Narendra Krishna Sinha, "Indian Business Enterprise: Its Failure in Calcutta," in Rajat Ray ed., *Entrepreneurship and Industry in India*, (Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1984), 70-82; Amiya Bagchi, *Private Investment in India, 1900-1939*, (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1972), 165-181.

In 1859, Radkanta Deb worried that the over-rapid expansion of English education might create a frustrated intellectual proletariat. "Nothing should be guarded against more carefully than the insensible introduction of a system whereby, with a smattering knowledge of English, youths are weaned from the plough, the axe and the loom, to render them ambitious only for clerkships, for which hosts would besiege the government and mercantile offices." Quoted in M.K. Haldar, Introduction to Haldar ed., *Renaissance and Reaction in Nineteenth Century Bengal*, (Minerva, Calcutta, 1977), 24. At the same time, P.C. Ray echoed this complaint, even suggesting that business entrepreneurship was somehow "beyond the scope of the Bengali race." Quoted in David Kopf, *The Brahmo Samaj and the Shaping of the Modern Indian Mind*, (Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1979), 88-9.

Seeking employment in British government offices and commercial businesses, these individuals found that their very commitment to Greater British liberalism was putting them in a bind. Somehow, they had to endure the manifest illiberalism of their increasingly racist employers, while holding fast to the progressive visions and values that they had fashioned into the touchstones of their own respectability. The invocation of history, they hoped, would resolve these contradictions; enabling them to gain the sense of self-respect and independence that membership in the British Empire was not providing on its own. The options of the bhadralok were further limited by their own contradictory class position. Should the frustrations inherent in their colonial subordination incite them to contemplate making an alliance with the peasantry to throw the British out, sober reflection would remind them just how far they had removed themselves from the peasant masses. More to the point, as scions of minor zamindar families, most of them understood that they would never have received their tickets into Greater Britishness had their ancestors not exploited peasants for several generations. For landlord peasant relations in Bengal see Sugata Bose, *Peasant Labour and Colonial Capital: Rural Bengal Since 1770*, (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1993).

In an important book, Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and its Fragments*, (Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1993) argues that the Bengali bhadralok resolved this tension by dividing the world between the public domains of business and government - still at least temporarily controlled by the British - and the private spiritual and familial domains, where the Indian male could exercise unqualified control. See especially pg. 6. This argument is developed by Tanika Sarkar, who also captures the voices of women, in *Hindu Wife, Hindu Nation: Community, Religion, and Cultural Nationalism*, (Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 2001), especially 1-52. Up to a point, Brahma history does seem to confirm Chatterjee's and Sarkar's hypothesis, but my argument suggests the need for a further distinction between the literal institutions of the Hindu patriarchal family, and the broader ideologies - allegedly grounded in the 'spiritual' and the 'familial' - that were metaphorically launched as subaltern bids for hegemony. For an analysis disputing the presumption that leading Bengali intellectuals (not including Keshub) ever accepted the superiority of western civilization, see Raychaudhuri, *Europe Reconsidered*, especially x.

For more in-depth social history of the bhadralok community see John McGuire, *The Making of a Colonial Mind: A Quantitative Study of the Bhadrakok of Calcutta: 1857-1885*, (Australian National University, Canberra, 1985); J.H. Broomfield, *Elite Conflict in a Plural Society*, (University of California Press, Berkeley, 1968), 1-41. Sumit Sarkar explains some of these contradictions by arguing that bhadralok was subdivided between a relatively small upper section that benefited from (and largely embraced) anglicization, and a larger but less visible mass of impoverished upper caste men, who could not adjust to the new circumstances. Sarkar, *Writing Social History*, 159-357. In this chapter I concentrate on relatively well-known examples of the first type, to show how their command of multiple languages enabled them to engage in a variety of creative, syncretic historiographical projects. As Sarkar shows, the less advantaged bhadralok group was more likely to eschew syncretic projects in favor of nostalgic laments for a lost golden age. These usually took the form of Kaliyuga -- a reflection on the Hindu cycle of eternal degeneration and renewal, which located the nineteenth century as the last stage of corruption, when foreigners ruled, the lower castes were disobedient, and women were breaking free from patriarchal control. See also Robert Darnton, "Literary Surveillance in the British Raj: The Contradictions of Liberal Imperialism," *Book History*, IV, (2001), 133-76. Darnton's study of books published in India between 1867 and 1905 reinforces Sarkar's argument. See especially pgs. 134-5 and 145-6. For further details on the book trade see Darnton's "Book Production in British India, 1850-1900," *Book History*, V, (2002), 239-62.

4. Protap Chunder Mazoomdar recalls from his early youth "a superficial race of smatterers, who dealt in the merest platitudes of the English tongue." "Excessive indulgence in the use of alcoholic liquors characterized the educated community,"

he complained, “the apostles of Utilitarianism, the materialistic professors of neoscience, and so-called Positivism overspread the land.” Yet, in spite of his obvious taste, he reluctantly acknowledged the excitement and intellectual stimulation that accompanied these novelties. “The establishment of debating clubs in different quarters of Calcutta, dating from the foundation of the Bethune Society in 1851 created a great ferment amongst bodies of young students. Political associations, then in their embryo, arose out of such organizations, one or two English newspapers edited by Hindus began to rear their heads [and] a good many Bengali newspapers kept the air warm with their perpetual vilifications of each other.” P.C. Mazoomdar, *The Life and Teachings of Keshub Chunder Sen*, (Baptist Mission Press, Calcutta, 1887), 6-8.

Dependent on the British, not only for their jobs and their physical security, but also, to some extent, for their aspirations and self-respect, such individuals realized that they stood dangerously over-exposed. Straightforward return to the seamless Hinduism of their forebears was no longer possible, but entrée into the benefits of Anglo-Saxonism was now also being foreclosed. What was the alternative? The dilemma can be clearly seen in the vicissitudes of Calcutta’s leading bhadrak family, the Tagores. Dwarkanath (1794-1846), who headed the family in the first half of the nineteenth century had been the anglicized Indian *par excellence*. A wealthy zamindar and intimate friend of Rammohun Roy, he served as a British tax-collector, a founder of the Union Bank, and initiator of the first major British-Indian commercial partnership. As a public citizen, he had started several newspapers and journals. As philanthropist, he had helped finance Hindu College and Calcutta Medical School. As the very embodiment of the western-acculturated Bengali Brahman, Dwarkanath scandalized his more orthodox caste brethren by traveling to Europe, where he died. By contrast, Dwarkanath’s son, Debendranath (1817-1905) who inherited his mantle in the 1840s, sensed that the Anglo-Indian climate was beginning to change. Lacking the open entrepreneurial environment that had been available to his father, he settled in as a rentier, devoting his life to spiritual goals. Taking up the fledgling Brahma movement that had been left leaderless after Rammohun’s death, Debendranath created a formal organizational structure, the Brahma Samaj, in 1843. James W. Furell, *The Tagore Family: A Memoir*, (Calcutta, Thaker, Spink & Co, 1892), 1-69; Dilip Kumar Biswas, “Maharishi Debendranath Tagore,” Atalchandra Gupta ed., *Studies in the Bengal Renaissance*, (National Council on Education, Bengal, Calcutta, 1977), 33-46.

