

In Another Country

COLONIALISM, CULTURE,

AND THE ENGLISH

NOVEL IN INDIA

Priya Joshi



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WHO REASONED NOT THE NEED

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CHAPTER I

The Poetical Economy of Consumption

INTRODUCTION

Q. D. Leavis opens her classic account of the novel, *Fiction and the Reading Public* (1932), by documenting British readers' immense affection for the genre. She reports that although novels comprised only a third of the total holdings in British public libraries in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, they were requested over four times more often than works of nonfiction. From this, Leavis concludes:

Considering that the 11 percent minority which takes advantage of its right to borrow books from the public libraries is probably the more enterprising section of the poorer reading public, [this] shows convincingly enough the supremacy of fiction and the neglect of serious reading which characterise the age.¹

"The supremacy of fiction and the neglect of serious reading"—the remainder of Leavis's magisterial study proceeds to dismantle any hint of parataxis between the two phrases. It is *precisely* the supremacy of fiction in mid- to late-nineteenth-century Britain that bred the neglect of

"serious" reading in the twentieth century concludes Leavis trenchantly, amassing a formidable body of research in what became the first study of its kind to include—indeed, to introduce—the category of readership into the systematic analysis of a literary genre. For Leavis, reading bad fiction—by which she meant works that "make a brute assault on the feelings and nerves" such as the fiction of Marie Corelli and William Le Queux (154)—meant liking it *and* looking for more of it, thus leading to "the disintegration of the reading public" (the title of Leavis's longest chapter) and a decline in the British novel from the days of Richardson and Scott, Austen and Eliot, when it had "serious standards" (123).

This book studies the emergence of the novel in India from its introduction under the aegis of nineteenth-century British colonial policies through the 1980s. My research on the success of British popular fiction in India documents virtually identical readership figures as Leavis does for Britain, yet my conclusions are markedly different. The British novel of "serious standards" was introduced in India in the nineteenth century as a means of propagating and legitimating Englishness in the colony. Yet the fiction consumed most voraciously—discussed, copied, translated, and "adapted" most avidly into Indian languages and eventually into the Indian novel—was the work of highly popular British novelists, today considered relatively minor and far from serious, whose fortunes soared for generations among enthusiastic and loyal Indian readers long after they had already waned in Britain. Despite this apparent "neglect of serious reading," the Indian novel ascended to "serious standards." In order to better understand this process and the subsequent morphology of the Indian novel, this study begins by documenting the culture of novels and reading in nineteenth-century India with particular attention to the pervasiveness of British popular fiction in the colony.

Inspired by Leavis and what she terms her "anthropological" research, I study the actual readers of fiction in colonial India in an attempt to understand the forces behind the genre's ascendance. My implicit premise is that if the British novel was a success in India in certain select forms, its colonial readers made it so. Therefore, studying readership patterns (i.e., the novel's *consumption*) from extant records might provide the clearest key to uncovering the processes of cultural transmission in a colonial and, later, postcolonial context. Here, recog-

nizing the disjunctions between the novel's actual readers in India versus the readers implied in the English novel (who shared its larger cultural concerns) opens up new fields of meaning from which to approach a study of the novel's development in colonial and ex-colonial India.

Rather than approaching the colonial archive from the abstraction of positions held and proposed by the colonial elite, this study excavates the practices of individuals and groups in mid- to late-nineteenth-century India. Cultural and literary historians of India have until recently tended to draw conclusions about empire and its aftermath largely by examining imperial policies and pronouncements, thus implicitly suggesting that the edicts propagated at the helm were uncontroversially and seamlessly adopted into native practice. In the case of the novel in India, using this approach yields a bland and familiar narrative of imperial zealots such as Thomas Babington Macaulay on the one end and silent and compliant natives on the other. The relationship between the two comes across as unidirectional: the colonizer issued directives and the native, it has been assumed, more or less complied. Moreover, in conflating intention with effect, this approach has immense difficulty explaining the forms in which the Indian novel emerged, forms that look very different from their initial ingredients: British texts and the colonial policies that brought them to India.

Gauri Viswanathan's pathbreaking study, *Masks of Conquest* (1989), provides a useful caveat to its own focus on the vast textual archive that preceded and accompanied the institutionalization of British literary education in nineteenth-century India.² Viswanathan argues that the deployment of English literary education and the ensuing desire for anglicization that it generated among Indians served to fortify colonial interests in India while camouflaging ("masking") British intentions. Acknowledging that "detailed records of self-incrimination are not routinely preserved in state archives" (2), Viswanathan provides a subtle reading of the impulses behind the vigorous and extensive debates preserved in British *Parliamentary Papers* and the East India Company's voluminous correspondence on its educational policy toward India that form the basis of her study. She rightly insists that the considerable depth and detail present in what today have in fact become self-incriminatory documents come not from British hubris emanating from a sense of stable authority and absolute power over India but from the

exact opposite. "The vulnerability of the British, the sense of beleaguerment and paranoid dread, is reflected in defensive mechanisms of control" that find their articulation in the extensive official records and documents of the sort Viswanathan draws upon in her influential monograph (10-11). "The inordinate attention paid by parliamentary discussions and debates and correspondence between the Court of Directors and the governor-general to *anticipated* reactions by the native population . . . is often in excess of accounts of *actual* response," she further proposes in an extremely provocative reading of the colonial encounter between British literary texts and Indian readers of these texts (11; emphases in original).

Yet, rather than pursuing the opportunities implicit in her argument and analyzing the *actual* responses of Indians to the East India Company's efforts on their behalf, Viswanathan largely ignores them altogether. Initially conceding they are "outside the scope of this book," with its clearly defined emphasis on studying the psychology and ideology of a British power that has "no comprehension or even awareness" of its Others (12), she judiciously proffers that the story of Indian response "can, and perhaps must, be told separately for its immensely rich and complex quality to be fully revealed" (12).

To an extent, Viswanathan is right in defining her inquiry as narrowly as she does. Indian responses are in fact complex and rich, requiring volumes to do them justice. Anything less would be irresponsible. However, her insistence that the story of British power and rule, beleaguered and paranoid though it may be, can be told on its own monochromatic terms without illumination, insight, or even reflection from the most direct source and recipient of its paranoia and rule is an awkward one. Perhaps recognizing this as she explains her refusal to include Indian voices in her study, Viswanathan's syntax with its repeated and contorted negatives suggests that she too is less than fully persuaded by her logic: "to record the Indian response to ideology is no more an act of restoring the native's voice as not recording it is to render him mute" (12).

Drawing upon many of the insights and opportunities Viswanathan's important work has made available, this study differs from hers in both impulse and inclination in two significant ways. First, it resists the tempting and often easy Manicheanism that accounts for empire and its complex, clotted history with the disarming simplicity of ruler-ruled,

colonizer-colonized. Insisting that each party inserted and imposed itself in unexpected quarters of the other's domain, I see each side of the colonial encounter illuminating the other in multiple and irrefutable ways. No account of colonial India can do it justice without taking into direct account the presence and practices of the British, much the way that a story of Britain in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries can never be complete or even fully accurate without acknowledging and addressing her colonies and their inadvertent and considerable presences within her. While this remark may appear a truism today in a world that has indigenized the dialectic of master and slave into a glib mantra, it is one worth restoring to status when reading arguments such as those Viswanathan advances in her meticulous study of British ideology that nonetheless ignores Indian responses altogether.

If the distinction I have just highlighted is one of outlook, there is a second difference in approach. Sensitive to Ashis Nandy's claim that there were at least two colonialisms if not more, I read the colonial encounter in India from the perspective that dissent and consent, cooperation and corruption characterized both sides in it. Not only were there elements on both sides that contested and corroborated with the other, there was something far more complex taking place. If the visual image of empire that Viswanathan's approach invokes is of two creatures with their backs to each other facing different directions with mutually excluding histories, my image of the British Empire in India is of two sides facing each other with their arms outstretched, each side taking, snatching, pilfering, plundering what and when it could, but also giving, exchanging, and unevenly borrowing, fitfully and sporadically, but persistently, from the other. The thesis then is less one of exclusion and a strict textual and ideological apartheid than what Harish Trivedi some years ago outlined as a transaction between two unequal, and unequally motivated, sides in an encounter that, despite its unevenness, was still characterized by exchange of some sort.³

In no way do I intend to invalidate or ignore the brutality of empire or the innumerable economic, psychic, and social costs it extracted from India when I propose an interpretive model based on transaction of the kind I do. However, I take seriously the urgency of examining the colonial archive from a perspective that reconfigures Viswanathan's focus on a hierarchy of elites in which the British and their concerns rank uppermost to one in which I give Indians and their practices

importance. The outcome of my approach yields another and altogether less familiar narrative that is full of surprises and rich with hitherto overlooked insights into the history of the British presence in India.

