

**DETECTIVES IN *WHITE AND BROWN*:
A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF
SHERLOCK HOLMES AND *BYOMKESH BAKSHI***

THESIS SUBMITTED IN REQUIREMENT FOR
THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Detectives in White and Brown: a Comparative Study of Sherlock Holmes and Byomkesh Bakshi is an exhaustive re-reading of most of the sixty Sherlock Holmes stories and thirty-three Byomkesh Bakshi narratives in the postcolonial perspective. I have undertaken this voluminous work because I felt that it would fulfil and enrich the lacunae, which have been persisting in critical studies on detective fiction. I felt the need to bring together the coloniser and the colonised in my study of the works of Arthur Conan Doyle and Saradindu Bandyopadhyay.

First of all, I must acknowledge my indebtedness to Dr. Soumyajit Samanta, Reader and the former Head of the Department of English, University of North Bengal, who has painstakingly supervised my work, and has readily spared time from his busiest schedule to read, reread and make necessary corrections in my thesis whensoever required.

I must convey my gratitude to Professor Brian A. Hatcher of the Department of Religion, Illinois Wesleyan University, Bloomington, who has been so kind enough as to provide me with valuable information pertaining to my thesis, and has offered necessary suggestions whenever I have had asked for it. Professor Russell B. West of the Department of English Language and Literature, Free University of Berlin, Berlin, has also glossed over my project and has offered requisite clarifications on the subject. Besides, Leslie S. Klinger from Los Angeles, and Chris Redmond, Director of Internal Communications, University of Waterloo, Ontario have sent me important data especially on Doyle and Holmes.

I feel indebted to the faculty members of the Department of English, University of North Bengal, and Dr. Amrit Sen of the Department of English and Other Modern European Languages, Visva-Bharati, for helping me on and off during the course of my work. I also express my gratitude to Brindaban Karmakar, the Librarian, University of North Bengal, for allowing me to use referential materials at the premises.

Last but not the least I record the overwhelming support, which I have received from my parents during the composition of my thesis.

Dated: 4th July, 2005

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English

2005.

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CHAPTER 1.

INTRODUCTION:

“The fantasy... which the detective story addict indulges is the fantasy of being restored to the Garden of Eden, to a state of innocence, where he may know love as love and not as law. The driving force behind this daydream is the feeling of guilt, the cause of which is unknown to the dreamer” – Wystan Hugh Auden¹

Tracing the gradual development of the sub-genre of detective fiction, Auden thus summarises a typical plot in of detective stories:

“A murder occurs; many are suspected; all but one suspect, who is the murderer, are eliminated; the murderer is arrested or dies” (*The Wordsworth* 253).

While Auden, by stating so, delineates the basic structure of every detective story, the sub-genre itself is concerned with several more aspects and ingredients including vivid description of the country and the society in which the narrative is set, representation of the social demeanour of the detective, portrayal of his associate who is characteristically his best friend and the narrator of his adventures. The criminals, along with their preferences, prejudices, eccentricities and flaws, come to assume centrality in sleuth fiction whose most important function is to facilitate interpretation of the message the novelist wants to convey through his narrative.

The literary sub-genre has sprung from the eternal attraction of human beings for mystery, and deals with the primordial issue of crime and punishment. The detective story writers depict the various ways the ordinary men are threatened with criminality. This particular form of popular fiction identifiably occupies a considerable portion of every literature. However, as far as popularity and acceptance of the detective characters are concerned, four European, and more precisely, British and French detectives – Sherlock Holmes, Hercule Poirot, Father Brown and C. Auguste

Dupin – dominate every other fictional sleuth, including those of the Eastern literatures. European nations like Britain, France, Germany and Spain that had colonised more than eighty per cent of the world in the late-nineteenth century, not only physically dominated the technologically underdeveloped Easterners, they also destroyed their indigenous cultures and traditions, injecting within their languages and literature different Eurocentric traditional, ethical, and lingual values (Said, *Culture* 6). It is, therefore, natural that the sub-genre of Afro-Asian detective fiction has also been permeated by conventions of the European sleuth stories which accounts for the wide popularity of Holmes, Dupin and Poirot in the East at the exclusion of any significant Oriental investigator.

Scholars have traced the origin of detective fiction to the Bible (Daniel, Susanna and the elders) and the puzzle tales of the Enlightenment like Voltaire's Zadic that was published in 1747 (*The Wordsworth* 253). Michael Seidman, Julian Symons and Douglas Greene, on the other hand, refer to the sixteenth century Italian tale translated into French by the Chevalier de Mailly as Le voyage et les aventures des trios princes de Sarendip (1719), which was later rendered into English as The Travels and Adventures of Three Princes of Sarendip in 1722, as being among the first detective stories². However, according to Ranjit Chattopadhyay and Siddhartha Ghosh, the parable incorporated in the tenth *Mandala* of the three thousand five hundred year-old *Rig Veda* where Sarama the bitch apprehends the "Poni" group of dacoits, who had stolen cows belonging to gods, is the "world's first detective story" (Chattopadhyay and Ghosh 747).

According to the compilers of Merriam Webster's Encyclopaedia of Literature, the modern history of detective fiction begins in the mid-nineteenth century with Edgar Allan Poe's five tales of *ratiocination*: "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" (1841), "The Gold Bug" (1843), "The Mystery of Mary Roget" (1842-3), "Thou Art the Man" (1844) and "The Purloined Letter" (1845), that introduce the French detective, C. Auguste Dupin, the first modern fictional sleuth (Merriam 320).

Starting with Poe, detective stories have rapidly gained popularity to become one of the more read literary sub-genres even in the first decade of the twenty first century. Its acceptance and wide readership could be accounted for by the following six points.

First of all, detective fiction is closely related to the real life of human beings. Crimes like homicide and theft are as old as the history of the human civilisation itself. By committing them the criminals intimidate smooth functioning of different human institutions, unsettle the social *status quo*, and, according to Auden, commit the direst offence against God (Gupta, *Introduction* 4). It is to ensure protection of individual interests, perpetuation of social institutions, and assertion of the human right to live in peace and prosperity that the criminals need to be apprehended and crimes like anarchy, sedition and nihilism be punished. Ordinary human beings do not support crime but are not privileged with sufficient physical or intellectual prowess to counteract the anti-socials because of their innate superior physical and mental faculties.

It therefore becomes the purview of the trained and intelligent detectives to challenge and apprehend them. Moreover, without possessing details of different criminal acts and unable to remain in physical proximity to scenes of crime because of personal safety, it is impossible for ordinary people to remain updated about varied anti-social activities. Therefore, simulated instances of crimes are re-created in literature and fictional investigators are invoked to resist the subversions on behalf of the society in totality.

Second, human mind is characteristically attracted to the mysterious and incomprehensible. Naturally, they are attracted to tales of crimes and criminals that are generally outside the purview of common people. Auden observes,

“For me, as for many others, the reading of detective stories is an addiction like tobacco or alcohol. The symptoms of this are: firstly, the intensity of the craving – if I have any work to do, I must be careful not to get hold of a detective story for, once I begin one, I cannot work or sleep till I have finished it. Secondly, its specificity – the story must conform to certain formulas (I find it very difficult, for example, to read one that is not set in rural England). And, thirdly, its immediacy – I forget the story as soon as I have finished it and have no wish to read it again” (Gupta, *Introduction 4*).