Yet, as it evolved over the next decade, this Brahma Samaj lost the confident universalistic Brahmaism that Rammohun had proclaimed. Faced with a less sympathetic generation of British officials, and an aggressive missionary movement, led by the pugnacious Presbyterian, Alexander Duff, Debendranath was more concerned to preserve Hinduism’s distinctive spiritual traditions, than to reach out confidently to Unitarians and religious reformers in other parts of the world. Gone was Rammohun’s highly visible public persona of the 1820s, as his bold syncretic claims to having reconciled Hinduism with the teachings of Moses, Mohammed, Buddha, and Christ were allowed to lapse. The more pragmatic Tagore was content

to remain a practicing Brahman, continuing all the old familiar Hindu rituals and ceremonies, simply giving them a more rationalistic and monotheistic gloss. By the mid 1850s, the Brahmos seemed to be settling into a kind of bloodless Hindu reformism -- an anodyne sect catering to those among the bhadrakok who were too modern to blindly embrace the ancient deities, but too cautious to drop them either for Bentham or for Christ. Debendranath Tagore, *Brahmo Dharma*, (Brahmo Mission Press, Calcutta, 1928); Kopf, *Brahmo Samaj*, 157-75; Meredith Borthwick, *Keshub Chunder Sen: A Search for Cultural Synthesis*, (Minerva, Calcutta, 1977), 1-16. Although they had progressive instincts, according to Friedrich Max Muller, "Debendranath and his friends were afraid of anything likely to wound the feelings of the great mass of the people . . . They wanted above all to retain the national character of their religion." Quoted in Kopf, *Brahmo Samaj*, 135. On the continuing role of the Tagore family in fostering a cultural politics of indigenism, see Indira Chowdhuri, *The Frail Hero and Virile History: Gender and the Politics of Culture in Colonial Bengal*, (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1998), 1-39. Yet, Debendranath and his followers were very far from anti-British. How could they be, inasmuch as their livelihoods, their careers, and their educations were built on nearly a century of British rule? Their problem was that they had little to bring to the Greater British negotiating table in countering the anathemas of the racists, the blandishments of the Christians, or the snares of the atheists?

7. Although George Trevelyan deplored "the habit of sneering at our dark fellow-subjects," he described anglicized Bengalis as "the most helpless feeble set of beings in the universe. If one of them can ride a shambling pony, daubed all over with splotches of white paint, to and from his office, without tumbling off, he considers himself to have done quite enough to establish his reputation as a horseman." Nevertheless, his sharpest sarcasms were directed against those who had acquired the advanced English education that his uncle had prescribed: "I sat aghast at the flowery combination of epithets which came so naturally to their lips . . . They talk as Dr. Johnson is supposed to have talked by people who have never read Boswell." "There was," he continued, "something exquisitely absurd in hearing a parcel of Bengalees regretting the time when every rood of ground in England maintained its man, and indignantly apostrophizing trade's unfeeling train for usurping the land and dispossessing the swain." George Trevelyan, *The Competition Wallah*, (Harper Collins, New Delhi, [1864], 1992), 33-4.

11. In spite of the fact that he was extremely proficient in English and served as Native Secretary to the Royal Asiatic Society, and as Treasurer of the Calcutta Mint, Ram Camul Sen upheld strict traditional Hinduism in every aspect of his personal life. Raised by his uncles, in an orthodox joint household, Keshub was deeply inspired by the self-sacrificing asceticism of his mother. Thus, the enticements of a secular education were counter-balanced by an initially directionless sense of spirituality. Adopting a rigorous course of self-study, the young man dabbled in Christianity and Theism, before discovering in Brahmo Samaj

a theology remarkably consonant with the one that he had been cobbling together on his own. Joining the Brahmos set Keshub at odds with his uncles, and induced him to give up a promising career in the Bank of Bengal, where other members of his family were employed. Fortunately, for this somewhat dour and fastidious young man, Debendranath Tagore assumed the role of a less domineering father-substitute, and helped the lad evolve from a shy and retiring introvert into the dynamic speaker and charismatic leader that – during the late 1850s and 1860s – he so effectively became. Mazoomdar, *Life of Sen*, 1-169.

14. As Nabagopal Mitra put it somewhat later, “A great change has taken place in the minds of educated youths of Bengal. The tide of denationalization has sustained an ebb. A happy reaction has taken place in native feelings. People have begun to disbelieve in a theory that for a nation’s progress they have simply to learn the art of borrowing. They have firmly begun to believe in the doctrine that to secure everlasting good to themselves, they should have a basis of their own.” Quoted in Nemai Sadhan Bose, *Racism, Struggle for Equality and Indian Nationalism*, (Firma KLM, Calcutta, 1981), 125-6. See also Raychaudhuri’s account of Bhudev Mukopadhyay, whose “genuine rejection of much in western civilization,” was derived from “his happy experience of family life,” which included such practices as child marriage and widow celibacy. Raychaudhuri, *Europe Reconsidered*, 29-33

15. The issue that initially divided Keshub from the orthodox Brahmos centered on the primacy of the Vedas in congregational worship. According to Keshub, the original aim of the Samaj had indeed been to “to revive Hinduism to its primitive state of purity, to do away with idolatry and superstition and caste.” This purely formal transformation however had not proven sufficient. Over the course of the next twenty years, the mistake of accepting the Vedas as pure scripture had been exposed. “From that time [i.e. from his ascendancy in the movement] we date the rise in India of the true monotheistic church.” Sophia Dobson Collet ed., *Keshub Chunder Sen’s English Visit*, (Strahan & Co., London, 1871), 35.