Rather than focusing on the colonial policies that brought the novel to India, I examine instead the British novel's impact on Indian readers and their responses to it and ask questions such as: What did the introduction of a hitherto unknown genre do in Indian letters? What was the effect of the newly introduced British novel beyond the institutional spaces of classrooms and universities and in more informal venues such as public libraries, Indian reading groups, and the domestic press where literature was increasingly being discussed and debated in the nineteenth century? What does Indian readers' relative neglect of the "serious" novels encouraged by librarians and officials in the Department of Public Instruction tell us about the cultural landscape of nineteenth-century India? The image that emerges from this research indicates an involuted portrait of cultural influence and consumption. Despite its colonial legacy, when the Indian novel emerged, it did so in forms that successfully subverted earlier colonial policies and radically reversed the priorities of Englishness and empire within the once foreign form of the novel. It is my argument that studying consumption patterns of nineteenth-century readers helps us better understand this process.

My assumption is that studying the role of the novel in the culture of print in mid-nineteenth-century India helps uncover the entangled processes at work in the transmission of culture between Britain and India. My method has been to focus on the culture of books and the practices of reading fiction occurring *on the ground* rather than at the more abstract, propagandist plane occupied by remote policymakers. *In Another Country*, then, is an attempt to combine some of the methodological insights from history of the book with the sociology of reading in order to understand the complex and contrapuntal processes at work in the consolidation of literary culture in colonial India within wider cultural and historical fields.

"Consuming Fiction," the first part of *In Another Country*, works intensively with early trade and publishing data of the nineteenth century in order to establish how Indians consumed the British novel and to explicate how these patterns of consumption both shaped and were

shaped by their social and cultural horizons. The research into the circulation, consumption, and production of print in nineteenth-century India that forms the core of this part helps identify the two different tracks on which ideas and ideologies operated in British India. The vast import of textual matter underscores the origin of the encounter with British books during the first two-thirds of the nineteenth century. Following that, with the rise and consolidation of domestic publishing in the regional languages, European books were translated into numerous Indian languages, and Indian readers and writers engaged in a long, sustained, and passionate dialogue with issues and ideas that had their source in the earlier part of the century, in the workings of the colonial state, and in social identities and perspectives introduced through readers' contact with various forms of British print. Part 2 of this book, "Producing Fiction," switches tracks to production and studies four moments marking the rise of the English novel in India from the late nineteenth century to the late twentieth. Each moment bears traces of nineteenth-century consumption practices, and this section rounds out my account of the colonial past that reaches into the present.

The following three sections of this chapter concentrically lay out and work through the main methodological and theoretical arguments of *In Another Country*. The first two elaborate on the relevance of culture generally and the novel specifically in amplifying the colonial encounter in India, while the final section maps some of the theoretical and practical insights offered by focusing on consumption within the social life of books.

COLONIALISM AND CULTURE

The larger ambitions of this project arise partly out of a curiosity to identify the limits and successes of the British Empire in India. Most imperial historians today acknowledge that both commerce and culture, gunpowder and print played a role in creating and maintaining the colonial state.⁴ As Jean and John L. Comaroff have persuasively argued, modern European empires "were built not merely on the violence of extraction, not just by brute force, bureaucratic fiat, or bodily exploitation. They also relied heavily on the circulation of stylized objects, on disseminating desire, on manufacturing demand,

on conjuring up dependencies. All of which conduced to a form of bondage, of conquest by consumption, that tied peripheries to centers by potent, if barely visible, threads and passions."⁵

The insertion of culture and its consumption into studies of the colonial encounter so apparent in the works of the Comaroffs and others has broadened both the scope of inquiry into colonialism's cultures and the findings to emerge from it. No longer is the historical record weighed by accounts that adumbrate the success of European cultural products in the colonies: research into their consumption is providing a valuable corrective that considerably complicates our understanding of the politics and psychology of the colonial encounter.

The following three brief examples help illuminate my point more concretely. In their ethnohistory of clothing and fashion in nineteenth-century southern Africa, the Comaroffs show that the European clothing introduced by missionaries was not simply a marker of the cultural terrain conquered by the British. They demonstrate how native use of Western clothing surprisingly and quite contrary to all expectations "opened up a host of imaginative possibilities for the Africans. *It made available . . . a language with which also to speak back to the whites*" (235; emphasis added).

In another salient example that pushes this point even further, Ashis Nandy maintains that not only did colonized Indians soon create an "alternate language of discourse" to British colonialism, which he identifies as "their anti-colonialism" (xvii). He also reflects upon the multiple colonialisms taking place in India and demonstrates the extent to which the Indian alternative, articulated in practical and cultural politics by figures such as M. K. Gandhi and Aurobindo Ghose, visibly seeped back and began to shape crucial aspects of the "internal culture of Britain."⁶

And finally, John MacKenzie's research into the propaganda of empire—imperial exhibitions and societies, radio and cinema, schoolbooks and juvenile literature—assails the view that empire was what happened in far-flung overseas territories with little visible impact upon domestic debates or popular representations. Studying what he calls the "centripetal effects of Empire," MacKenzie persuasively makes the case that the cultural and commercial propaganda intended centrifugally (i.e., to radiate British influence outward from metropolis to periphery) in fact ended up being crucial "in creating for the

British a world view which was central to their perceptions of themselves," a worldview that he suggests was perceptible well into the 1980s during the Falklands War and the ensuing British victory.⁷

Each of these examples theoretically and empirically underscores the premise that studying colonialism through mainstream cultural practices allows one access to the many languages in which empire was both "spoken" and "spoken back to." In studying institutional structures and everyday practices within areas as diverse as religion, architecture, medicine, literature and language, polity, fashion, and advertising—together broadly termed as culture—historians of the British Empire have begun to document two important correctives to the earlier centrifugal account. The first and most critical project has been to make apparent the effective, if not widespread, ripostes and resistances to colonial priorities that were almost everywhere and almost immediately taking place on the ground during the colonial encounter. The second, as evidenced by Nandy, MacKenzie, and others, has been to demonstrate the centripetal and unintended consequences of the imperial will to rule. Together these correctives help us see that the colonial "replies"—frequently couched within a variety of consumption practices of the colonizer's own language and tools—were often as important, if not more so, than the original metropolitan utterance, for they eventually came to shape and sometimes paradoxically to define the field in which they operated.

Revealingly, however, these correctives and the three examples I cite to exemplify them have largely come from disciplines in the social sciences (anthropology, social psychology, and history, respectively) and significantly not from literature where the emphasis on colonialism has historically been placed on the cultural product and not on its consumption. Literary analyses have most typically focused on interpreting imperial ideology as it is embedded within narrative and textual material, and the scrutiny of literary critics has most typically worked largely within the text (i.e., reading it as product) rather than outside it (i.e., reading its consumption).⁸ Literary critics have, in other words, approached the question of colonialism through the lens of their disciplinary object, subjecting what is within it to insightful and often paradigm-shifting analysis. Not surprisingly, some of these techniques have been picked up outside the discipline: all three of the examples I cited earlier have significantly drawn upon literary texts to amplify

their arguments.⁹ Literary analysis, however, which initially renewed the study of empire almost a quarter century ago with the publication of Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978), has been slow to reciprocate fully in this cross-disciplinary commerce and to include consumption more fully in its analysis of textual production.

In *Orientalism*, a groundbreaking and immensely influential study of the cultural politics of imperialism, Said has persuasively and powerfully argued that the discourses and practices of studying the non-West both legitimated Western political hegemony over lands as disparate and far-flung as India and the Levant and also provided the cultural and ideological justification for this dominance. The outcome of these Western labors was the creation of what Said identifies as "a complex Orient suitable for study in the academy, for display in the museum, for reconstruction in the colonial office, for theoretical illustration in anthropological, biological, linguistic, racial, and historical theses about mankind and the universe, for instances of economic and sociological theories of development, revolution, cultural personality, national or religious character" (7-8). Moreover, the power of Western mastery was such that the Orient neither participated in nor was permitted to challenge its fabrication in Western words and forms of knowledge. It was, quite simply, an invention of the mind with powerful and long-lasting geopolitical implications, the product, Said maintains, of Western "desires, repressions, investments, and projections" (8). In subtle readings of figures such as Flaubert, T. E. Lawrence, Kipling, Renan, and Sylvestre de Sacy among numerous others, Said demonstrates how European textual production created "not only knowledge but also the very reality they [the texts] appear to describe" (94), a reality from which the Oriental Other was almost entirely excised as agent.

Orientalism's influence in a number of disciplines that had made the non-West their area of study (such as history, anthropology, area studies, religion, and even philosophy) was transformative: whole disciplines with their objects and methodologies that often bore colonially inscribed priorities and interpretations underwent widespread intellectual scrutiny, often revealing the masks of conquest at the heart of many of them. In this regard, *Orientalism* served as a useful corrective to the ways in which imperialism and its legacies have been studied in the academy.