Third, detective stories satisfy the inherent human desire for quest and adventure. Because the ordinary individuals are not privileged to

undertake arduous and dangerous journeys, they find a sort of wish-fulfilment in their adventurous detectives.

Fourth, the fictional investigators guarantee the general readers of their physical safety and continuation of the societal status quo. They transform themselves into nearly omnipotent figures that the defenceless commoners could depend upon.

Fifth, the sub-genre of detective fiction directly appeals to the emotions of readers and provides them with a pleasant suspense, thus helping them against the boredom of conventional forms of literature like the general short stories, poems, essays and critical articles. Sleuth narratives are generally light in tone, subject and treatment and do not require strenuous reflections prior to comprehension and enjoyment. Moreover, they help readers to sharpen their intuitive and analytical prowess, and verify at the conclusion of the story whether they had guessed correctly.

Finally, the doctrines that whatever happens must have a cause and that in this world governed by realism every mystery is solved in due course of time, are explored and vindicated in detective fiction. To exemplify, a murder is not committed without a context, and after it is committed, the detective is expected investigate and infallibly unravel the mystery of the murderer's identity.

In "The Typology of Detective Fiction", Tzvetan Todorov compresses within eight points the twenty rules of detective fiction that S.S. Van Dine had laid down in 1928 to characterise 'properly-written detective stories'. According to Van Dine, an ideal detective novel must have at most one detective and one criminal, and at least one victim (a corpse); the culprit must not be a professional criminal, must not be the detective, and must kill for personal reasons; should not deal with love; in it, the culprit must have a certain importance: (a) in life: must not be a butler or a chamber maid (b) in the book: must be one of the main characters; should explained everything rationally and not admit fantasy; should not be descriptive or deal with psychological analysis; with regard to information about the story, observes the following homology: 'author: reader = criminal: detective'; and, must avoid banal situations and solutions (Todorov 50-1). In addition, Martin Priestman notes that European detective stories of the late nineteenth century are exclusively concerned with the "white-male-centred private eye" (Priestman 5). On the other hand, Martin A. Kayman writes:

"Nineteenth-century detection's concern with the City is another significant aspect of its modernity. Indeed, G.K.Chesterton claimed that 'The first essential value of the detective story lies in this, that it is the earliest and only form of popular literature in which is expressed some sense of the poetry of modern life' by which he means 'the poetry of London', an urban text of histories and meanings waiting to be read. Chesterton exemplifies this theory in the very first Father Brown story,

The Blue Cross (The Innocence of Father Brown, 1911), but rarely elsewhere, and while most detectives have offices in the city, a great many of their cases do seem to occur in country houses; what is important here, as no doubt, for the suburban commuters who formed a large part of the magazine readership, is the sense of connection to contemporary urban reality” (Kayman 43).

The Sherlock Holmes narratives that Arthur Conan Doyle first published in the November 1887-issue of *Beeton's Christmas Annual* conform to all the twenty rules postulated by Van Dine. Moreover, they are centred in the British imperial metropolis of London and revolve round the adventures of the White male detective – Sherlock Holmes. They are, therefore, not only ‘properly-written detective stories’ but also have been identified as “the most famous and enduring contribution to detective fiction by any single writer” (*The Wordsworth* 850). It requires mention that no other fictional detective, including Dupin, Poirot and Father Brown, has been able to achieve such wide popularity as the Sherlock Holmes stories, or has so widely been translated (*The Wordsworth* 850). It is not that the detectives prior to the appearance of Holmes, like Caleb Williams, Eugene Vidocq, Dupin, and Sergeant Cuff, were imperfectly conceived, but Doyle had employed several indigenously-developed techniques of investigation, including usage of plaster-of-Paris to take imprints of footprints, bio-chemical tests for analysing stains of blood, mud and ashes of different cigars, and examination of dust on criminals’ and corpses’ bodies, that helped his

detective stories to transcend the sole realm of literature and become a part of forensic science as well. In addition, while constructing his White British detective, Doyle exhibited his own nationalistic sentiments and conformed to the contemporary imperial ideology of the British and European readers, who overwhelmingly supported the European domination of the predominantly Eastern nations. Holmes's declaration that he is "the only one in the world" stems from an awareness of his supremacy as the representative of Britain, the world's greatest colonial power (Doyle, *The Complete* 54). In the Sherlock Holmes canon, Doyle asserts not only the omnipotence and uniqueness of his White Eurocentric detective but also an Orientalist bias, associating everything evil and disorderly with the Orient.

In contrast, Byomkesh Bakshi, whose first adventure story "Pather Kanta" was published in 1932 in *Basumati*, a monthly Bengali magazine published from Calcutta, is one of the more popular detectives to be introduced into the genre of Bengali detective fiction in pre-independence India. Since then Saradindu Bandyopadhyay's narratives have commanded attention and wide readership. In Bengali, the most preferred language after English in colonial India because until 1911 British India had its headquarters at Calcutta, there had been several other investigators including Priyanath Mukhopadhyay's inspector-in-charge, Kaliprashanna Chattopadhyay's Bankaullah, Panchkari Dey's Debendra Bijoy Mitra and Dinendra Kumar Ray's Robert Blake before Saradindu Bandyopadhyay's inquisitor was introduced, but they were overtly influenced by European detective fiction and actually formed a part of the imperial literature itself. Moreover, they were defective in precision

and methodology and their stories lacked realism. On the other hand, Byomkesh Bakshi represents the most perfectly conceived indigenous face in late pre-independence and post-independence Indian detective fiction. The inquisitor, who conspicuously incorporates within his character the behavioural features of an Indian against that of the Eurocentric detectives, assumed national importance soon after his introduction. India being the most famous of the British colonies in the Orient, and Bengali having had been the most preferred Indian language during the colonial occupation, Byomkesh Bakshi commands considerable importance as a representative Oriental investigator.