17. The whole matter is aired in Nirad Chaudhuri, *Scholar Extraordinaire: The Life of the Rt. Hon. Friedrich Max Müller P.C.*, (Chatto and Windus, London, 1974), 311-16, who tends to be too forgiving of Max Müller’s many sins. See also Thomas Trautmann, *Aryans and British India*, (University of California Press, Berkeley, 1997), 172-183, and *passim*, for a full discussion of the relationship between Aryanism as a philological category, and as a racial concept

19. Keshub’s program of Indian reform, with its accompanying ideology of syncretic historicism, might be usefully contrasted with that of Iswarchandra Vidyasagar, which was confined largely within a traditional Hindu idiom, and eschewed bold inventions of universalist tradition to scan the received Hindu scriptures for a



usable past that would sanction widow remarriage and generally improve the lot of women within the inherited framework of patriarchy. See Sarkar, *Writing Social History*, 216-81; Brian A. Hatcher, *Idioms of Improvement: Vidyasagar and Cultural Encounter in Bengal*, (Oxford University Press, Calcutta, 1996); Halder, "Introduction," *Renaissance and Reaction*, 37-54; and Amalis Tripathi, *Vidyasagar, The Traditional Modernizer*, (Orient Longman, Bombay, 1974).

Above and beyond good government, Keshub saw enlightenment as the greatest benefit that the British had brought to India. "The flood of western education has burst upon India has made its way into the citadels of idolatry and prejudice, and is sweeping away in its restless current all the errors and iniquities of centuries." Collet ed., *Keshub's Visit to England*, 195-6. And yet, if Britain had awakened India from its superstitious slumbers, it was Indian religion (i.e. Keshub's own Brahma Samaj) that was best placed to advance the course of a truly enlightened universal, rationalistic non-sectarian theology. "English Christianity is too sectarian . . . [it] appears to be too muscular and hard. . . . Christian life in England is more materialistic . . . in England there is hardly anything like meditation or solitary contemplation. Englishmen seek their God in society . . . there is a tendency to see God outside, in forms, in rites." Collet ed., *Keshub's Visit to England*, 601-2.

20. "Christianity," Keshub argued, "has come to India in a foreign and repulsive form." "Christianity in its founder," he continued, "was oriental, Asiatic, and there is no reason why Christianity in the present day should be presented to the Indian population in any other than in an oriental aspect." "Let not well-meaning foreigners try to convert his people to this or that particular denomination," he warned, "but let them help in a spirit of broad liberality to extend that glorious light of regeneration which had already dawned on the face of India." "Every sect," he noted elsewhere, "represents God's truth partially, every nation presents only one side of the religious life: every denomination embraces one particular truth of theology, or ethics, and unless we gather together all races, we cannot see, we cannot understand what living religion means." Collet ed., *Keshub's English Visit*, 37, 410, 556.

21. That Keshub actually succeeded in promoting ecumenicism in Britain was testified by several English ministers. According to the Unitarian, James Drummond, Sen's "visit has brought strongly home to the minds of many in England the fact that our old feeling of separation is passing away, and that in spite of all the efforts which may be made by those who fix their attention chiefly upon the differences which divide men, we are becoming more profoundly conscious of a common element of religion, which binds together true men all over the world." The same point was made at Keshub's 'farewell' by Rev. H. Ireson, who acknowledged that "Mr. Sen had been able to greet face to face men of very different persuasions, who unhappily stood apart from one another when not in the presence of a man like himself, and he

had been the means of bringing them together.” Collet ed., *Keshub’s English Visit*, 307, 589-90.

Although rendered impossible here by limitations of space, it would be interesting to compare and contrast Keshub’s ‘Brahmo’ approach to Hindu reform and revitalization with the rather different, more overtly populist strategy adopted by Dayananda Sarasvati in his alternative organization, ‘Arya Samaj’. See J.T.F. Jordens, *Dayananda Sarasvati, His Life and Ideas*, (Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1978); Kenneth W. Jones, *Socio-Religious Reform Movements in British India*, (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1989), 95-108, 192-9; Tony, Ballantyne, *Orientalism and Race: Aryanism in the British Empire*, (Palgrave, New York, 2002), 169-79; and Mazoomdar, *Life of Sen*, 283-4, 333-4.

22. Keshub’s sermons and addresses during his time in England were compiled by Sophia Dobson Collet, and published in *Keshub’s English Visit*. As he disembarked, he announced that he had come “from India to tell you English men and women, what you have done in my country.” Britain had effected a revolutionary transformation in the economy and government of the subcontinent. “This is not man’s work, but a work which God is doing with His own hand, using the British nation as his instruments. When India lay sunk in the mire of idolatry and superstition . . . the Lord in his mercy sent the British nation to rescue India . . . England and India became thus connected by an overriding Providence.” Nevertheless, he warned his British audiences “you hold India on trust, and you have no right to say that you will use its property, its riches, or its resources, or any of the power which God has given you simply for your own purposes of selfish aggrandizement and enjoyment. . . You are accountable to God for those millions of souls . . . You cannot hold India for the welfare of Manchester, or for the welfare of one sector of the community here.” In this manner, Keshub turned a discourse of servile colonial abasement into a demand for imperial obligation and accountability. Indeed, the only thing that separated him from the early political nationalists (though it was a big thing), was their willingness to mount movements of political protest, whereas Keshub insisted on keeping Britain’s accountability “in the hands of God.” Quoted in Kopf, *Brahmo Samaj*, 26-7, 198-9, 261-2.

24. In England, Keshub had argued that “unless the women are educated, the education will be partial and superficial, for the wives of the country conserve all the traditions, all the errors and prejudices, and all the injurious institutions that exist in the country.” In his vision of India’s future “the husband and wife will sit together and try to purify their family and uproot all those prejudices and iniquitous institutions which have found lodgement in the sacred walls of the family house for many centuries.” The custom of early marriage in particular had to be abandoned. “Women should be permitted to marry only when they are of marriageable age. Bigamy and polygamy should be suppressed, if possible, by legislative enactment.” However, “there are other things that can only be put down by the operation of

personal influence. . . . The growth of that society must be indigenous, native and natural. Foreign customs must not be forced upon us." Gender equality need not be a British import, since evidence of it could be found in the history of India's distant past. "Time was when men and women freely mixed with each other in society in India, when celebrated ladies solved mathematical problems . . . and when not only men chose for themselves, but even ladies came forward and selected husbands for themselves." Collet ed., *Keshub's English Visit*, 214, 216, 466, 468, 471.