However, though a work on the silencing of the Other, *Orientalism* was itself curiously silent on the responses and resistances to the totalizing practices of the metropole occurring on the ground during the colonial encounter.¹⁰ Moreover, given its widespread influence in so many other areas of scholarship, *Orientalism's* influence upon literary studies has created a less than total transformation. A number of important and illuminating accounts published since it appeared continue to rehearse within them *Orientalism's* narratives of the imperial will to rule and of colonial self-legitimation implicit in literary texts. These accounts, many of which are far-reaching in their own right, have further focused on literary texts as products and producers of empire, often overlooking key aspects of textual consumption and circulation among the subjects of empire. Viswanathan's *Masks of Conquests*, as I have already discussed, ignores the impact of British policies on Indian subjects as well as Indian responses to them. More recently, Anne McClintock's *Imperial Leather* (1995), a breathtaking work on metropolitan commodities and ideologies (such as soap and domesticity) that were purveyed in empire often puts off their wider transaction altogether.¹¹ Indeed, McClintock does not so much ignore consumption as defer it to much later. Two-thirds of *Imperial Leather* dwells upon the invention and deployment of what she calls imperial modernity in southern Africa; only the final third of the book explicitly deals with what she calls anticolonial refusal in the writings of black South Africans such as Poppie Nongena's *The Long Journey of Poppie Nongena* (1980) and Sophiatown and Soweto poetry from the 1950s and 1970s.

It is not my intention to question the richness and importance of this research, which has provided valuable insights into the persistence of imperialism and its practices, but rather to build upon it and the opportunities it has opened up. The main issue it seems to me that has been raised by Said's *Orientalism* and these more recent accounts of empire is what the colonized's response to colonial practices and commodities was at the time of their arrival. Exploring contemporaneous consumption practices alongside production, I will argue, is a way to thicken and complicate our understanding of empire that helps illuminate both sides of the colonial encounter and extends our understanding of its long and often unexpected trajectories. Now that many of its far-reaching insights have been assimilated, *Orientalism* in particular invites a scholarly response resembling what Mary Layoun in a different context

so insightfully summoned as an inquiry into "the cultural and textual responses to hegemony rather than mourning its occurrence."¹²

Collaborating with many of the insights that Said's brilliant work has made available, this book is in part an attempt at expanding *Orientalism's* important legacy in literary studies and restoring balance to the disciplinary exchange that it has spawned in the cross-disciplinary world of postcolonial studies. It looks both within and without literature's traditional disciplinary object, complementing close literary and textual analysis—the look within—with material and historical research into how the textual object itself was produced, circulated, and consumed—i.e., the look without. In doing so, I draw upon the multidisciplinary tools of historian and ethnographer using them to understand better literature's particular role in the technologies of colonialism. Thus the presentation of quantitative data on the circulation and consumption of the British novel in chapters 2 and 3 is an attempt to use empirical findings to address a literary puzzle: What novels did Indians read in the nineteenth century and, if possible, how did they read them? The literary chapters in part 2 build upon the empirical and historical findings of this earlier section in order to pursue a related literary question: namely, how might we theorize the production of literary form to earlier conditions of textual and ideological consumption?

The quantitative findings that frame part 1 of this book are, therefore, not antithetical or opposed to the literary analyses that accompany them and follow in part 2. On the contrary, these empirical findings help reveal patterns within larger fields that an exclusively and more conventionally literary study of single authors and unique texts could not do on its own. In studying periods of tumult and change, as Robert Darnton and other book historians have shown, quantitative findings have frequently been able to index and illuminate shifting values more accurately than purely textual or literary analysis.¹³ My own quantitative research serves as a crucial tool to bridge the domains of the literary and the historical: its findings help connect the production of texts to their social and economic contexts, a matter much analyzed by historians of the *Annales* group.¹⁴ Through these findings, I hope to show that the British and Indian literary texts I study were not simply products of colonialism or informers of the imperial will; they were also objects of cultural consumption engaged in multiple and

varied forms of transaction and exchange whose marks remain visible both within and without them.

THE NOVEL AND EMPIRE

Edward Said's work reminds us of the considerable extent to which literary narratives informed, directed, and themselves embodied the traffic of ideas and values between metropole, periphery, and back. "The main battle in imperialism is over land, of course," he writes, "but when it came to who owned the land, who had the right to settle and work on it, who kept it going, who won it back, and who now plans its future—these issues were reflected, contested, and even for a time decided in narrative."¹⁵ The narratives Said most focuses on and the archive upon which the main evidence of his argument in *Culture and Imperialism* rests is that of the novel. As he maintains, "imperialism and the novel fortified each other to such a degree that it is impossible, I would argue, to read one without in some way dealing with the other" (71).¹⁶ Said shows how the literary institution of the novel—particularly in its British manifestation—rested upon a broader world of politics and economics: through its structures, impulses, and allusions, the novel projected the world of its composition outward and in so doing gave coherence and authority to what would otherwise have been a series of discontinuous and dispersed facts of political and imperial practice.¹⁷

In Said's account, the novel expanded and also determined European horizons about overseas territories—about habits, habiliments, peoples, and attitudes. Moreover, it performed the cultural and ideological work of empire by reinforcing upon its readers (both European and colonial) the authority of the imperial state. The novel was, in other words, a part of what constituted the colonizing mission. However, not only did it succeed in cementing national bonds through its subtle and not so subtle accounts of the "deeds of empire" (Martin Green's phrase), it was also, as we shall see in the case of India, a widely popular literary form among colonial readers, who themselves voraciously consumed the English novel as a way of understanding and learning about British culture.

For this, the British novel has come to be considered a particular success not just because of the cultural labor it performed in Britain but

also because of the labor it performed *for* Britain, most notably for its apparently successful reception among and seduction of readers in the colonies. Some critics have suggested that British influence and prestige were so marked in the nineteenth century that Indian readers "considered [British novels] to be far superior to anything which was available in their own languages";¹⁸ or, in a related vein that "Indians took to fiction as a part of their attempt to familiarise themselves with the language, style, and manners of the ruling race."¹⁹ Yet other critics have taken a more subtly sociological approach, maintaining that the British novel opened up "a whole new world" for nineteenth-century Indian readers, who discovered irresistible new possibilities in it.²⁰ Either way, the British novel was considered an immediate and immense success among readers in India, requested three to four times more frequently than any other printed form in Indian public libraries, and liberally and visibly advertised and discussed in the local press and in periodicals.²¹ It is largely to understand the nature of what constitutes this success and to instantiate the role of culture broadly and the novel more specifically in the colonial encounter that this book investigates what English books Indians read and how they did so during the nineteenth century. Were literate Indians colonized by the plethora of literature arriving from Britain, or did they, through their choices and ways of reading, themselves colonize the British literary forms to their own ends, thus eluding in nimble and skillful ways the long reach of the colonizing mission?

Nineteenth-century India, it ought to be remembered, was a world increasingly under British influence and dominance. It went from being a territory tightly controlled by a group of London merchants with an exclusive trading charter in the early part of the century to a possession ruled by Crown and Parliament by the century's end. British involvement in Indian affairs during this period escalated from trade to taxation, education to administration, occupation to rule. The English language and English ways entered India in a major way during this period and penetrated more widely and deeply within the Subcontinent. Many Indians who came in contact with this anglicist and anglicizing world, however, did not regard it as altogether a bad thing, nor did they ever fully abjure it: acquiring proficiency in the language, for instance, was seen as a way of entering the well-paying and upwardly mobile ranks within the colonial administration. Moreover, national-

ists, traditionalists, anticolonialists, and reformers alike used English language and learning at different times (however contradictory this may appear to have been) in order to advance causes as diverse as Hinduism, social reform, modernization, and liberation.²²

In this mixed world where dominance and hegemony alternately and variously existed—occasionally and uncomfortably alongside each other—I am interested in probing how literate Indians exercised choice in their consumption of the world of print; what, if anything, their choices reveal about what they themselves produced; and what these choices might tell us about the colonial world and the nature of its cultural exchanges. While I will be speaking about the print world quite broadly in the pages that follow, I should say at the outset that to have made this large and diverse world in its entirety and complications the focus of my project would be an enormous undertaking, well beyond the scope of any single book.

I have focused instead on a smaller and more manageable field of textuality that Indians encountered through contact with the British. I look specifically at how readers responded to the novel, a form I selected in large part because it had never existed in India prior to its introduction under the aegis of the British commercial and colonial presence in the Subcontinent. It was a form, furthermore, that was initially outside the immediate sphere of the colonial state apparatus, whose emphasis on literature in the educational curriculum was primarily conveyed by English poetry, with essays and drama following. While the machinery of the colonial state increasingly made education one of its cornerstones by using select literary texts in the curriculum to enhance, underwrite, and otherwise underscore the superiority of the English language and the sophistication of English learning more generally, the novel as such was not at first included in this official purvey of print and ideas. Alongside the apparently marginal role it initially played in the ideology of rule (a role, incidentally, that was to increase dramatically as the nineteenth century wore on), what we see unfolding is the great and sustained enthusiasm with which Indians literate in English turned to reading British novels in their leisure.