Neither Sherlock Holmes nor Byomkesh Bakshi was created by the litterateurs just for the sake of creating popular sleuth characters. In the Sherlock Holmes stories Doyle projects his own ideas about the superiority of the European Whites to the perceptively unsophisticated Afro-Asians. Serialised when Britain was at its imperial best, the Holmes narratives actually celebrate the British colonial occupations. Contrarily, Saradindu Bandyopadhyay, himself a colonised litterateur, has painstakingly avoided referring to the British colonisers directly if not at all in all the ten Byomkesh Bakshi stories written before the Indian independence. Instead, he follows the path of cultural collusion, ambiguity and hybridity to create a subaltern world that uses the technical innovations of the British imperialists but effectively shuts them out. Though he belongs to a British colony, Byomkesh Bakshi is perceptively as brilliant as Holmes. Simultaneously, his methodology is primarily opposed to that of the British detective. If Sherlock Holmes, according to Rosemary Jann, incorporates basic aspects of the British social body (685-708), Bakshi identifiably

exhibits the features of the Indian societal conventions and the Indian author's postcolonial response against the perceived omnipotence of the British detective. Analyses of the basic differences between these two investigators in context of their being respective imperial and anti-colonial constructs are not only plausible but also have wide scope and potency for attracting extensive researches. In the present thesis the author depicts Sherlock Holmes as Arthur Conan Doyle's imperially compatible spokesperson and Byomkesh Bakshi as a subaltern investigator whom Saradindu Bandyopadhyay uses to resist the Orientalist ideology Doyle's detective narratives. *Detectives in White and Brown: a Comparative Study of Sherlock Holmes and Byomkesh Bakshi* involves a comparative analysis of those particular Sherlock Holmes and Byomkesh Bakshi stories that bear the maximum number of Doyle's colonial and Bandyopadhyay's anti-imperial ideological aspects. A Study in Scarlet, The Sign of Four, "The Adventure of the Speckled Band" and "The Adventure of the Three Students" – have been segregated and analysed separately as the British litterateur's most imperially compatible Holmes stories. On the other hand, four Byomkesh Bakshi stories – "Satyanweshi", "Pather Kanta", "Arthamanartham" and "Chitrochor" – have been given a separate treatment and detailed analysis in the postcolonial perspective.

With the unavailability of a complete set of translations for all the Byomkesh Bakshi narratives, the textual references to "Satyanweshi", "Pather Kanta", "Makorshar Rash", "Arthamanartham", "Agniban", "Upasanhar" and "Chitrochor" indicate Sreejata Guha's Picture Imperfect and Other Byomkesh Bakshi Mysteries (New Delhi: Penguin, 1999) in which she has translated them respectively as

“The Inquisitor” (1-28), “The Gramophone Pin Mystery” (29-70), “The Venom of the Tarantula” (71-88), “Where There’s a Will” (89-128), “Calamity Strikes” (129-161), “An Encore for Byomkesh” (162-194), and “Picture Imperfect” (195-249). Select passages from the remaining twenty-nine Byomkesh Bakshi stories have been translated into English by the author of this thesis himself, and the page numbers mentioned in parenthesis normally indicate those in Byomkesh Samogro (Kolkata: Ananda Publishers Private Limited, 1995. Rpt. 2000), unless otherwise specified. Because the references to the Bengali text involve transliteration, the author proposes to supply the closest English equivalent of the titles of those stories that have not been translated by Sreejata Guha or any other renowned translator. “Shimonto Heera” can be translated as “The Shimonto Diamond” and “Chorabalee” as “The Quicksand”. “The Scarlet Sapphire” is the translated form of “Raktomukhi Neela” and “Byomkesh and Baroda” of “Byomkesh O Baroda”. “Durgo Rahoshyo” and “Chiriakhana” can be substituted with “The Mystery of the Fort” and “The Zoo”, respectively. “Aadim Ripu” is “The Primitive Instinct”; “Bonhi Patango” is “The Fire-Obsessed Insect”; “Rakter Daag” and “Moni Mondon” are “The Blood Stain” and “The Stolen Gem”. “Amriter Mrityu” becomes “The Eternal Dies” in English while “Shaiylo Rahoshyo” becomes “The Mystery of the Mountains”. “The Bird Unknown”, “The Riddle” and “The Invisible Triangle” are the respective translated forms of “Achin Pakhi”, “Kahen Kabi Kalidas” and “Adrishyo Trikon”. “Adwitiyo” is “The Unique”; “Khunji Khunji Nari” is “The Quest Futile”, and “The Cryptic” can be substituted for “Magno Mainak”. “The Evil Triangle”, “The Rhythm of the Riddle”, “Room Number Two”, “The Melody of Deception” and “The Porcupine Thorn” are the respective English titles for “Dusto Chakra”, “Henyalir Chhando”, “Room Number Dui”,

“Chholonar Chhando” and “Shanjarur Kanta”. The titles of the last three Byomkesh Bakshi narratives, “Beni Sanghar”, “Lohar Biscuit” and the incomplete “Bishupal Badh” become “The Knot of the Lock”, “The Iron Biscuit” and “The Death of Bishupal” in English translation.

Passages from select Bengali critical and historical works have also been translated by the author himself. The English equivalents of their titles have been indicated in parenthesis in the list of “Works Cited” at the concluding portion of the thesis.

NOTES:

1. See Gupta, Nilanjana. “Reading Detective Fiction: Introduction”. The Murder of Roger Ackroyd: A Collection of Critical Essays. Nilanjana Gupta, ed. New Delhi: Worldview, 2001. 4.
2. Seidman, Michael, Julian Symons, and Douglas G. Greene. “Detective Story”, Microsoft ® Encarta ® Online Encyclopaedia 2003. 1 April 2003. <http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_761559994/Detective_Story.html#endads>

CHAPTER 2. A.

(i) THE COLONISER AND THE COLONISED: -

As Ian Ousby, et al., observe, Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes stories "are...the most famous and enduring contribution to detective fiction by any single author" (*The Wordsworth* 850). On the other hand, Sreejata Guha considers Saradindu Bandyopadhyay's Byomkesh Bakshi narratives "a classic of...[modern Indian literature]" (Bandyopadhyay, *Picture* viii). Bandyopadhyay's thirty-three Byomkesh Bakshi mysteries formed identifiably the most popular Bengali detective fiction in late pre-independence and post-independence India.

Although the primary duty assigned to both Sherlock Holmes and Byomkesh Bakshi is identification of criminals, their conception, behavioural features and investigative methodology are markedly different. Holmes was created by Doyle perceptively as a representative of the British imperialists, who would safeguard their interests by maintaining peace and societal status quo at the colonial centre. On the other hand, Bakshi is a middle-class Bengali inquisitor who not only "seeks...the truth" but also acts as the spokesperson for Saradindu Bandyopadhyay's resistance against the hegemony of the Eurocentric sleuths in the sub-genre of detective fiction (*Byomkesh* 40).