27. See Borthwick, *Keshub Chunder Sen*, 135-73. Keshub himself said; "A noble-minded and kind-hearted lady went to India a few years ago in order to promote the work of female education. Miss Carpenter's name is familiar to you all. Why should not some of you follow her praise-worthy example. I say this because the work that requires your aid and co-operation is urgent. At the present moment, a thousand Hindu homes are open to receive and welcome English governesses – well trained accomplished English ladies, capable of doing good to their Indian sisters, both by instruction and personal example." Keshub Chandra Sen, "Women in India," in *Diary, Sermons, Addresses and Epistles in England*, (Navavidhan, Calcutta, 1938), 393. See also Kopf, *Brahmo Samaj*, 34-41. Marriage law in British India was based on religious affiliation. Thus, there were separate laws for Hindus, Muslims, and Christians. Brahmos faced the problem of not fitting into any of these categories, since their opposition to child marriage placed them beyond the pale of orthodox Hinduism. After much lobbying, in 1872 Keshub persuaded the government to promulgate a special Native Marriage Act to permit Brahmos to marry according to their own rules. See Mazoomdar, *Life of Sen*, 128-33, 157-60; Borthwick, *Keshub Chunder Sen*, 142-7.

28. White Britons' unease about Keshub's appeal to women of all races is captured by a caricature of "Conundrum Baboo" that appeared in the London *Saturday Review* on June 11, 1870. "Conundrum Baboo answers every sting his hostess pulls with a perfect adaptability. It is amazing to compare his performance with the clumsier gambols of his western rivals. A flow of pietistic enthusiasm gilds the vagueness of his dogma; the Bible, instead of being reduced to arithmetic, disappears in a cloud of Vedas." Quoted in Borthwick, *Keshub Chunder Sen*, 115-6.

29. These complaints must be set off against Keshub's manifest achievements. Thanks in no small part to his missionary efforts there were 102 branch chapters of Brahmo Samaj throughout India in 1872, though the main strength remained in Bengal. Kopf, *Brahmo Samaj*, 138-42, 324.

30. Schism within the Brahmo Samaj must have been especially painful for Keshub, given the way he had rhetorically advanced his own movement (and Indian spirituality in general) as ecumenical and non-sectarian, in contrast to the

fissiparous and contentious culture of English Protestantism. If his Church (and Indian spirituality in general) was also rent by sectarian divisions, perhaps it was no more syncretic and all-embracing than Britain's theologically fractious and mutually competitive denominations. If Indians had no unique capacity for spiritual harmony, then it might have to be admitted that, even in the sphere of religion, bhadrakok culture and institutions were derivative and second class.

32. Some years later, another young Brahmo devotee, Narendranath Datta was inspired by Ramakrishna. Changing his name to Swami Vivekananda, he carried forward the later Keshubite tradition, becoming a guru, and traveling throughout Europe and North America, bringing Indian spirituality to the materialistic west during the 1890s. Mazoomdar, *Life of Sen*, 227-247; Raychaudhuri, *Europe Reconsidered*, 219-219-330.

33. However Keshub also expressed a deep affinity for English literature. "When we came to receive English knowledge in our schools and colleges, we learned to respect your Shakespeare, Milton and Newton, and now I may say that in some measure they have become our own." "If you happen to be traveling in a railway carriage in India, you will find scores of Bengalee gentlemen reading English books as a matter of recreation, some perusing the *Times* newspaper, others *Good Words*, and others the *Waverley* novels." *Keshub's English Visit*, 29, 202-3.

39. Raising his opium dose, Kamalakanta acquires divine vision. "Before me was the giant world marketplace stretching out to infinity." In another sketch, Kamalakanta finds himself in court as a witness. He is called to take the oath; "With the direct knowledge of the almighty," when Kamalakanta interrupts: "Must I say that I had direct knowledge of the almighty?" "What is the problem," asks the Judge? Is it merely the formula of the oath? "You are a great Judge indeed sir," Kamalakanta replies, "It could perhaps be excused if I said some minor lies in the course of my deposition, but should we begin by such a massive untruth? . . . I always had the impression that God was not an object of direct knowledge. I have never yet seen him clearly, directly, but that could be because of poor sight." Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay, *Kamalakanta*, (Harper Collins, New Deli, 1997), 14-54, quotes on 75, 77, 80, 83; translation of quote taken from from Sudipta Kaviraj, *The Unhappy Consciousness: Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay and the Formation of Nationalist Discourse in India*, (Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1995), 3-7

42. Critical commentary on Bankim tends to divide his output between an early liberal cosmopolitan phase, and a later period of cultural indigenism. See, for example, Andrew Sartori, *Bengal in Global Concept History: Culuralism in the Age of Capital*, (University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2008), 89-135. The historical changes

in the character of British rule that I have noted in this chapter corresponds so neatly with this shift in Bankim's oeuvre, that it is easy to see the former as cause and the latter as effect. Nevertheless, Bankim was always too complex and multi-layered for such simple reductionism. In contrast to Keshub, the early Bankim never entirely believed British promises of liberal imperialism. Conversely, the late Bankim's disillusionment was always tempered by the knowledge that men such as himself, who were its products, would never be able to extricate themselves from its contradictory qualities.

43. As Aurobindo Ghose would put it in 1907, "It was thirty-two years ago the Bankim wrote his great song . . . The mantra had been given, and in a single day a whole people had been converted to the religion of patriotism. The mother had revealed herself." Quoted in Halder, "Introduction," *Renaissance and Reaction*, 108.

44. In his survey of Bengali book production during the Victorian period, Robert Darnton notes that a good deal of the popular literature published at the time emphasized "themes of humiliation and oppression" rather than "open opposition to British rule," combining self-hatred with hatred of the foreigner, and self-assertion with deference to the sahib." The date for most of the titles in Darnton's survey (1879) suggests that Bankim was probably influenced at least subliminally by this 'lowbrow' pulp fiction, which was flooding the market at the time when he wrote his book. While he doubtless intended *Anandamath* as an antidote to this harvest of humiliation, his novel actually replicates more than it transcends the self-abasing sentiments on display in the popular press. Darnton, "Literary Surveillance in the British Raj," 134-5, 143-6, quotes on 145.