As increasing numbers of Indians started reading English books for pleasure, the novel and Indian responses to it provide ideal variables to help track the development of a population that was not just consuming the novel as a new form of literature and entertainment but was

simultaneously encountering in this form a world of new values and ideas inevitably associated with Englishness, modernity, and the colonizer. Tracking how Indians consumed the novel, then, opens up a way of examining how a colonial population responded to a world of culture and priorities inherently different from and often apparently antithetical to their own. In studying the consumption of the British novel, I submit, we begin to see most clearly how ideas and ideologies were received, transmogrified, rejected, or refashioned by that small but influential part of the Indian population who had access to this world of print. By focusing primarily on the novel, I attempt to make some sense of the vast textual apparatus that imagined, achieved, understood, retained, and reproduced empire through a large and varied array of print. By further emphasizing what literate Indians both consumed as well as produced, we begin to uncover with some specificity the details of a world in which writing served not simply as an instrument of power and expansion but also as one of seduction, explication, translation, negotiation, transaction, consolidation, and resistance.²³ In short, as the next two chapters detail, the focus on the novel helps us see that Indian readers were neither passive recipients of British print nor bit players in a story dominated by European production. Indeed, it is the very nature of print that in many ways enabled the multiple and varied transactions that this book documents. The act of reading as such leaves few textual or representational remains: its consumption, initially at least, is entirely invisible, taking place in what Benedict Anderson has elegantly called the "lair of the skull" that conceals its most extensive and revealing byproducts.²⁴ All readers, even those being read to, consume in the privacy of the mind, which actively enables the kinds of inventions that I propose in chapters 2 and 3.

For practical and methodological reasons, I have further focused this study upon novels in English. As I discuss in the chapters that follow, British books constituted approximately 95 percent of book imports into India between 1850 and 1900 and were present in equivalent or higher percentages among Indian library holdings (see chapter 2). Therefore, to study the circulation of the British novel over other European imports in nineteenth-century India makes considerable methodological sense. Furthermore, while I make numerous references in the chapters that follow to novels and figures who wrote in various Indian languages, my argument on Indian production in part 2 is

based primarily upon Indian writing in English. Attempting to provide a pan-Indian account of the novel would require linguistic competence in at least a dozen languages and would practically lie beyond the capabilities of any single author or volume.²⁵

Moreover, there is a further methodologically sound rationale for focusing on the Indian novel in English. It was the language in which Indians first encountered the form, although paradoxically it was one of the last languages in which Indians wrote their own novels. This gulf between the consumption of novels in English and their production in the language is itself provocative for it suggests that the response to colonialism was far slower in colonialism's own terrain (English) than in vernacularized and translated forms where it gained momentum rapidly, an issue that I address in chapter 4 on the Bengali novelist, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee. Indeed, colonial writing in English has carried a particular burden and relish apparent not just in the Indian context. For Stephen Dedalus in Ireland, the charge was memorably one of unrest and despair:

The language in which we are speaking is his before it is mine. How different are the words *home*, *Christ*, *ale*, *master*, on his lips and on mine! I cannot speak or write these words without unrest of spirit. His language, so familiar and so foreign, will always be for me an acquired speech. I have not made or accepted its words. My voice holds them at bay. My soul frets in the shadow of his language.²⁶

For others, the trauma came from writing not just in an acquired speech but in a borrowed form as well. Seamus Heaney writes in a powerful stanza:

Ulster was British, but with no rights on
The English lyric: all around us, though
We hadn't named it, the ministry of fear.²⁷

Views similar to this can be found among nineteenth- and twentieth-century Indian writers as well, some of whom, as Harish Trivedi documents, found British cultural influence initiating "a period of crisis, of

bewilderment and trial by new historical forces not always fully grasped or entirely welcome" (186).²⁸

However, alongside the powerlessness and despair echoed above, one also detects a celebration of the new linguistic and creative possibilities that writing a novel in English ushered in in India. Upamanyu Chatterjee's *English, August* (1988) opens with just such relish and abandon. "Amazing mix, the English we speak," chortles August in the novel's first page. "Hazaar fucked. Urdu and American . . . a thousand fucked, really fucked. I'm sure nowhere else could languages be mixed and spoken with such ease."²⁹ For Chatterjee's irreverent protagonist, the particular pleasures came not just from writing in English but also from writing the language in the amazing mix in which "we" speak it. His novel and its use of English gesture to a process of cultural indigenization that has rendered both the imported form and its language Indian. If, *pace* Said and Viswanathan, colonialism staged its presence largely through literary culture, *In Another Country* is invested in exploring the languages in which that culture was mixed and spoken, apparently with such ease. It therefore focuses on the colonial encounter as it took place in India in an entirely colonial realm—i.e., within an imported genre (the novel) as well as in an acquired language (English)—even as it shows both dimensions of this realm being indigenized within a domestic cultural sphere.

THE POETICAL ECONOMY OF CONSUMPTION

I embarked on this project increasingly convinced that political economy's traditional emphasis on production and the commodity within the trade cycle significantly obscures a fuller understanding of the social life of things. Production and circulation tell only part of the story. It is my contention, strengthened over the course of my research, that consumption crucially shapes the telling and sometimes even the tale of the cycle. The title of this chapter, "The Poetical Economy of Consumption," therefore, invokes two registers. It is in part a play on Marx's "Introduction to a Critique of Political Economy" (1857), in which he maps out a theory of production, distribution, and consumption that was to remain his view on the trade cycle under capitalism.³⁰ For Marx, "the process always starts afresh with production" (139),

which fundamentally creates, determines, and shapes consumption through the commodities it produces. While his essay skillfully places production as an originary moment in the trade cycle—before distribution, exchange, and consumption—it ends there without substantially connecting consumption to production or ever fully closing the gap between the two. Political economy is powered by production for Marx; consumption largely marks the requisite endpoint of a chain rather than the beginning of another one. In this regard, therefore, the word "cycle," which he uses to describe trade in abstraction is something of a misnomer. Consumption for Marx remains subordinate to production: it is that which "falls properly outside the sphere of economy" (130); that "cannot be the decisive element [in political economy]" (139).³¹

Finding Marx's refusal to link consumption to production unsatisfactory and curious to investigate what would happen if the trade cycle were closed around these two points, I propose an alternative model in this chapter. While I too draw upon political economy, I focus considerably on its subjective trajectory rather than purely on its objective and abstract elements, specifically as it relates to the circulation of print in nineteenth-century India. Working within a frame that emphasizes consumption's influence upon social meanings and relations, my account here differs substantially from the Marxist one outlined above. Rather than locating political meaning solely within the product (i.e., within the various ideological utterances putatively contained in the text), I suggest instead that the political effects of a text lie outside it in its consumption by readers who are not its makers. Drawing upon Michel de Certeau's illuminating argument that consumers are "unrecognized producers, poets of their own affairs,"³² I offer here what I somewhat playfully contrast with the political: namely, a poetical economy of the circulation of goods. The second register that my title invokes—of poetical economy and consumption—therefore inverts the first one—of political economy and production.³³

In *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1979), de Certeau described consumption as "another production," arguing that "it insinuates itself everywhere, silently and almost invisibly, because it does not manifest itself through its own products, but rather through its *ways of using* the products imposed by a dominant economic order" (xii–xiii; emphasis in original). In their dissident ways of using goods that they neither make

nor produce, consumers nonetheless manipulate, re-imagine, appropriate, and re-fashion the products at their disposal. Separated, marginalized, or alienated from the economy of production, users express themselves through their choices and forms of consumption. They skillfully and ceaselessly adapt or otherwise evade the rules and structures under which they live without overthrowing the rules and structures themselves. As de Certeau maintains, "the tactics of consumption, the ingenious ways in which the weak make use of the strong, thus lend a political dimension to everyday practices" (xvii).

De Certeau's examples of dissidence through consumption are numerous: shopping, watching television, reading, walking in the city. Although these ways of producing by consuming, multiple and minor as they are, often leave few textual traces and lie outside the historical record or the sphere of statistics, he nevertheless maintains that they are apprehensible to the researcher attentive to them. Drawing upon Spanish colonial attempts to implant European culture and religion among indigenous peoples in the New World, for instance, de Certeau vividly argues that Spanish success was only partly and superficially achieved:

Submissive, and even consenting to their subjection, the Indians nevertheless often *made of* the rituals, representations, and laws imposed on them something quite different from what their conquerors had in mind; they subverted them not by rejecting or altering them, but by using them with respect to ends and references foreign to the system they had no choice but to accept. They were *other* within the very colonization that outwardly assimilated them; their use of the dominant social order deflected its power which they lacked the means to challenge; they escaped it without leaving it. (xiii; emphasis in original)

The example is particularly relevant to de Certeau's thesis on consumption in part because it so starkly identifies the dominant power (the Spaniards) and because this power had the strategic and military means to impose and engineer its influence upon a host of everyday indigenous practices from polity, language, and religion to architecture, jurisprudence, and trade. Yet, as de Certeau insists, users within this colonial order had ways of mutating its power through their manner of consuming its products.