Several factors as described below have contributed to Doyle's ideal conception of Sherlock Holmes as an upholder of the British colonial interests. It is important that most of Holmes's clients belong to the aristocracy while the criminals he deals with in narratives like A Study in Scarlet, The Sign of Four, "Five Orange Pips" and "The Adventure of the Dancing Men" are either Orientals or Americans or White Westerners with obsessive attraction for Britain's contemporary or former colonies. In contrast, Saradindu Bandyopadhyay exhibits an ambivalent attitude towards the British colonisers in the stories of the Byomkesh Bakshi canon. It is significant that with the exception of "Aadim Ripu", no other Byomkesh Bakshi story contains reference to the Indian freedom struggle even when the first ten of narratives – "Pather Kanta" (1932), "Shimonto Heera" (1932), "Satyanweshi", (1933), "Makarshar Rash" (1933), "Arthamanartham" (1933), "Chorabalee" (1934), "Agniban" (1935), "Upasanghar" (1935), "Raktomukhi Neela" (1936), and "Byomkesh O Baroda" (1936) – had been written and published prior to the Indian independence in 1947. In the dhoti-punjabee clad Bengali gentleman Bandyopadhyay tries to create an extraordinarily *ordinary* investigator who, in spite of being colonised, would dare to oppose the Eurocentric detectives like Sherlock Holmes, Hercule Poirot and Father Brown intellectually, behaviourally and methodologically, thereby establishing a separate section of subaltern detective fiction. Other Bengali litterateurs like Priyanath Mukhopadhyay, Bhuvan Chandra Mukhopadhyay, Kaliprashanna Chattopadhyay, Dinendra Kumar Roy, and Nihar Ranjan Gupta, whose sleuth narratives were published before 1932, had modelled their investigators on the White Western detectives but, unlike Bandyopadhyay, had subconsciously subsumed themselves in the realm of imperial literature. The pre-

Byomkesh Bakshi detectives, except Robert Blake, exhibit similarity in detecting Indian criminals and handing them over to the perceptively superior White administrators of British India. In contrast, Bakshi displays his insularity by avoiding the British police officials in stories, other than "Pather Kanta", written before the Indian independence in 1947, and dealing personally with the native criminals. Bandyopadhyay does not follow the path of Fanonian *collision* but of cultural and literary *collusion* to protest against the British colonisation and refute the perceived omnipotence and omniscience of the White Western detectives created by Doyle, Agatha Christie and G.K.Chesterton. Bakshi's anti-imperial character is registered through what Homi Bhabha terms "hybridity".

A Study in Scarlet, the first story of the Sherlock

Holmes canon that introduces the detective and his associate Dr. John H. Watson, was published in the November 1887-issue of *Beeton's Christmas Annual*. Doyle based his detective on Joseph Bell, M.D., F.R.C.S. (1837-1911), consulting surgeon to the Royal Infirmary and Royal Hospital for Sick Children and teacher of medicine during his student days at Edinburgh University (Baring-Gould, *Annotated I 7*). From their maiden appearance both Holmes and Watson express themselves as supporters of the British colonial expansion and appear to be ideologically prejudiced against the Orient and the inhabitants of the British colonies. It is important that Arthur Conan Doyle was not English by birth, having had been born at Picardy Place, Edinburgh, on 22 May 1859 to the Irish Catholics Charles Altamont Doyle and Mary Foley. Significantly, Holmes's full name – "William Sherrinford Scott Holmes", according to Klinger – might be interpreted as referring to his Scottish ascendancy¹. On the other hand, Duncan MacDougald, in

Some Onomatological Notes on Sherlock Holmes and Other Names in the Sacred Writings, reports that the name “Sherlock” comes from the Irish *scorl`oz* – Shearlock or Sherloch, which is derived from *searl`oz* – Scurloch, Shirlock, or Sherloch, which in turn is the Gaelic version of the Anglo-Saxon *scortlog*, literally ‘short lock’, that is, one with shorn locks (Baring-Gould, *Annotated I* 10). Moreover, Patrick Woulfe, in Irish Names and Surnames (1923), opines that “the Sherlock family...is of Anglo-Saxon origin, had settled in Ireland before the beginning of the thirteenth century, and soon became very widespread, being found in Dublin, Meath, Louth, Wexford, Waterford, Tipperary, etc.” (*Annotated I* 10). In The Colonial Conan Doyle: British Imperialism, Irish Nationalism and the Gothic, Catherine Wynne notes that Charles Altamont Doyle was committed to the Irish cause and his brother resigned as the main cartoonist for *Punch* after the magazine satirised the Pope (3-7). Therefore, incorporation of an element of subalternity in his investigator symbolically becomes an instance of Doyle’s own resistance against the hegemony the English colonisers. The detective’s refusal of the English knighthood also assumes significance in this contest (Doyle, *The Complete* 1017). In contrast, John H. Watson, initially Ormond Sacker, is identifiably an Englishman from his full name, but is constantly dominated by Holmes². It is to impart universality to his creation and in background of his practice as an ophthalmologist at Southsea in the imperial metropolis of London that Doyle usually uses “Sherlock Holmes” that combines a name and a surname that do not testify to the investigator’s nationality or indicate to which Western continent he belongs. The detective has no relative except his elder brother Mycroft who appears in “The Adventure of the Greek Interpreter” and “The Adventure of the Bruce-Partington Plans” and whose first name also does not reveal his nationality or faith.

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In spite of the ambiguity in his nationality, Holmes offers his service to the imperial Britain more actively and rigorously than Watson who is an English ex-military surgeon and has the experience of having served in British India. The investigator's early habitat might not be specified in that Watson first meets him as a "student" performing experiments at an unspecified hospital laboratory in A Study in Scarlet (Doyle, *The Complete* 14) but he exhibits a strong patriotic fervour in inscribing "V.R" or Victoria Regina on the drawing room-wall in "The Adventure of the Musgrave Ritual" (334), thus alluding to the monarch under whom Britain's colonial expansion had reached its ultimate maturity. Holmes's clients belong to the section of the British and international bourgeois society usually concerned with imperial expansion: for example, the king of Bohemia in "A Scandal in Bohemia", knighted old squires in The Hound of the Baskervilles, the British Prime Minister and the Secretary for European Affairs in "The Adventure of the Second Stain", and (perceptible) members of the British Royalty in "The Adventure of the Illustrious Client". That he deals with them without any exuberance suggests that such noblemen are his *natural* and *ordinary* clients. The cases he investigates are of international importance but are directly or indirectly related to colonisation. In "The Adventure of the Second Stain" he investigates into the theft of a letter potent enough to start an international war between two imperial powers, and in "The Adventure of the Naval Treaty" that of a secret defence memorandum-of-understanding perceptively aimed at strengthening Britain's naval power, the navy being the traditional military wing for imperial expansion. "The Adventure of the Blue Carbuncle" and "The Adventure of the Mazarin Stone" revolve round the stealth of

internationally-renowned gemstones that have identifiably been procured from the British colonies. In “The Five Orange Pips” and Valley of Fear, xenophobic occult organisations like the Ku-Klux-Klan and gangsters from Britain’s former colony of the United States of America lead to disturbances in the imperial centre. The Victorian man-of-science adhered to strictest codes of etiquette seek to refute the existence of the supernatural in The Hound of the Baskervilles and “The Adventure of the Sussex Vampire” and prevent social scandals in “The Adventure of the Illustrious Client” and “A Scandal in Bohemia”. Apart from testifying to the versatility of Holmes, these cases depict how he follows the Eurocentric societal norms that, in extension, advocate imperial expansion.

In contrast, the Byomkesh Bakshi’s adventures generally aim at solving societal problems faced by ordinary Indians of the subaltern metropolis of colonial Calcutta though occasionally landlords like Kumar Tridibendra Narayan Roy of “Shimonto Heera”, Himangshu Roy of “Chorabalee”, Deep Narayan Singh of “Bonhi Patango” and Mahidhar Chowdhury of “Chitrochor” consult him. Saradindu Bandyopadhyay thus negates the Eurocentric convention of granting primacy to the bourgeoisie.