45. In *Anandamath*, India's Muslims are invited to join the Sanyasa Uprising. But how many of them would really dare to enter the secret chamber, where the iconography of the motherland assumes the images of Jagaddhatri, Kali and Sakti? Quote from Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay, *Dharmatattva*, (Oxford University Press, Oxford, [1888], 2003), 214, Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay, *Anandamath*, (Vision Books, Delhi, 1992), 42-4; Sisir Kumar Das, *The Artist in Chains: The Life of Bankimchandra Chatterji*, (New Statesman Publishing, New Delhi, 1984), 133-5.

47. Through the Hindu approach to dharma, it was possible for people to keep their faculties in balance, tempering those like sexuality and hunger that arose spontaneously, while cultivating those like judgment and wisdom that do not come instinctively. Chattopadhyay, *Dharmatattva*, 33-64. Yet Bankim is much less concerned with the role of dharma in personal fulfillment, than in its power as a source of collective obligation.

"If self-preservation and the protection of our near and dear ones constitutes dharma, so does the protection of the motherland. Just as some people within a

society commit acts of aggression on others with a view to theft and plunder, so also do nations and societies sometimes set upon others. Man does not hesitate to snatch and grab what he can unless he is restrained by the authority of a ruler or by the injunctions of dharma.” Chattopadhyay, *Dharmatattva*, 90.

At this point, Bankim backpedals furiously to declare India’s loyalty to Greater Britain – which becomes a further manifestation of her *dharmic* superiority. “After the Mussalmans the British came to rule, and still the Hindu subject did not utter a word. Indeed; it was the Hindus themselves who set the British up to rule. Hindu sepoys fought for the British, conquered Indian territories and willingly made them over to their leaders. The British were not objects of hatred merely for belonging to another race. Subjugated though she is, even today India is extremely loyal to her political masters. But the British fail to see the reason behind this and believe that since the Hindus are weak, they must be false in their fealty.” Chattopadhyay, *Dharmatattva*, 187.

Should such racist attitudes continue, Bankim implies, the Hindus who raised the British up could pull them down. But what would the Hindus set up in their place? The very fact that Bankim so seamlessly associates India with Hinduism – and with a distinctively Bengali Brahman version of that – spelled deep trouble for his version of national culture and identity. Bankim is not unaware of the problem, but he merely compounds it by trying to detach Hinduism (and even Bengali Brahmanism) from its (their) racial, caste, and religious moorings, by reinventing it (them) as moral and political categories. The Brahman zamindar who adhered to all the rituals but exploited his peasants was not a true Brahman, while those who broke all the dietary rules could remain true to their dharma, so long as their behavior was unselfish and just. When the disciple reminds his master that half of Bengal’s peasants are Muslims, the guru responds, “but they are like Hindus in their habits, either for having originated from a common stock, or for having lived among Hindus.” Chattopadhyay, *Dharmatattva*, 108-15, 214; Kaviraj, *Unhappy Consciousness*, 142-3. In *Anandamath*, 42-4, India’s Muslims had been invited to join the Sanyasa Uprising.

48. It may be mere coincidence - perhaps exacerbated by the contradictory positions in which they found themselves - that both Keshub and Bankim developed diabetes, which resulted in premature deaths, in 1884, and 1894, respectively. Mazoomdar *Life of Sen*, 297-324; Das *Artist in Chains*, 185-98.

49. British public opinion was not entirely unsympathetic to Banerjea’s plight. In *All the Year Round*, Charles Dickens published an account of the Civil Service Exam debacle, in which it was made clear that Banerjea and Dutt had “worked hard during vacation with those professors and teachers who had the time to spare for them.” The young men had fulfilled every requirement of the law, and yet they were tripped up on a technicality based on cultural differences between Hindus and

Britons in reckoning their dates of birth. “The native candidates who are deprived, for the present, of the prize they have honestly won, are not excluded on the ground of character. The case is limited to the simple question of fact: How old are they? Nobody, we believe, doubts that the true date of birth was given to the commissioners. . . . No matter. The commissioners are almost irresponsible. They are beyond the reach of the Council for India; and a court of law has only a limited though, in this case let us hope, sufficient power over their decision.” *All the Year Round*, 2:42, (Sept. 18, 1869), 374-5, 377.

52. Over the course of many years of agitation, Banerjea honed these linkages between British and Indian liberty into well worn tropes. “Ram Mohun Roy,” he reminded his listeners, “lived and died at a time when the forces which brought about the first Reform Bill were in full operation.” This had “created a yearning for rational and constitutional liberty not for this race or that race, not for the white man to the exclusion of the black, but for humanity in general.” In those days, “the hearts of Englishmen were full of the generous spirit of freedom. It was this freedom which prompted the noble utterance of Macaulay on the enactment of the Charter Act of 1833. The words of that speech are still ringing in my ears. . . . They should be inscribed on the portals of Government House in Calcutta.” “That proud day has now arrived,” Banerjea insisted, “but unfortunately Englishmen, at any rate the majority of Englishmen in this country, so far from welcoming the advent of this day would give worlds to recall the policy which has produced this splendid result. Surendranath Banerjea, *Speeches*, (Lahiri, Calcutt, 1908), 360-1.

56. Banerejea was a staunch advocate of ‘social reform’, yet was remarkably vague when it came to saying exactly what ‘social reforms’ he had in mind. “I regard the social and political movements as indissolubly linked together,” he insisted. “We must purify and elevate the social and moral atmosphere before we can aspire to those political rights which it is the aim of Congress to secure and promote.” Yet, was Banerjea willing to take a stand against caste? “I am a [Kulin] Brahmin of Brahmins,” he cautioned, “We must take our stand upon the ancient foundations . . . And what are Hindu customs and Hindu rights? They are those of the past, but must be modified to meet current conditions.” What about ‘Hindu customs’ of polygamy, child marriage, prohibition on widow re-marriage? Banerjea was astonishingly vague. “We must either move forward or go backward. We cannot remain where we are. Nature in the physical world abhors a vacuum. Nature in the moral world abhors stagnation. I have the greatest respect for the institutions of my fathers . . . but if we are to preserve them in the spirit of the past, we must adapt them to modern requirements.” Banerjea, *Speeches*, VI, 318, 323.

60. C.A. Bayly has traced the influence of Mazzini on nineteenth-century Indian liberalism in “Liberalism at Large: Mazzini and Nineteenth-Century Indian Thought,”

in C.A. Bayly and E.F. Biagini eds., *Mazzini and the Globalization of Democratic Nationalism: 1830-1920*, (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2008), 355-74.