Subjected to a force vastly more powerful than their own, indigenous subjects of Spanish colonialism employed the tactics of the weak. Imbuing alien regulations and representations with vernacular ones, "they metaphorized the dominant order: they made it function in another register" (32). They rescripted the colonial narrative and created a new role and new possibilities for themselves within it. Submitting to Spanish power—and language and religion—native groups nonetheless found ways of evading it by digesting (or consuming) its practices within their own social priorities. De Certeau calls this process "metaphorization," but we could as well call it an act of cultural translation, a practice through which groups make sense of differences between the worlds they encounter in ways that allow them to convert differences through consumption and to divert the apparatus of dominance by reimagination.³⁴ Translation in this context serves to underscore the gulf between the worlds of the colonizer and the colonized rather than to accentuate the common ground they share. Instead of discovering likeness and equivalence between the two orders, consumption-as-translation highlights the vast chasm separating them. Through acts of cultural interpretation (or, what Daniel Miller has usefully called "recontextualization"³⁵), the colonized produces new and unintended meanings of the products deployed by the colonizer, meanings that only tangentially relate to their original ones and that thus mark the paucity of shared signification between the two orders.

To focus on consumption, therefore, is not to study how goods and commodities are acquired by consumers; rather, it is to study the diversity of ways in which they are recontextualized and put to use. Indeed, this is the key distinction between my use of consumption and that of its predominant theorists, Thorstein Veblen and Pierre Bourdieu. Veblen's *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (1899) defined the theoretical terrain that mapped the cultural determinants to consumption studies that his successor, Bourdieu, has today come to occupy (though, significantly, Bourdieu makes no mention of Veblen in his work on consumption). Both Veblen and Bourdieu, despite their differences, form a single axis within consumption theory: both emphasize the manner in which commodities define consumers, who seek identity and realization from the goods and services they can command and consume.³⁶ Veblen's account comes from a reading of late-nineteenth-century American *nouveaux riches* who sought to erase any hint of labor from

the source of their wealth and, therefore, preferred to consume conspicuously those goods that themselves had no overt reference to labor (and, more specifically, to industrial labor); hence a vacation "doing nothing" or a purely decorative lapdog that had no ostensible or visible use value, not even hunting or protection.

On the other hand, Bourdieu's work in *Distinction* (1979) focused on consumers' desires to cultivate and project a particular kind of labor underpinning their consumption practices and to identify their class position through it: namely, that of higher education. Consumers select those commodities that identify their education in taste: thus the emphasis on "educated" forms of recreation (music, museum visits, art), food, reading materials. Despite differences that need not detain us here, there are two marked similarities: both Veblen and Bourdieu emphasize material culture over its users; commodities over consumers. Following de Certeau, however, the emphasis in my study is upon the consumers themselves rather than the commodity; upon sociology not materiality; upon less visible uses and ruses from those below rather than conspicuous displays from those near the top.

It ought to be clear from my account that the slippages that consumption helps make visible, especially in the context of empire, are also significantly different from those in the much used notion of mimicry. In Homi Bhabha's influential description of it, mimicry is a form of Western desire imposed upon its Others as a way of both inventing them and articulating mastery over them.³⁷ For Bhabha, mimicry in the case of India refers to British desires for an anglicized Other who is nevertheless not permitted to be English (or, as Macaulay had infamously put it, one who is "Indian in blood and colour but English in taste, opinions, morals, and intellect"³⁸). Bhabha's concept of mimicry thus comes to represent the ambivalences and disavowals inherent in the European colonial enterprise. It is "an erratic, eccentric strategy of authority in colonial discourse" (90), originating in European power—and not the mockery or copy of that power as V. S. Naipaul maliciously portrayed it in his novel *The Mimic Men* (1967).

The differences between my argument of what consumption enables in a situation of unequal power such as colonial rule and Bhabha's of mimicry are straightforward but substantial. First, whereas the agency of consumption explicitly lies with the user (typically, the colonized), agency in mimicry is exclusively the domain of the producer (i.e., the col-

onizer). Mimicry is all about the European will to rule and the projection of that will upon the colonized: it is articulated and made visible in European writing, which Bhabha cites extensively and almost exclusively in his essay. The colonized are presented in this account as an undistinguished mass, deprived of any agency, whose sole historical relevance is to reveal the colonizer's will and desire for reproduction. Second, whereas mimicry is invested in explicating the colonizer's will to power, consumption on the other hand is marked by its investigation into the effects of that power. At best, mimicry is elusive ("erratic, eccentric"): it "conceals no presence or identity behind its masks" (88). Consumption, in marked contrast, is part of everyday practice; in many cases it is implicated in material history and culture, often leaving traces within the historical record. Finally, consumption signals the gulf between two worlds that it attempts to bridge through metaphorization; mimicry indicates a gulf that is never fully bridged because of the multiple slippages inherent in it. Mimicry is marked on both sides of the colonial encounter by ambivalences ("almost the same, but not quite"), consumption by inadvertent agency and action. Even in a later essay, where Bhabha allows the voice of anticolonial refusal to come through, the source of this refusal lies not in the colonized's particular practices of consumption (Anund Messeh's interlocutors still read the Bible *qua* Bible under the tree in Delhi) but in the hybridity and ambivalences embedded within the colonizer's practice of authority.³⁹ Consumption, therefore, details the agency and weapons of the weak, mimicry those of the strong.

Predictably and not surprisingly given mimicry's source in imperial desire, the colonial record—maintained by the rulers—is full of its presence. Mercifully, however, the colonial archive is also rife with examples of consumption as cultural translation and metaphorization. In a subtle reading of José Rizal's 1886 novel, *Noli Me Tangere* ("The Lost Eden"), Vicente Rafael describes a scene where a cleric, Father Damaso, gives a bombastic sermon to a congregation of locals, starting with a Latin quote then moving on in Spanish to end his remarks in Tagalog.⁴⁰ The gathering soon loses the point of the sermon, noting instead "the sour face of the lieutenant, the bellicose gesture of the preacher" (2) along with a few words here and there from which they make out a whole other meaning than the one Father Damaso intended (and upon which Rizal's narrative dwells at length). In annotating the scene, Rafael suggests that

the priest's words rouse in the Tagalog listeners other thoughts that have only the most tenuous connections to what he is actually saying. . . . Their response, however, is not simply a matter of boredom, indifference, or rejection. In fact, they anxiously attend to Damaso's voice, hoping to catch some of the words that are thrown their way. *It is as if they saw other possibilities in those words* . . . another place from which to confront colonial authority—one that appears to be tangential to the position of subordination ascribed to them by both Father Damaso and Rizal.

(3; emphasis added)

In this case, then, the congregation evaded the entire battery of associations hurled in Father Damaso's sermon—of Christian superiority, colonial justice, Filipino underdevelopment, and so on—instead hearing within the "flood of words" a story in which, as Rizal writes, "San Francisco would destroy the *guardias civiles*" (2) and fulfill the deepest—and anticolonial—desires of the Tagalog. Unfettered by their mis-translation, the cleric's listeners "redoubled the attention with which they followed Father Damaso" (2).

As Rafael helps us see, through this example and others in his extraordinary ethnohistory of Christianity in the Philippines, not only did Tagalog consumption-translation reconfigure colonial priorities, it also actively enabled native fantasies. Even as religion, language, and new technologies of representation were produced and placed before colonial consumers, they found ways of indigenizing foreign influences by recontextualizing or translating the alien and the unknown within their own local narratives or, in some cases, using ideological imports to talk back to the colonial authorities. In each case, by producing new meanings of and uses for products they had no initial hand in making, colonial consumers found ways both of evading full submission into the dominant economy of interest and of inserting themselves within the circulation of its products. As we will shortly see in the Indian context, consumption was not (not just) a tactic of preserving the self under external ideological onslaught by preserving a rich fantasy world in the mind; it also managed to affect the pathways through which products that originated in the colonial apparatus circulated and, even possibly, were eventually produced.

Accepting the broad premise that consumption is another produc-

tion, its most significant outcome is not always or only dissidence, opposition, or subversion as de Certeau maintains (although these are abundantly present and initially at least salient markers of the colonial encounter). Rather, it is something more participatory with the dominant order, something that, following Harish Trivedi, one might call transaction. Although the colonial state apparatus is initially the major point of reference and source of conflict in this project, to study opposition exclusively serves not toward uncovering another production, but rather a *reproduction*, in negative or distorted form, of the colonial priorities and ideologies that practices of consumption in fact seek to replace.⁴¹ For me, instead, focusing materially and rigorously on broad consumption practices within the everyday that engage with and translate outer forms of power holds the promise of unearthing something more nuanced: the production of new methodological and interpretive possibilities, new meanings, different vistas, new findings within an order that has hitherto emphasized production as the main source of social and historical meaning.

Within a historical record that has emphasized the data of production, patterns of reading as consumption nonetheless make themselves visible, paradoxically within the very data and statistics that apparently eschew them. Despite the fact that Indian readers have left so few textual records of their novelistic consumption, the print archive of nineteenth-century India nonetheless offers revealing glimpses. From this archive it is possible to learn something about the novels that were available to literate Indians, where and how, and something of the conditions under which Indians availed themselves of this reading matter. It also yields information on local conditions of printing and publishing, on the role of the nascent serial press, and on the ways in which books were purveyed and discussed, translated and adapted through the nineteenth century. In short, this quantitative archive provides the social context in which the British novel was consumed in nineteenth-century India, a consumption different from that of many other commodities in that it required not just purchasing power but literacy as well.