In the Sherlock Holmes stories, Watson appears as a retired army-surgeon: a figure who has had actively suppressed the native figures in India, and thereby exemplifying Said’s observation that “the cult of the military personality was prominent...[in late Victorian British culture]...[,],...usually because such personalities had managed to bash a few dark heads...” (*Culture* 181). Doyle’s

characterisation of Watson as a former member of the imperial army is aimed at fusing his Holmes texts with the contemporary imperial British cultural outlook. The retired surgeon has fought in the Afghan war, experienced the violence and malignance of “the murderous Ghazis”, and has withstood ‘curses’ like the enteric fever which the White Western Orientalists customarily link to the Orient (Doyle, *The Complete* 13). In A Study in Scarlet and The Sign of Four, he treats everything originating in India as the rightful property of Britain. Narratives like The Sign of Four and “The Adventure of the Crooked Man” are replete with references to the Indian Sepoy Mutiny of 1857 during which the author identifies the Indian characters like Mahomet Singh, Abdullah Khan, Dost Akbar, Lal Rao and Tonga with danger, treachery and mystery. Under the erroneous impression that the Europeans are inherently qualified to control, discipline and obliterate the colonised natives as and when required, Holmes and Watson shoot dead the Andaman-dwelling Tonga without any further reflection but do not have to face persecution for homicide in The Sign of Four (82). Narratives like “The Adventure of the Speckled Band” and “The Adventure of the Crooked Man” contain description of the daily life of the European settlers in colonised India (196, 365-6). While references to services in the Bangalore Pioneers and the Bengal Artillery in “The Adventure of the Speckled Band” (196) gain imperial significance in that they indicate British military wings used to dominate the Oriental natives, Sebastian Moran’s wild game hunting in the Himalayas in “The Adventure of the Empty House” (550) testifies to how the British settlers passed their life in the colonies.

Holmes exemplifies his Orientalist attraction in his habit of storing tobacco in a Persian slipper in “The Adventure of the Empty House” and his tour of the Orient covering Tibet, Lhassa, Persia, Mecca and Khartoum in “The Adventure of the Empty House”(550, 544). To Nicholas Stewart, Sherlock Holmes is an imperial-Orientalist “who utilises the European study of the Orient with the result of revealing and outwitting the criminally linked Other, and by doing so...justifies Watson’s actions and validates Orientalist research as the key to understanding, controlling and remaining superior to the colonised populaces”³. Doyle’s underscoring of the Oriental link of criminals like Tonga and Dost Akbar depicts the common imperial perception that evil is intricate to the Oriental psyche. Significantly, a number of criminals in the Holmes narratives have strong links with the former British colony of the United States of America that serves to highlight Doyle’s prejudice against the colonised individuals in general. Abe Slaney of “The Adventure of the Dancing Men”, Enoch J. Drebber, Joseph Stangerson and Jefferson Hope of A Study in Scarlet, James Calhoun of “The Five Orange Pips”, the Mormons prophets Brigham Young and his Elders of A Study in Scarlet and Councillor McGinty of The Valley of Fear are Americans depicted as criminals. Importantly, though Holmes calls Professor Moriarty as “the Napoleon of Crime” in “The Adventure of the Final Problem” (417), the British criminal’s activities are restricted to only three stories: “The Final Problem”, “The Adventure of the Empty House” and The Valley of Fear.

Byomkesh Bakshi first meets his associate Ajit Bandyopadhyay at a central Calcutta-boarding house in 1925 in “The Inquisitor”.

Bandyopadhyay's specification of the year has an important postcolonial connotation because the anti-colonial activities of armed Indian revolutionaries had reached their zenith in Bengal and particularly Calcutta during the 1920s. That Bakshi and Ajit Bandyopadhyay, "fresh out of university", are aged between 23 and 25 during their first meeting is significant because participation of Bengali youths in their early twenties was the largest in contemporary Indian nationalist movement (Bandyopadhyay, *Picture 1*). Pahari observes that even before the 1930s, "Bengal...[had been]...one of the important regions for the rise of militant nationalism", and that Bengali youths taught in Western system of education and philosophy had thrown themselves in an all-out war against the British occupants (254). Significantly, Saradindu Bandyopadhyay never protests vociferously against the imperial occupation of India. His early profession as a lawyer at British Indian courts and chances of censure and detention for sedition perceptively prevented him from projecting Bakshi and Ajit Bandyopadhyay as active nationalists in stories written before 1947.

Although influenced by Doyle, Christie and Jack London to formulate his fiction, Saradindu Bandyopadhyay has not specified details about a purely imaginary character, and avoids any precise reference to the former imperial capital that was being constantly changed under the anti-imperial activities of the nationalists (*Saradindu II* 637). While Holmes resides at 221B Baker Street in north-west London, Bakshi's house is at an unspecified number on Calcutta's Harrison Street. However, like Holmes who retires from London to Sussex Downs in "The Adventure of

the Second Stain" (Doyle, *The Complete* 717), the Bengali inquisitor retires to Keyatala, Calcutta, in "Beni Sanghar" (Bandyopadhyay, *Byomkesh* 925).

The Indian author portrays his detective as a family man with middle-class values who, as implied in "Where There's a Will", marries early (*Picture* 127-8) which is a subjective reference in the context that Bandyopadhyay himself married Parul Chakroborty on 28 June 1918 at the age of nineteen. In contrast, Holmes never marries or has affairs. He remains unmoved, unlike Watson, by the physical charms of Mary Morstan in The Sign of Four (Doyle, *The Complete* 58), Irene Adler in "A Scandal in Bohemia" and Violet hunter in "The Adventure of the Cooper Beeches"; does not sympathise with Helen Stoner in "The Adventure of the Speckled Band" (197-9); examines the hands of Violet Smith with the objective and detached eye of a scientist (587), and is immune to Hilda Hope's attractiveness in "The Adventure of the Second Stain" (728-9). He considers women to be distractions that would hinder his vigorous championing of Britain's imperial interests (58). Watson marries Mary Morstan in The Sign of Four (92), but the couple remains childless until "The Adventure of Shoscombe Old Place", the last Holmes story to be published, which might be interpreted as Doyle's attempt to keep Watson an associate to Holmes's imperially compatible adventures. Holmes also does not pay a single address to his associate's wife after they are married. By eschewing description of scenes of courtship or post-nuptial life, Doyle not only conforms to the norms of the Victorian prudery but also asserts the requirement of the colonisers not to exhibit emotions before the subaltern populaces. To avoid complications such as sexual assaults on women, he never depicts Mary Morstan as

accompanying Watson during his adventures with Holmes. Not a single Doyle's detective narrative deal with the anti-feministic crimes like rape and incest, and does not relish them in states of undress or provocative outfits.