64. Banerjea also took a page from the history of Irish nationalism. "The Irish have been fighting for Home Rule for over one hundred years," he reminded his listeners, "and they have not yet got it, but they are within a measurable distance of success. Let us emulate the courage, the enthusiasm and heroic self-sacrifice of the children of the Emerald Isle." Banerjea, *Speeches*, VI, 406.

71. Naoroji's figures compare favorably with modern scholarly estimates. B.R. Mitchell and P. Deane, *Abstract of British Historical Statistics*, (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1962), 367, list British per capita income at £34 in 1875. From information in Dharma Kumar ed., *Cambridge Economic History of India*, volume II, (Cambridge University Press, Delhi, 1983), 402 and 904, it is possible to estimate India's per capita income in the same year as approximately £3.

72. Although Naoroji's book was too dry (and too repetitive) to gain a popular readership, his devastating indictment could not be left unanswered. A small squadron of civil servants was deputed to generate more favorable statistics. Lord Curzon, the Viceroy himself, saw fit to deliver a paper that purported to show that Indian per capita income had been slowly increasing, and that money transfers to Britain were all part of the normal expenses of commerce and trade. Of course, the death of millions of Indians in the famines of the late 1890s somewhat diminished the plausibility of his remarks. As with Lecky's critical Anglo-Irish *History*, a generation earlier, Naoroji's drain theory was a powerful solvent that threatened to go beyond the intentions of its author. To a small handful of *fin de siècle* Indian nationalists it told a story of unrelenting British perfidy, prejudice, oppression, and theft. Separation, rather than a re-negotiated union, was the message that they took away from this history lesson. What is more remarkable however is the number of Indian nationalists of the Banerjea generation who continued, the 'drain'. with Naoroji, to cling to the British connection, in spite of the devastating indictment of

74. Naoroji's theory of the 'drain' is analyzed and contextualized by Bipan Chandra, in *The Rise and Growth of Economic Nationalism in India*, (People's Publishing, New Delhi, 1966), 1-54, 636-708. K.N. Chaudhuri argues that "in order to measure the actual magnitude of the 'drain' it is necessary to use a 'value added' concept. In other words, the cost of producing the exports must be subtracted from their final sales value. This difference, insofar as it was paid for through internal taxation, represents the real income leakage. In the long run, it was not so much capital payments as the absence of active measures for economic development which was probably most responsible for the continuing poverty of India. K.N. Chaudhuri,



“Foreign Trade and Balance of Payments (1757-194),” Cambridge *Economic History of India*, II, 877.

77. Some twenty years after Dutt and Banerjea arrived in London, another, more obscure, law student named M.K. Gandhi followed their path. As he later recalled, “I soon found that Indian students had free access to the G.O.M. [Naoroji, aka Grand Old Man] at all hours of the day. Indeed, he was in the place of a father to every one of them, no matter to which province or religion they belonged. He was there to advise and guide them in their difficulties. I have always been a hero-worshipper. And so Dadabhai became real Dada to me.” Quoted in Masani, *Dadabhai Naoroji*, iii-iv.

78. Like Keshub and Bankim, Dutt was raised in a thoroughly anglicized family, learned Sanskrit after he was already proficient in English, and was fed a steady diet of Shakespeare and Scott. As he recalled, at the age of fifty-seven, in 1905, “Sir Walter Scott was my favorite author forty years ago. I spent days and nights over his novels; I almost lived in those historic scenes and in those medieval times which the enchanter had conjured up. Scott has, in fact, created a world of his own – a somewhat idealized but vivid and, on the whole, faithful picture of the medieval world in Europe. . . . I do not know if Sir Walter Scott gave me a taste for history, or if my taste for history made me an admirer of Scott; but no subject, not even poetry, had such a hold on me as history.” Quoted in J.N. Gupta, *Life and Work of Romesh Chunder Dutt*, CIE (London, 1911), 383.

84. “A nation which has a past has a future,” proclaimed R.C. Dutt. “It is a duty which devolves upon the educated Indian to try to explain their [Indians’] past and to see what they have actually achieved in the past, generation after generation, in order that they might base their endeavors and build their future hopes upon them.” Yet for a nation like India, whose recent history had been so studded with defeats and disasters, it was not self-evident how that history should be interpreted and understood. “Our successes, and still more our failures in the past,” Dutt continued, “have lessons for us in the present.”

“A knowledge of our national strength in the past inspires us in our endeavors; a knowledge of our national weakness is still more helpful to us in correcting our mistakes and seeing proper remedies. All history is instructive in this way; but the genius of the Indian nation is not the genius of the west, and a knowledge of Indian history is particularly fitted in the present day to guide us and to warn us, and to lead us onward in the path of progress.” Quoted in Gupta, *Life of Dutt*, 320.

86. To appreciate Dutt’s achievement, it is necessary to consider his treatment of these matters in relation to the wider discussion about the relationship between caste and race that was swirling around him. Seen in this context, Dutt’s refusal to

collapse caste completely into race can be viewed as an implicit critique of that position, which was becoming the orthodoxy of his day -- fuelled by the ethnographic work of such scholar-imperialists as George Campbell, Walter Elliot, and (later) W.W. Hunter and H.H. Risley. Where these British ethnologists were generally inclined to see race-mixing as a source of Indian weakness, Dutt portrays it as a source of strength, since it allowed the ancient Aryans to proceed more quickly through the sub-continent, acquire things of value from the people whom they conquered, and move more quickly from tribal to universal ideas. For recent discussions of the uses of Aryanism by British imperialists see Joan Leopold, "British Applications of the Aryan Theory," *English Historical Review*, 89.352, 9 July 1974, 578-603; Trautmann, *Aryans and British India*, 165-228; Thomas Metcalf, *Ideologies of the Raj*, (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1995) 66-159; Ballantyne, *Orientalism and Race*, 41-55; Ronald Inden, *Imagining India*, (Blackwell, Oxford, 1990), 56-65; Bernard Cohn, *An Anthropologist Among Historians*, (Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1987), 224-254; Heather, *Streets, Martial Races; The Military, Race and Masculinity in British Imperial Culture, 1857-1914*, (Manchester University Press, Manchester, 2004), 155-89; and, especially, Nicholas B. Dirks, *Castes of Mind: Colonialism and the Making of Modern India*, (Princeton University Press, Princeton, 2001), 127-254; and Susan Bayly, "Caste and Race in the Colonial Ethnography of India," in Peter Robb ed., *The Concept of Race in South Asia*, (Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1995), 165-218. Surveying all these instances of racially-obsessed metropolitan ethnographic work, should help us to appreciate the originality of Dutt, who made at least an effort (not entirely successful) to escape these snares.