By reading novels as well as reading how novels might historically have been read, consumption's multiply layered practices reveal themselves from within the textual analysis and statistical data of the chapters in part 1 as trends rather than individual practice, diachronically

rather than synchronically. Consumption's contribution to social meaning emerges in between the domains of the literary and the historical, asserting its presence and influence upon the economics of cultural production. The poetics of consumption manifest itself through the quantitative record: therefore, rather than abrogating statistics altogether as de Certeau might have, this study uses them against the grain for their ability to lend both clarity and complexity to cultural analysis by helping reconfigure the historical, sociological, and textual in useful new ways.

In India's encounter with the British novel, what we see is neither a large-scale boycott nor a widespread opposition to British literary culture. The immediate and sustained enthusiasm for the form was contrary to what the preceding theoretical discussion might lead one immediately to predict, especially given the statistical popularity of this form in just about any register. Readers vigorously and unambiguously embraced the novel for their leisure reading, often choosing it over indigenous literary forms, discussing it in the domestic press, in literary societies, and in homes in a manner that would suggest the novel's successful conquest of the Indian literary and cultural marketplace. In examining the record more closely, however, a different pattern emerges: what we see is not consumption by opposition but consumption through selection. Individual readers in multitudes variously indicated the differences between their world and the colonial state's in two ways: first, by the specific novels they consumed (both the selections they made *for* as well as *against* certain books are revealing here); and second, by how they read, misread, translated, mis-translated the British novel. These descriptions of reading are not just writerly sleights: the historical record is full of British novels translated and adapted into Indian languages, and what got translated and how signals a form of consumption characterized not by opposition but by adaptation; it articulates a narrative of production by abduction, diversion, invention.

Consumption's use for me, therefore, lies in its ability to reveal the interstices between vernacular, everyday practices and a dominant social and political economy. In Daniel Miller's keen words, it opens new interpretive possibilities through the way it "translates the object from being a symbol of estrangement and price value to being an artefact invested with particular inseparable connotations" (190). Con-

sumption contributes meaning and clarity to the denotative data of production and its circuits of exchange. The accounts it makes visible are not the replication of a grand historical narrative but a multiplication and correction of it.

In the particular context of this project, specifically in chapter 2, consumption focuses attention on local practices occurring on the ground: knowing what readers consumed and why they did so clarifies crucial aspects of the politics and psychology of the colonial encounter. The novel, as Meenakshi Mukherjee and others have suggested, indeed provided a host of imaginative possibilities to Indian readers: it became a new form involved in inventing and representing the self; it provided its readers in India with a new language for figuring out the calculus of emerging social relations associated with modernity; and almost simultaneously, it also became one of the most powerful vehicles, first of the anticolonial and later of the nationalist struggle. In this regard, studying the novel's consumption helps us get to what Ashis Nandy earlier identified as the alternative discourse to empire; through it, in pointed ways Indians discovered themselves and manifested their anticolonialism.

Chapter 2 studies the wider world of print and ideas from which the novel eventually emerged in India. Through an analysis of extant library circulation records, public library catalogues, and translation rosters, I document how the British novel circulated among Indian readers roughly between 1835 and 1900. These patterns of use allow me to analyze the dual structure of similarity and difference in reading tastes between colonial India and Britain during the same period. Despite the sociological, political, and cultural differences in the two contexts, the canon of popular and most-sought-after novels had both striking similarities and marked differences. As a revealing example of these, I analyze the pervasive appeal of G. W. M. Reynolds (1814-79), possibly the most popular British novelist in India. I show how Indian readers consumed and interpreted Reynolds, and I argue that Reynolds's writing, with its embrace of extravagantly antirealist modes, participated in a moral, literary, and psychic economy that resonated with Indian consumers' symbolic and subconscious needs as readers in a subordinate political context.

On the other side lies the unexpected exchange visible through

consumption practices in India. What novels Indians chose to read inevitably influenced the kinds of books British publishing firms such as Macmillan began to ship to the country. The success of this Indian-selected fiction, however, soon became apparent in Paternoster Row and began to motivate the forms of the novel that were published there. Colonial literary consumption, in other words, eventually began to inspire literary production in the metropolis, thus highlighting and making explicit a colonial encounter characterized by transaction and exchange, rather than one marked exclusively by dominance and conquest.

Chapter 3 engages with a long-held critical commonplace among publishing historians that British firms dumped unsold and unsellable books into the colonies, so that studying colonial readership for insights into broader cultural or social trends can be dismissed as futile: the world of print in the colonies, this argument claims, simply documents metropolitan excess and excrescence. Intrigued by this line of reasoning, I spent several summers at the British Library working in the archives of Macmillan and Company, the most successful British publishing firm in nineteenth- and twentieth-century India, in order to understand the firm's success in the colonial world. Based on this research, I propose that the firm (as well as others including Murray, Routledge, Bentley, and Cassells) was acutely aware of the profits to be made from selling books directly to Indian readers, and it carefully cultivated this marketplace, first with textbooks and educational materials in the 1860s and then with novels through its "Colonial Library" series that was started in 1886. The success of Macmillan's fiction series lay largely with the firm's willingness to satisfy the tastes of their Indian readers, a fact well documented in the firm's private correspondence files and readers' reports. Therefore, not only is research into the colonial marketplace useful for gaining insights into the circulation of print and ideas between metropolis and periphery, but analyzing the nature of *what* Macmillan sold discloses an understudied economic aspect of the production of the British novel. The willingness of British firms such as Macmillan to please this new and palpable colonial market might also, as I show, be reflected in the kinds of novels that were eventually published in Britain, thus highlighting the contribution of the colonial marketplace to the shape of the English novel.

The outcome of this literary encounter has persisted in Indian letters well past the demise of the colonial state, most notably in the

development of the Indian novel in English, which records a narrative in considerable contrast to the one on the rise of the novel in Britain. The origins of the English novel have spawned a veritable research industry devoted primarily to identifying the novel's sources in England and the reasons behind its subsequent literary hegemony.⁴² The actual forms that the English novel has taken have tended to be less of an issue for researchers than its sources.⁴³ With the novel in India, exactly the opposite is true: understanding the origins of the novel is less of a puzzle than understanding its trajectory. Why the English novel developed in the forms that it did and when it did in India is a question that has yet to be fully addressed. Part 2 of this book is a beginning in that direction, and chapter 4 serves as both transition and bridge between the two parts of *In Another Country*.

In chapters 4 to 7, I study the attempts Indian novelists made to indigenize what was initially a foreign form and idiom. In some ways, the story told is one of failures and reroutings, in other ways, of oddly satisfying reversals and triumphs. Bankim Chandra Chatterjee (whom I discuss in chapter 4) gave up on language but not the form to become the first nationally renowned novelist in India when he abandoned an early experiment in English and started writing novels in Bengali in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Krupa Sathianadhan (discussed in chapter 5), a woman and a convert to Christianity, abandoned form but not the language in her fin-de-siècle visions of an India freed of oppressions from without and within. As a "nobody" of the kind one critic has named certain woman writers in the British marketplace,⁴⁴ Sathianadhan's was a striking but short-lived and even more shortly remembered moment in the development of the English novel in India.

Yet her writing also illuminates an extraordinary success. If the colonizer's language proved to be an obstacle for effectively rendering an Indian subjective consciousness for Bankim and other early Indian novelists who turned instead to regional languages, Sathianadhan elicits both interiority and intimacy from the imported language and the particularly autobiographical form of the novel that she cultivates. Her success in this matter gestures to a shift between novelists in the regional languages and those in English: while novelists such as Bankim (Bengali), O. Chandu Menon (Malayalam), Naro Sadashiv

Risbud (Marathi), and Devakinandan Khatri (Hindi) reveled in the fictionality of fiction and in fabricating worlds suitable for the novel, Sathianadhan's writing begins to mark a particular turn that the English novel in India took toward embracing the biography of known subjects. Sathianadhan writes about her own and her mother's *Bildung* in different households; Ahmed Ali (discussed in chapter 6) wrote a novel in 1940 that includes the social history of a city; and Salman Rushdie in 1980 produced a novel of the nation's political history. If Indian "reality" was deemed an encumbrance in the development of the novel in regional languages, which instead crafted massively fictional worlds for it, the novel in English reflects an apparent ease with "reality," placing it at the very center of its production.

With indigenizing the English novel, then, comes a paradox: while the language alienated Indian novelists in the nineteenth century, it embraced them in the twentieth. Far from being an uncomfortable language of production, English and the English novel became vehicles of intimacy and acclaim by the end of the twentieth century. If the earlier discomforts lay with rendering an Indian "reality" in a foreign tongue, the later success lay in submitting that the only reality that mattered was the subjective one that the English novel almost single-mindedly pursued in its uneven, century-long development.