In the Byomkesh Bakshi canon, the Indian inquisitor and his associate appear as strongly heterosexual characters. In opposition to the Victorian conventions for detective stories, Bandyopadhyay exhibits vivid sensuousness and emotional involvements in his sleuth stories, starting with a detailed description of Bakshi and Satyabati's courtship in "Where There's a Will" (*Picture* 125-8). His profession of a Bombay-based Hindi film-script writer between 1938 and 1952 has had perceptively been instrumental in making him deal with extramarital affairs and incorporate courtship and flirtation scenes in the stories like "Picture Imperfect" (210, 220-1), "Bonhi Patango" (*Byomkesh* 554-9), "Magno Mainak" (779-80, 796-7) and "Shanjarur Kanta" (866-9, 881). In contrast to Watson's restrained references to Morstan in The Sign of Four (Doyle, *The Complete* 58), Ajit Bandyopadhyay sensuously describes the physical appearance of Satyabati in "Where There's a Will" (Bandyopadhyay, *Picture* 100, 111-2), of Shakuntala Singh in "Bonhi Patango" (*Byomkesh* 517) and of Mohini Das in "Kahen Kabi Kalidas" (687). In spite of being married, Bakshi exhibits a subconscious attraction for Rajani in "Picture Imperfect" (*Picture* 207). While Byomkesh Bakshi's investigations in "Arthamanartham", "Chitrochor", "Chiriakhana", "Bonhi Patango" and "Magno Mainak" are overwhelmingly concerned with unmarried or widowed women, Holmes deals with married or honourably engaged primarily aristocratic ladies. Even in the love-centred narratives like A Study in Scarlet, "The Adventure of the Dancing Men"

and “The Adventure of the Solitary Cyclist”, the underprivileged lovers like Jefferson Hope, Abe Slaney and Carruthers have been shown as incorporating within themselves conventions of chivalry.

The differences in Doyle’s and Bandyopadhyay’s attitude to women in their detective stories might also be explained on the basis of their respective personal experiences. While Bandyopadhyay enjoyed conjugal bliss, Doyle suffered because of Louise Hawkins’s consumption between 1893 and 1907 and because of his love for Jean Leckie whom he met on 15 March 1897 but could marry until his first wife’s death in 1907⁴. On the other hand, Mary Foley’s affair with her boarder, Dr. Brian Waller, six years senior to Arthur, after Charles Altamont Doyle had been institutionalised for alcoholism in 1876, culminated into her moving into his estate in 1882 for the next thirty years, and caused deep anguish to the writer who wrote in Memories and Adventures that his mother’s taking boarders to sustain her family “may have eased her in some ways, but was disastrous in others”⁵. It is possible that Holmes’s maintenance of distance from women has its basis in such bitter incidents.

The British author and the Indian litterateur also differ in the context of their self-identification with their detectives. Doyle positions himself between the extraordinary intelligence of Holmes and the simplicity of Watson in order to provide sufficient publicity for his detective without himself appearing on the scene. On the other hand, Byomkesh Bakshi is admittedly Saradindu Bandyopadhyay’s own self-projection, which administers a subaltern identity also to the detective

(*Saradindu II* 646). Contrary to Doyle's focussing on Holmes's different adventures while ignoring societal references, Bandyopadhyay exhibits a tendency to keep the detective stories at an intellectual level and writes them to be simultaneously read as social novels (647). In opposition to Holmes's indulging in physical violence while capturing Jefferson Hope in *A Study in Scarlet* (Doyle, *The Complete* 33), John Clay in "The Red-headed League"(124), Joseph Harrison in "The Adventure of the Naval Treaty" (411), Sebastian Moran in "The Adventure of the Empty House" (548), and Evans in "The Adventure of the Three Garridebs"(1028), or using firearms in *The Sign of Four* (82), *The Hound of the Baskervilles* (527), Bakshi does not carry a gun except in "The Inquisitor" (Bandyopadhyay, *Picture* 23) and "Amriter Mrityu" (*Byomkesh* 633) and he does not personally own a revolver.

According to Watson's chart of "Sherlock Holmes – his limits", the investigator is a novice at literature, philosophy and astronomy, weak in politics, but is profoundly knowledgeable in botany, geology, and an expert in anatomy, chemistry and sensational literature. He is also an accomplished violin-player, a skilled fencer, boxer and singlestick player and is well-versed in British law (Doyle, *The Complete* 16-7). Apart from his interest in science which he later uses to outwit the criminally-linked Others, Holmes has the basic training of every coloniser for self-protection through the usage of hands, swords and 'singlestick'-s. Ralph A. Ashton notes that "a singlestick is about 34 inches long [,]...[and]...is essentially a slashing, whacking, battering, beating and clubbing sort of weapon" – an instrument an imperialist would

customarily use to discipline a mischievous native (100). Holmes and Watson always carry revolvers during their adventures, and Sidney Paget's illustrations in *The Strand Magazine* show the former in Stetson hats or a deerstalker caps and tweed ulster, thus meticulously following the Eurocentric dress codes. Holmes smokes briar-root pipes, is attracted to Bach and Beethoven, and in stories like "The Red-Headed League" visits opera houses for intellectual refreshment (Doyle, *The Complete* 121). His food includes cold beef, grouse and white wine while he is addicted to seven-percent solution of cocaine (79, 54). Ian Ousby, et al., note that Doyle has manifested his interest in contemporary Victorian science through his detective (*The Wordsworth* 850). Holmes conducts different biochemical experiments in A Study in Scarlet and suggests the infallibility of several others in forensic sciences (Doyle, *The Complete* 14-5), which led the Royal Society for Chemistry to grant him an honorary fellowship for his life-long contribution to the field of medical sciences on 16 October 2002. To depict his imperial investigator as unique and flawlessly conceived and attain credibility for his detective narratives, Doyle has devised several indigenous methods for crime detection including the usage of Plaster-of-Paris, chemical analyses of blood and mud stains, and forensic examinations of cigar ash, shoes, abandoned dresses and other daily-use materials.

Against Doyle's profession as a physician, Saradindu Bandyopadhyay was a lawyer-turned-litterateur and understandably has not given primacy to scientific research and chemical experiments in his Byomkesh Bakshi stories and has stressed on psychoanalysis for crime detection. He symbolically seems to attest the Orientalist conception of the Eastern aversion to science and technology.

A resident of the scientifically-developed Occident, Sherlock Holmes uses machines and technology soon after as they are devised. In “The Red-Headed League”, he uses the Tube even as the first underground metropolitan railway service stated operating between Paddington and Farringdon, London, in 1863 (Doyle, *The Complete* 120), speaks on the sparingly-used telephone in “The Adventure of the Three Garridebs” (1020), and rides steamboat and Hansom cab respectively in The Sign of Four and “The Disappearance of Lady Frances Carfax” (79, 815). Ousby, et al., identify his strong feeling, like Doyle, for the atmosphere of the late-Victorian and Edwardian London (*The Wordsworth* 850), and stories like The Sign of Four, “The Red-Headed League” and “The Five Orange Pips” contain vivid description of the different localities of the imperial capital and its climate.