87. In 1898 and 1899, respectively, Dutt abridged the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana*, and published both in English translation. Here he made the comparisons between these Hindu epics and the Iliad and the Odyssey most explicitly. See "Translators Epilogue" in Romesh Chunder Dutt, ed., *The Mahabharata; Epic of the Bharatas*, (Jaico, Bombay, [1898], 1944), 177-88. As Robert Darnton notes, the *Ramayana* provided one of the most ubiquitous models for the outpouring of cheap Bengali literature that issued from Indian presses during the second half of the nineteenth century. Darnton, "Literary Surveillance in the British Raj," 141-2.

88. The contemporary political implications of Dutt's book were fully recognized by the *Saturday Review*, the only major British periodical to review his volumes, which "demur[red] "to several of the conclusions which the author has thought himself justified in making." Indeed, by extracting strategic quotations taken out of context, the reviewer strongly implied that Dutt's book was little more than a political tract masquerading as an erudite multi-volume history. Dutt's "ancient Hindus in the Vedic times possessed all requisites for self-government and displayed a capacity for freedom as such privileges are understood, preached and propagated in our own age." Dutt would have his readers believe that "some eighty or ninety generations

ago the Hindus were full of 'political life'. They displayed 'the liberties and energies of a free people,'" and "they had been in the enjoyment of a 'Republican form of government'" until they somehow lost their 'manly freedom'. "It seems to have occurred to Mr. Dutt that by indenting on a Radical programme and standing on a progressive platform, he could really bring his readers to believe that there was as period in Oriental history when the people spoke and the Raja only listened, when all sections of the community governed themselves, and when priestly arrogance and kingly pride were unknown." "There is not the smallest trustworthy evidence," the reviewer continued, "to show that the early Aryan conquerors were at all different from Sesostris or Nimrod, or that they governed by maxims and agencies other than those familiar to the average modern Oriental despot." "True history," the reviewer concluded, "cannot be evolved out of such fancies any more than can a new India rise out of the flaccid orations of the members of the Congress who delude themselves into the belief that they are sent on a mission to complete or to revolutionise the policies of Cornwallis, Elphinstone and Munro." *Saturday Review*, 71:1842, (February 14, 1891), 204-5.

90. Through the end of the Mauryan Empire, according to Dutt, Kshatriyan elitism and Buddhist egalitarianism had, between them, kept the priestly pretensions of the Brahmans in check. Yet as Buddhism itself sank into a refined courtly culture, it lost much of its original populist simplicity. Corrupt, complacent, and reduced to empty formulas, it paved the way for the dead hand of Puranic Brahmanism, which was imposed on the entire society. Dutt, *A History of Civilization in Ancient India*, (Cosmo, New Delhi, [1890], 2000), volume II, 303-34.

92. One of the few periodicals to give serious and respectful attention to Dutt's *History of Civilization in Ancient India* was the *Calcutta Review*. Separate reviews appeared for each of its three volumes. "It is gratifying," the first reviewer wrote, "to see that though 'the charge of a Bengal District with an area of over six thousand square miles and a population of over three millions' leaves our author little leisure for other work, he has succeeded in presenting the general reader with a reliable and concise history of ancient civilization in India." Existing texts for the university examinations in India were unsatisfactory, the reviewer noted, and "Mr. Dutt's book will form a very useful addition to the Entrance or F.A. Course. . . . We throw out this hint for the consideration of the Educational authorities." *Calcutta Review*, 89:178 (October, 1889), xxv-xxviii, quotes on xxvi, and xxviii. A year later, the second volume was correspondingly praised, although Dutt's extreme hostility to caste was noted. "In this connection he sometimes forgets he is a historian and becomes a partisan." Yet, the reviewer concluded, "these, after all, are very slight blemishes," and "many ardent liberals will like him all the better for them." *Calcutta Review*, 90:130, (1890), xv-xviii, quotes on xvii, and xviii.

By the time of the third volume, however, the *Review* was more inclined to take Dutt to task for his liberal bias, and his failure to recognize that the oriental character

probably required the division of the population into separate and hereditary castes. “There is room for bitterness, room for sarcasm [about Brahman pretension] and, maybe he [Dutt] does well to be angry. But failing nationality and racial coherencies, what so catholic a controlling agency, making for the maintenance of order, and the greatest good of the greatest number; what other agency could have been devised that would have been half as much in accord with the bent and sympathies of oriental minds?” “Mr. Dutt’s black is too black,” the review concluded, “Snaffle-bits are of no use with some hobby horses; they should be ridden on a curb. Mr. Dutt’s enthusiasm against Brahmanism and vested interests appears to be one of them.” *Calcutta Review*, 92: 183, (January, 1891, i-xi, quotes on vii, x.

94. “We are all the more grateful to Mr. Romesh Dutt,” wrote Max Müller in his introduction to Dutt’s translation and condensation of the *Mahabarrata*, “for having given us a kind of photographic representation, a snap-shot as it were, of the old poem – the longest poem, I believe, in the whole world – and having enabled students of literature to form for themselves some kind of idea of what our Aryan brothers in India admired and still admire in the epic poetry of their country.” ‘Introduction’ to R.C. Dutt ed., *Maha-Bharata: The Epic of Ancient India*, (Dent, London, 1899), xii.

An earlier compilation of ancient Indian verse by Dutt, had been entitled *Lays of Ancient India*. “Verse,” remarked the *Calcutta Review*, “is as congenial an element to the scions of the Dutt clan as water is to ducks.” “Following the family tradition of fondness for rhyme, Mr. Dutt has transfigured prose into that medium in his renderings of the Upanishads and some of Asoka’s Edicts.” Dutt had “not given his whole heart to the verses” however, the reviewer complained, “us[ing] them rather as magic lantern illustrations to his *History of Civilization in Ancient India*, . . . showing mankind how the nature worship of the Rig Veda developed itself into the worship of nature’s God.” *Calcutta Review*, 99:198, (October, 1894), lv-lvi.