What follows in the second part of *In Another Country* is an expansion and exploration of the questions initiated in part 1. In no way are chapters 4 to 7 to be thought of as an attempt to craft a literary history of the English novel in India. Rather, these chapters with their accounts of formal experimentation, narrative indigenization, and literary production explore the extent to which literary history itself is explained and complicated by the analysis of consumption that precedes it. If, to borrow a phrase from Roger Chartier, variations in the dispositions of readers help uncover a more nuanced account of the colonial encounter (in part 1), then variations in the dispositions of writers in part 2 help clarify a number of literary and formal questions that confront the Indian novel in English. If part 1 helps explain realism's failure among Indian readers in the nineteenth century (see especially chapter 3), part 2, with its readings of specific moments of literary production, helps elaborate the kinds of struggles Indian novelists confronted in rendering Indian "reality" in a form of the novel that was rapidly being vernacularized. Together these two parts explore a

process by which first readers then writers of the English novel in India indigenized the form and put it to their own uses in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

It is not my intention to claim a causal link between the history of consumption and the account of production I provide—such a link would likely be almost impossible to sustain. Rather, while each of the following chapters has its own internal coherence and historical specificity, the chapters together illuminate six episodes or moments in a process of narrative and cultural indigenization according to which the anglophone novel was vernacularized in Indian literary and cultural life. As such, the chapters on consumption help expand and render complexity to questions of literary history, novelistic form, and literary production that comprise part 2 of *In Another Country*. With this in mind, I have chosen literary moments and novelists that lend the greatest depth and dimension to the kinds of questions I ask, all figures crucial and celebrated in their day whose status helps explain the long journey toward self-expression undergone by the English novel in India.

Some might argue that to have Christians, women, and Muslims represent Indian novelistic production in English in the way this book does is an anomaly given the minority status increasingly enjoined upon these groups in India. To the extent that this is a valid concern, one might recall Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's pioneering work on Kafka with its insistence that a literature constructed by a social or political minority often exerts a considerable critical and political force on a "great" (or established) literature as it revises and exposes the triumphalist narratives of groups in power.⁴⁵ That the minority does this in the language of the majority (German in the case of Kafka, English in the case of Sathianadhan, Ali, and Rushdie) renders the power and insights of minority literature all the more compelling. As Salman Rushdie claimed with some circumspection not too long ago: "the only people who see the whole picture . . . are the ones who step out of the frame."⁴⁶

This book is in part that picture or, rather, two of them. Part 1, on the nineteenth century, is crowded in the way old photos are with ancestors and relatives, near and distant, whose bloodlines and genes, habits and tendencies are still visible in the generations that followed them. Part 2 is a more intimate picture—a family photo—that, in keeping with

the conventions of the form, is of a much smaller group whose influence and importance is most closely felt among those who consider themselves part of the family. If this part of the book appears selective in its genealogy to some, this too is in keeping with the nature of families—and family romances.

CHAPTER 2

The Circulation of Fiction in Indian Libraries, ca. 1835-1901

Indians in the British Empire never really seemed to read at all. This is the conclusion one might draw from the popular and pervasive accounts of India and Indians in the British novel. Even those novelists, such as Kipling, Forster, and Orwell, who knew India well from living there had Indians do all sorts of things including travel in trains, deliver and receive mail, play cricket and polo, bargain, dissemble, squat, spy, eat, shout, sleep, talk, hunt, and then talk some more—but they almost never represented them reading. True, Wilkie Collins showed three Indians work with ink in *The Moonstone* (1868), but only to elicit pseudomystical mumbo-jumbo from the palms of a ten-year-old mesmerist hired for the purpose of locating a holy diamond, news that the three Indians might have more easily got from a newspaper—that is, if they read, or were allowed to in the hands of these writers.¹

Not surprisingly, a very different India emerges from the words of Indians themselves and even from the pens of British colonial officials who, beginning in the mid-nineteenth century, recorded the virtually ceaseless circulation and consumption of print and textuality. Far from being the India of caves and mosques, this India is one in which Indians passionately, powerfully, and persistently read—and often wrote—

thirty million versions, according to *Midnight's Children*) that reconfigure and represent an entire and entirely new calculus of modernity. Rushdie's play with faulty memory and historical "facts" (he gets all sorts of dates wrong, such as the date of Gandhi's assassination); Amitav Ghosh's insistence on relying almost entirely on different characters' personal memories to recall a riot in Dhaka in *The Shadow Lines* (1988); I. Allan Sealy's dismissive, "People want to hear stories so you make them up" (572)—all these ways of ordering the past render a profound dislocation to the discourse of historiography itself, defamiliarizing it and its authority upon the referential illusion. In these versions of India's history, there is no referential illusion, no authorizing center, no grand narrative. These are just "legends that make reality" and worlds that have to be swallowed. As such, these novels may be the first works that in Dipesh Chakrabarty's keen phrase provincialize Europe by provincializing its forms of knowledge and narration.⁵³

This then for me is the relevance of the family romance to Indian literary modernism: individually and as a corpus, these novels are fantasies in a very formal sense, celebrating first the fact *that* they can create. And when we turn to *what* they articulate, their account of the nation is a sound critique of the Enlightenment myth of a unified nation whose citizens inhabit a single homogenous plane by remembering and forgetting the same things (paraphrasing Renan). In contrast, Indian modernist novels celebrate the nonsynchronism of post-colonial India as a space from which alternatives might emerge in a language that is fully liberated from an enervating British culture and its ensuing expectations. Observing this phenomenon repeat itself around the former empire, Rushdie triumphed in an essay in the *London Times*: "The instrument of subservience became a weapon of liberation."⁵⁴

What I have earlier called the elegiac mood of these novels can now be explained as the mood befitting the demise of one political and narrative order, even as these novels struggle to give voice to the possibility of an alternative one.

NOTES

1. THE POETICAL ECONOMY OF CONSUMPTION

1. Q. D. Leavis, *Fiction and the Reading Public*, p. 4.
2. Gauri Viswanathan, *Masks of Conquest*. For a vigorous critique of her position, see Harish Trivedi, "Reading English, Writing Hindi," pp. 176–179.
3. Harish Trivedi, *Colonial Transactions*. Lata Mani's brilliant work on *sati* illuminates another dimension of the transaction model when she shows how Indian priestly informants seized the power to interpret Hindu law for Governor General William Bentinck and provided a version of it that did not simply fabricate "tradition" in colonial India but also consolidated their own position within the hierarchy of native elites in the colonial state. See Mani, "Contentious Traditions," pp. 88–126.
4. See for example: Partha Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought*; Ranajit Guha, *Dominance without Hegemony*; Ashis Nandy, *Intimate Enemy*; Nicholas J. Thomas, *Colonialism's Culture*; Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler, eds., *Tensions of Empire*; Nicholas B. Dirks, ed., *Colonialism and Culture*.
5. John L. Comaroff and Jean Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution*, vol. 2, p. 219.
6. See Nandy, *Intimate Enemy*, especially pp. 29–48 for a fuller discussion of this theme.
7. John M. MacKenzie, *Propaganda and Empire*, p. 2, *passim*.
8. The most vivid example of this remains Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*. See also: Patrick Brantlinger, *Rule of Darkness*; Martin Green, *Dreams of Adventure*; Abdul R. JanMohamed, *Manicbean Aesthetics*; Anne McClintock, *Imperial*

Leather; Benita Parry, *Delusions and Discoveries*; Suvendrini Perera, *Reaches of Empire*.

9. The Comaroffs' *Of Revelation and Revolution* is scattered with literary references; more than half of Nandy's monograph takes on literary texts to substantiate his claims; and MacKenzie has a chapter specifically on juvenile literature in his book.

10. Said spent almost half of *Culture and Imperialism* (a work published fifteen years later that he calls "not just a sequel to *Orientalism*") on documenting and theorizing the "historical experience of resistance against empire" in readings of literary figures including Césaire, Yeats, Fanon, Tagore, Achebe, Ngugi, and Rushdie.

11. The story of soap's consumption in colonial Africa is thoughtfully accounted for in the work of the anthropologist Timothy Burke, *Lifebuoy Men*.

12. Mary Layoun, *Travels of a Genre*, p. xii.

13. Robert Darnton, *Business of the Enlightenment*; Darnton, *Forbidden Best-Sellers*; see also Roger Chartier's more qualitative account of similar intellectual terrain in Chartier, *Cultural Origins*, pp. 67–91.

14. For examples specific to the history of the book, see: Fernand Braudel, *Structures of Everyday Life*; Roger Chartier, "Intellectual History"; Chartier, *Cultural Uses of Print*; Chartier, *Culture of Print*; Lucien Febvre and Henri-Jean Martin, *Coming of the Book*; Henri-Jean Martin, *Livre*.

15. Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, p. xiii.

16. A few pages earlier, Said states his case about the novel and imperialism more bluntly: "Without empire, I would go so far as saying, there is no European novel as we know it, and indeed if we study the impulses giving rise to it, we shall see the far from accidental convergence between the patterns of narrative authority constitutive of the novel on the one hand, and on the other, a complex ideological configuration underlying the tendency to imperialism." See *Culture and Imperialism*, pp. 69–70.