The British detective reflects the contemporary British colonial perception of being the microcosm and locus of the imperial world while speaking about his own omnipotence and uniqueness as investigator. He asserts his centrality, if not his uniqueness while describing his position as a consulting detective in A Study in Scarlet and The Study in Scarlet (Doyle, *The Complete* 18, 54). By making his character refute the qualitative excellence of other literary detectives like Edgar Allan Poe’s C. Auguste Dupin and Emile Gaboriau’s Lecoq in A Study in Scarlet, Doyle negates any challenge to his detective’s position from representatives of other imperial powers like France or former colonies like the United States of America (18).

It is important that though Sherlock Holmes is identifiably not an atheist or desecrates the Christian religious institutions, his faith has not been demarcated. He does not cite references from the Bible other than his singular mention of the Biblical David-Uriah-Bathsheba incident in “The Adventure of the Crooked Man” (367). This has been instrumental in making Doyle’s detective stories popular. Many former and contemporary colonies identified Christianity with the faith of the colonisers, and with the ambiguity of his belief Holmes is more easily internalised by the non-Christian colonised individuals of Asia and Africa. Depicting Holmes as an orthodox Christian would have impeded his universality and acceptance. Specification of the investigator’s faith would have gained significance in context of the intra-Christianity strife between different sections, particularly that between the Anglicans and the Methodists in late-Victorian England, which would have served to expose debilitating differences among the imperialists to the subaltern populace. Therefore, the canon eschews religious fanaticism. Moreover, though Doyle had been born an Irish Catholic, he settled in a predominantly Anglican and Protestant London, and became an agnostic and deeply interested in spiritualism in 1881 onwards⁶. The subjectivity of the author’s changing faith might have been reflected in the detective’s lack of a definite belief. Significantly, the Holmes stories do not deal with Catholic Irish or Scots, and, other than the excommunicated Williamson of “The Adventure of the Solitary Cyclist”, do not depict the Church or clergymen in corruption.

Both Doyle and Bandyopadhyay shared an interest in the occult, planchette and spiritualism, and identifiably possessed similar religious

ideologies. It is important that Byomkesh Bakshi also exhibits an ambiguity in faith and caste. Although he is a Hindu and, according to Bandyopadhyay, a “Kyastha” – the second group of Bengali societal divisions – the Bengali inquisitor does not ever visit temples or prays (*Saradindu II* 646-7). In “Aadim Ripu” he avoids specifying his religious sentiment when approached by Fazlu Rahaman for declaring himself as a supporter either of India or the Hindus, or Pakistan or the Muslims (Bandyopadhyay, *Byomkesh* 489). On the other hand, his introduction of his mother as a practising Vaishnavite indicates his knowledge about his social and religious positions (434). In India, the acceptability for a general-caste character is greater than that from the “upper” classes like the Brahmins, and the author’s ambiguity regarding his inquisitor’s social strata and religious faith serves to grant the Bakshi narratives a wide readership.

Saradindu Bandyopadhyay exhibits cultural hybridity in Byomkesh Bakshi’s characterisation. The Indian detective uses Western gadgets like electric fans and telephones while simultaneously being ambivalent in his basic attitude towards the imperialists. Though he is perceptively well-conversant with using firearms, but uses them sparingly only in “The Inquisitor” and “Amriter Mrityu” and does not possess a revolver personally. Like Holmes, he is knowledgeable and maintains codes of chivalry while exhibiting qualitative excellence in his psychoanalysis-based investigation. In an instance of cultural hybridity, he smokes European cheroots in “The Inquisitor” (Bandyopadhyay, *Picture* 24) and the Oriental hookah in “Achin Pakhi”, (*Byomkesh* 661). In “The Gramophone Pin Mystery” he exhibits preference for European

silk stockings (50) and, in “Chorabalee”, lunches on European menu like cutlet, boiled eggs and tea in flask (*Byomkesh* 131).

If Doyle validates the British colonisation of the East through his Sherlock Holmes stories, Bandyopadhyay symbolically effaces the colonialists from their own colony of India in his pre-1947 stories except Bakshi’s brief interaction with the White police commissioner in “The Gramophone Pin Mystery” (*Picture* 65). In the pre-Indian independence stories, the Bengali detective provides insularity to the Indian criminals from the colonial administrators by directly dealing with them himself.

In opposition to the Eurocentric detective fiction norm of focussing exclusively on crime and detection, Bandyopadhyay develops his sleuth stories as poly-thematic narratives. “Durgo Rahoshyo” is also a historical narrative; “Byomkesh O Baroda” and “Shaiylo Rahoshyo” focus on the Gothic mode; “Aadim Ripu” describes the final Indian freedom struggle towards freedom, and “Bonhi Patango” informs about the Indian myth of King Dushyanta-Nerd Shakuntala who married oblivious to their respective social statuses. The author Indianises the Eurocentric conventions of Western detective fiction into Bengali ones. Thus, in “Shanjarur Kanta”, identifiably drawn on Agatha Christie’s ABC Murders, Prabal Gupta registers his attraction for the Tagore songs by penning the details on Deepa Mukherjee’s autograph-book (*Bandyopadhyay, Byomkesh* 917); Shakuntala Singh of “Bonhi Patango” expresses her occult lust for the police inspector Ratikanta Choudhury by painting a detail from a

Sanskrit myth (558); in “Gramophone Pin Mystery”, the assassin impersonating as Prafulla Roy launches his attacks from a bicycle instead of an automobile or motor cycle; and Sukumari of “Magno Mainak” opposes the European cabaret dancers in being a devoted Vaishnavite singer (783).

Doyle, in the Sherlock Holmes narratives, avoids detailed portrayal of Britain’s social structures to maintain the British etiquette and project his society’s centrality as a model for the primarily Oriental colonies to imitate. In contrast, Bandyopadhyay realistically points out the defects of Bengali societal customs and calls for their amendments. In “Picture Imperfect”, Ashwini Ghatak’s love for Rajani Choudhury is considered illegitimate because of her being a widow; Santosh Samaddar of “Magno Mainak” is disallowed from visiting Sukumari openly because she is a devotional singer, and Deepa Mukherjee is put under house arrest in “Shanjarur Kanta” because of her intended elopement with her lover Prabal Gupta who is not a Brahmin. On the other hand, Bandyopadhyay adheres to the Indian social norms by condemning extra-marital affairs. Shakuntala Singh and Ratikanta Choudhury are killed in “Bonhi Patango” because of their adultery; a licentious widow is criticised in “Chorabalee”, and Deepa Mukherjee, the heroine of “Shanjarur Kanta”, is forced to become a sympathetic and cooperative spouse to Debashish Bhatta in spite of her pre-marital and post-nuptial love for Prabal Gupta. Bakshi testifies to Bandyopadhyay’s faith in the supernatural by describing irrational incidents in “Shaiylo Rahoshyo” (*Byomkesh* 641), which is in opposition to the scientifically-developed imperial Sherlock Holmes who does not believe even when he has face Stapleton’s recreation of the Baskervilles’ gigantic hound.