99. Since Indian poverty was an indisputable fact, imperial apologists were driven to extraordinary lengths in blaming the victim. Charles Johnston, for example, fastened on Dutt’s “confession,” that elite Indians imported twelve million dollars of gold for their jewelry. “Is it not perfectly evident,” Johnston exclaimed “that no change of government, no representative institutions, no economies, can have any permanent effect on the well-being of India while these great and growing causes of destitution remain? The remedy is, at this moment, wholly within the hands of the natives of India. On the one hand, a cessation of marriage of little girls, and a higher ideal of chastity; on the other, a temporary abstinence from gold brocade, and the fostering of industrial life in India to relieve the pressure on the soil. The English have accomplished marvels in India; but these reforms must be carried out by the Indians themselves.” Quoted in *Review of Reviews*, 39:234, (June, 1909), 526.

100. Recognizing the centrality of agriculture to the welfare (and even the bare survival) of the Indian masses, Dutt was especially critical of British land taxation policies. These policies, he contended, contributed significantly to the poverty of the people and precipitated famines in years when crop yields fell short. “The Land Tax in India is not only heavy and uncertain, but the very principle on which it is raised is different from the principle of taxation in all well administered countries. In such countries the State promotes the accumulation of wealth, helps the people to put money into their pockets, likes to see them prosperous and rich, and then demands a small share of their earnings for the expenses of the State. In India the State virtually interferes with the accumulation of wealth from the soil, intercepts the incomes and gains of the tillers, and generally adds to its land revenue demands at each recurring settlement, leaving the cultivators permanently poor.” R.C. Dutt, *The Economic History of India under Early British Rule*, (Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, London, 1901), xi.

104. British reaction to Dutt’s *Economic History of India* was mixed. *The Daily News* congratulated his novel undertaking, while the *Manchester Guardian* declared that “this will rank as the most valuable of recent books on British India.” *The Times*, however, declared that “the work before us is not a history: it is merely a collection of historical arguments for the use of a political sect.” These arguments were undermined by the author’s failure to appreciate the limitations of the ‘oriental character’, which was deemed to be incapable of responding to economic incentives, or indeed autonomous agency of any kind. “If the general character of the natives were really as it appears in Mr. Dutt’s pages, not only would there be no need now of a British Empire, but that empire would never have been permitted by the natives to be formed. If we could think away this strong element of bias we should be able to appreciate the scholarly character of much of Mr. Dutt’s book. But it cannot be got rid of, it determines every quotation, it warps every argument, it vitiates the book.” Quoted in Gupta, *Life of Dutt*, 292-4.

To undercut the agency that Dutt imputes to “the general character of the natives,” it was indeed necessary to impugn Dutt’s scholarship, and to rename it as “bias.” Nevertheless, it was precisely Dutt’s assumption that scholarship would reveal the historical agency of the Indian (and all the ways that British imperialism had closed it off) that made his *Economic History* a key catalyst for the conceptualization of Indian national autonomy by the next generation of nationalists. Of course, different members of this cohort read the book in differing ways. Consider, for example, the testimony of the young Gandhi in his defining manifesto of 1910: “When I read Mr. Dutt’s *Economic History of India*, I wept; and as I think of it again my heart sickens. It is machinery that has impoverished India.” Because the technology of British industrialism has left India economically enslaved, Gandhi predicated true national independence (*Swarj*) on its rejection. Adding to Dutt’s *History*, Keshub’s and Bankim’s spiritual turn, the whole of the Gandhian philosophy fell into place: “If the machinery craze grows in our country, it will become an unhappy land . . . By reproducing Manchester in India, we shall keep our money at the price of our blood,

because our very moral being will be sapped.” *Hind Swarj*, (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, [1910] 1997), 107, 108.

106. For both Banerjea and Dutt, Curzon’s decision to partition Bengal in 1905 was nearly the last straw. While continuing to speak vociferously against violent or ‘extremist’ methods of resistance, both men lent their names and voices to the swadeshi campaign, which advocated economic self-reliance. “The year 1905 is one of the darkest in our annals,” Banerjea lamented, “relieved by the reflection that it witnessed an upheaval of national life and an awakening of consciousness without parallel in our history.” “Lord Curzon has divided our province, he has sought to bring about the disintegration of our race . . . [but] he has built better than he knew. . . . He has stimulated those forces which contribute to the up-building of nations.” One of those forces was economic boycott, a tactic that Banerjea had previously been reluctant to use. “The boycott is an instrument in our hands. We resolved to use it when necessary, subject of course to the safeguard that it is only to be used in extreme cases when there is a sufficiently powerful body of opinion to justify its use and to insure its success.” Banerjea, *Speeches*, 397, 401.

While acknowledging that the Swadeshi movement had “raised much angry discussion,” and needed to “peacefully and quietly extend [its] operation from year to year,” the principle of economic self-sufficiency was, as his own books demonstrated, what India now required. “Gentlemen, the Swadeshi Movement is one which all nations on earth are seeking to adopt in the present day. Mr. Chamberlain is seeking to adopt it by a system of protection. Mr. Balfour seeks to adopt it by a scheme of retaliation. France, Germany, and the United States, and all the British colonies adopt it by building up a wall of prohibitive duties. We have no control over our fiscal legislation, and we adopt the Swadeshi scheme therefore by a laudable resolution to use our home manufactures, as far as practicable, in preference to foreign manufactures. I see nothing that is sinful, nothing that is hurtful in this; I see much that is praiseworthy, and much that is beneficial.” Gupta, *Life of Dutt*, 442.

107. It would be possible to trace a line of development in this chapter from the largely spiritual and imaginary histories of Keshub and Bankim towards an increasing realism, first manifest in the constitutional history of Banerjea, and then fully consummated in the empirically grounded ancient classical, and modern economic, histories of Naoroji and Dutt. This trajectory might then be aligned with a parallel arc in political sophistication, as we move from the largely individualistic responses of our first two subjects, during the 1860s and 1870s, to the early nationalist movement of the 1880s and 1890s, which provided the context in which the latter two worked. The trouble with this synopsis is that it fails to capture the internal development of all of our subjects, as they moved from a relatively straightforward youthful conception of liberalism, to a more complex and troubled vision, which followed from the experience of exclusion at the hands of an

increasingly racially discriminatory Raj. The reactive nationalism that these experiences produced also tended to be accompanied by a retreat into patriarchy, as the male bhadralok clung ever more tightly to control of the domestic arena, the more that public power slipped from their grasp. All of the individuals examined in this chapter began with youthful commitments to the emancipation of women, and none of them ever overtly repudiated these allegiances. In practice, however, they found it increasingly difficult to integrate feminist commitments either into their politics or their historical writings in any meaningful way.