17. On the regulatory function of the novel, see Franco Moretti, *Way of the World*; D. A. Miller, *Novel and the Police*; David Lloyd, *Anomalous States*.

18. T. W. Clark, "Introduction," *Novel in India*, p. 11.

19. Balgopal Varma, "Some Thoughts on English Fiction," p. 6.

20. Meenakshi Mukherjee, *Realism and Reality*, p. 6; also pp. 3–18, *passim*.

21. Chapter 2 provides details on libraries and users; for details on newspaper advertisements, see my preliminary findings in Priya Joshi, "Culture and Consumption," pp. 196–220.

22. For a discussion of the transactions between India and Britain along the consolidation of religion in the mid- and late-nineteenth century, see Vasudha Dalmia, *Nationalization of Hindu Traditions*. For useful documentation on the manner in which English educational priorities were manipulated by Hindu scholars during the same period, see Dalmia's, "Sanskrit Scholars," pp. 321–337.

23. For a useful discussion of the British empire and print, see the excellent

chapter, "Imperialism and Textuality," in Elleke Boehmer, *Colonial and Post-colonial Literature*, pp. 12–59.

24. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, p. 37.

25. The Sahitya Akademi, with an army of distinguished specialists, has begun this task in their multivolume, *A History of Indian Literature*, of which two excellent volumes have appeared under the formidable editorship of Sisir Kumar Das. A multivolume German series also entitled *A History of Indian Literature* on the development of literature in select Indian languages has also appeared under the editorship of Jan Gonda with each volume authored by an expert in the language. See for example, Dusan Zbavitel, *Bengali Literature* and Ronald Stuart McGregor, *Hindi Literature*.

26. James Joyce, *Portrait*, p. 205.

27. "The Ministry of Fear," in Seamus Heaney, *North*, p. 59.

28. Trivedi's remarks refer to Hindi writers and thinkers such as Bharatendu Harischandra and others who followed him. Trivedi is careful to distinguish their unease with English in the late-nineteenth century from the "exuberant capitulation to things English expressed in an earlier period by writers in some other linguistic areas, as for example in Bengal by Michael Madhusudan Dutta, or by Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar" (186). It is wise, therefore, to note that the regional responses to anglicization sometimes varied quite substantially at different periods, as did individual responses across time.

29. Upamanyu Chatterjee, *English, August*, p. 1, emphasis in original.

30. Karl Marx, "Introduction to a Critique of Political Economy," pp. 124–152.

31. Somewhat ironically, in a dialectical move, Marx anticipates the deficiencies in his own argument along much the same lines as I locate them here in sentences such as: "Consumption produces production in two ways. Because a product becomes a real product only through consumption. . . . Because consumption creates the need for new production" (131–132). Significantly, however, despite sentences such as these, he never quite gives up on the centrality of production to economic history as his numerous examples underscore insisting at the end that "Consumption without an object is not consumption, in this respect therefore, production creates, produces, consumption" (132). For a critique of this aspect of Marx's emphasis on production over consumption, see Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," in his *Illuminations*, pp. 217–252.

32. Michel de Certeau, *Practice of Everyday Life*, p. 34.

33. There is a useful literature critiquing Marx's position on consumption. Baudrillard, for instance, memorably remarked, "Marx made a radical critique of political economy, but still in the form of political economy." See his *Mirror of Production*, p. 50. See also Arjun Appadurai, "Introduction: Commodities & the Politics of Value," in Appadurai, ed., *Social Life*; Daniel Miller, *Material Culture and Mass Consumption*.

34. De Certeau fully intended his description of consumption to resonate

with Claude Lévi-Strauss's concept of bricolage. He uses the same verb to express the ways in which users make (*bricolent*) transformations to the system as they adapt it to their interests (see pp. 174–176). On a methodological note, he underscores why tactics such as bricolage only became apparent to Western ethnographers when studying anterior or exterior cultures: "Our 'tactics' seem to be analyzable only indirectly, through another society: the France of the Ancien Régime or the nineteenth century, in the case of Foucault; Kabylia or Béarn, in that of Bourdieu; ancient Greece, in that of Vernant and Détienne, etc. They return to us from afar, as though a different space were required in which to make visible and elucidate the tactics marginalized by the Western form of rationality. Other regions give us back what our culture has excluded from its discourse" (50; emphasis added). For further evidence of indigenous responses to Spanish colonization, de Certeau cites J-E Monast, *On les croyait Chrétiens: Les Aymaras* (Paris: Cerf, 1969); and his own "La Longue marche indienne," in *Le Réveil indien en Amérique Latine*, ed. Yves Materne and DIAL (Paris: Cerf, 1976), pp. 119–135.

35. See Daniel Miller, *Material Culture*, pp. 176ff.

36. See Thorstein Veblen, *Theory of the Leisure Class*; Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction*.

37. Homi Bhabha, "Of Mimicry and Man," in *Location*, pp. 85–92.

38. See his "Minute on Indian Education" (1835), p. 241.

39. Homi Bhabha, "Signs Taken for Wonders," in *Location*, where see especially pp. 117ff.

40. Vicente Rafael, *Contracting Colonialism*.

41. Put another way, opposition may be intransigent, admirably so, but it is never intransitive: grammatically and politically, opposition (as verb or action) always requires a direct object, one who receives its actions and to which it remains tied, often for very long stretches of time. Production anew, or another production, under these circumstances is difficult, for oppositions all too often (re)produce phantoms of what they oppose.

42. In addition to Q. D. Leavis, see also: Ian Watt, *Rise of the Novel*; John J. Richetti, *Popular Fiction Before Richardson*; Michael McKeon, *Origins of the English Novel*; Nancy Armstrong, *Desire and Domestic Fiction*; Nancy Armstrong and Leonard Tennenhouse, *American Origins of the English Novel*; Lennard Davis, *Factual Fictions*; Jane Spencer, *Rise of the Woman Novelist*.

43. This is largely true only for the novel from England. With the novel from Scotland or Ireland, things are quite different, and questions of the kind I raise with the English-language novel in India persist there as well. For instance, writing about the forms the Anglo-Irish novel has not taken, Terry Eagleton questions: "How is one to produce realist narratives from a history which is itself so crisis-racked, hyperbolic, improbable? How can even the most spectacular of tales not find itself trumped by the lurid theatricality of the actual events it records, which offer to beggar imagination in their epic violence, romantic bravado, or tragic despondency?" (181). Earlier, explaining

Joyce, Wilde, and George Moore, Eagleton argues: "In discarding or transgressing realist conventions, these distinctly non-popular writers were in a curious way aligned with the great bulk of Irish literature, which belongs to that species of magic realism known as folklore" (154). See Eagleton, *Heathcliff and the Great Hunger*; see also Penny Fielding, *Writing and Orality*.

44. Catherine Gallagher, *Nobody's Story*.

45. Gilles Deleuze, and Félix Guattari, *Kafka*. Deleuze and Guattari's argument on minority literature requires some qualification before being appropriate to the Indian context. As in the case of Kafka, the minority status of the Indian novelists in part 2 of *In Another Country* refers both to a political and a cultural context. The "majority" that these writers address, however is a shifting one: on the one hand, it refers to the world of anglophone novelistic production originating with the colonial state and continuing in postcolonial writing (where their contributions have been notably visible in the last decade or so). On the other hand, their "majority" also includes the particular character of Indian nationalism today where these novelists, by virtue of religion and gender, are "minor" in most ways. There remain, of course, those who would contest this characterization and argue that writing in English, however, is not writing in the language of an Indian majority. To them, one would have to reply that such a narrow application of Deleuze and Guattari's argument misses their central point on minority writing altogether.

46. Salman Rushdie, *Ground Beneath her Feet*, p. 43.

2. THE CIRCULATION OF FICTION IN INDIAN LIBRARIES, CA. 1835–1901

1. I realize a claim that Indians were never represented reading can be something of a generalization, but it seems a judicious one to make. There is rare evidence to the contrary, and when it appears it is far more damning of the British for their depiction of Indian reading practices than no representation would have been. Consider Dr. Veraswami in chapter 3 of Orwell's *Burmese Days* (1934): an ardent Anglophile babu consuming classics from his "rather unappetising little library" of the "Emerson-Carlyle-Stevenson type" without really getting them, Veraswami comes across as a *Punch* cartoon figure—one that fortifies the Englishman's fantasy of Indians as indifferent mimic men rather than even remotely conceiving of them as active consumers with critical and creative reading habits. See *Burmese Days*, p. 37.

2. Thakorelal M. Desai, "Study of Fiction," p. 333.

3. Anand's description of this meeting comes from the chapter, "Tea and Empathy from Virginia Woolf," in his *Conversations in Bloomsbury*, p. 105. Later in the reminiscence, he makes clear that he has been playing with Virginia: "I felt that if I was honest about the bad taste of my youth, Virginia Woolf might also acknowledge some blunders she had committed. Actually, I wanted to dethrone her from the perch of the goddess to the common clay in