While Holmes frequently verifies his empirical approaches by scientific experiments, the Byomkesh Bakshi canon does not contain any direct reference to science except in “Calamity Strikes” that focuses on the debilitating influences of British colonisation upon the Indian science (Bandyopadhyay, *Picture* 131-3). The Indian inquisitor’s relationship with Ajit Bandyopadhyay is pronouncedly different from that between Holmes and Watson. While Watson repeatedly asserts Holmes’s intellectual excellence and uniqueness, Ajit Bandyopadhyay, who is more a friend and share a common history of domination with Bakshi, does not indulge in hero-worship while describing the Bengali inquisitor. Unlike Ajit Bandyopadhyay, Watson identifiably does not share the same social class with Holmes because none of the detective’s aristocratic clients ever speaks to him. While Holmes leads a Western lifestyle by visiting operas and concerts frequently, Bakshi does not like music and opera, and seldom watches movies (118). Contrary to Doyle’s detective, Bandyopadhyay’s inquisitor never consumes alcohol in any of the thirty-three stories. Holmes exhibits his encyclopaedic knowledge before adventures like that of The Sign of Four by customarily lecturing to Watson on topics ranging between the Stradivarius violins, the Buddhism of Ceylon and warships of the future, and the egg-shell pottery of the Chinese Ming dynasty (Doyle, *The Complete* 79, 1043); Bakshi, on the other hand, does not exhibit his scholasticism even after his education. While the British detective is assisted by proactive associates like Watson himself, The Baker Street Irregulars, and Inspector Lestrade, Bakshi is forced to replace his benign litterateur-assistant with Bikash Dutta in instances like that of “Aadim Ripu”, “Chiriakhana”, and “Shaiylo Rahoshyo”.

Bakshi shares a physical similarity with Holmes though not his complexion. Judging from their respective descriptions in “The Inquisitor” (Bandyopadhyay, *Picture* 5) and The Sign of Four (Doyle, *The Complete* 16), both the detectives are tall, dark, sharp-eyed, square-chinned with an intellectual appearance. However, whereas the British detective exemplifies his physical strength and resilience by withstanding considerable amount of stress while travelling in “The Adventure of the Final Problem” (422-4) or during pursuit of the Moriarty gang in “The Adventure of the Empty House” (544), having been addicted to seven-percent-solution of cocaine (54), and avoiding food for three days (827), the Bengali inquisitor does not fast or undertake such arduous outdoor adventures.

Holmes, like Doyle, is familiar with the British imperial policies and exhibits deep respect for the British aristocratic families. Importantly, in the Holmes narratives, Doyle glorifies Britain’s successful imperial and international exploits and avoids referring to the abortive ones. Thus, even though the Afghan wars have been vividly described in A Study in Scarlet (13), the Crimean and Boer wars have only been mentioned passingly in “The Adventure of the Blanched Soldier” (1063-5). In the Holmes canon, Britain is presented as well-governed even when political uncertainty prevailed between Disraeli and Gladstone. First World War has been kept out of context, and except briefly in “The Adventure of the Golden Pince-Nez” and “His Last Bow”, descriptive references to other imperial powers like Russia and Germany have been avoided. The state of Ireland under the successive rules of Queen

Victoria, Edward VII and George V has also not found representation. Britain's apparent calmness is actually Doyle attempt to befool the subaltern who search for unrest in imperial realms to commence their nationalistic resistance.

Doyle's championing of Holmes and Watson as the powerful perpetrators of Britain's imperial interests required that the detective and his associate should not be vulnerable to diseases and annihilation. But Eyles informs that "weary of being identified with Sherlock Holmes and what he regarded as 'a lower stratum of literary achievement'...[Doyle]...carried out his threats to do away with the great detective" (Eyles 30). Holmes's death near the Reichenbach Falls of Switzerland after a confrontation with Moriarty is suggested in "The Adventure of the Final Problem" (Doyle, *The Complete* 426), which made the common British citizens feel insecure and deprived them of presenting a flawlessly-contrived investigator to detect crimes many of which were supposed to be committed by Easterners or those related to the Orient. Following wide protests and demonstrations between 1893 and 1901, that included "we[eping]...wearing mourning bands...implor[ing]...cajol[ing]...worry[ing]...[and] even...threat[ning]" the writer, Doyle was forced to revive Holmes in The Hound of the Baskervilles and finally to make him return under the disguise of a book-seller in "The Adventure of the Empty House" (Baring-Gould, *The Annotated I* 15-6). Moreover, the investigator is rarely sick, and in cases of genuine illnesses, recuperates quickly. Having had been wounded by Adelbert Gruner's agents in "The Adventure of the Illustrious Client", he reportedly recovers faster than any ordinary man (Doyle, *The Complete* 1042). Even after suffering from intense fatigue and exhaustion at Lyons in "The

Adventure of the Reigate Squire”, he continues to act thereby arresting the Cunninghams for murdering William Kirwan. In the only other recoded instance of his sickness in “The Adventure of the Dying Detective”, he feigns disease to arrest Culverton Smith after tricking him into a confession of his crime.

In his Sherlock Holmes narratives, Doyle does not indicate the advancing ages of Holmes and Watson except in “The Adventure of the Lion’s Mane” (1073). “The Adventure of Shoscombe Old Place”, the last story of the canon to be published in the 5 March 1927-issue of *Liberty*, seems to present the detective and his associate as retaining the same energy and qualitative excellence as in A Study in Scarlet. The concluding story ends with ample indications of the possible return of Holmes and Watson for undertaking more investigations (1116).

Saradindu Bandyopadhyay’s Byomkesh Bakshi narratives identifiably counter those specific conventions of Doyle’s stories which have been mentioned above. The Indian writer had also discontinued writing detective stories between October 1936 and December 1951 but was forced to resuscitate the Bengali inquisitor following demonstrations and requests from the young Indian readers particularly from Calcutta who were not ready to forfeit an intelligent subaltern detective who presented an alternative locus of power against the predominantly Eurocentric detectives (Bandyopadhyay, *Byomkesh* 1003).

Bandyopadhyay himself underscores that Bakshi's and Ajit Bandyopadhyay's ages and their relationship changes with every narrative so that in "Beni Sanghar" the inquisitor appears as an old man of sixty who is long-married, has a school-going son and a strained relationship with his equally elderly associate (*Saradindu II* 646). Bakshi's later adventures from "Beni Sanghar" onwards do not involve movements and chases and are focused more intensely on psychoanalysis. The writer's narrative technique changes from "Room Number Dui" – from ornamental archaic Bengali to the colloquial tongue. Ajit Bandyopadhyay's role as the narrator is minimised in "Beni Sanghar" and from "Shanjarur Kanta" onwards he is removed from the scene all together. In the introduction to Beni Sanghar (Kolkata: Ananda Publishers Private Limited, 1968), Bandyopadhyay writes,

"Byomkesh can no longer afford the luxury of assigning the task of narration to Ajit. His language has become quaintly archaic, but he has not managed adapting the modern words and phrases. Moreover, he is desperately short of time. Those who have already entered the publishing business know how pennies break the pens... I have already released Ajit from his arduous task. From now on I shall write what I can afford" (*Byomkesh* 645).

Other than "The Adventure of the Blanched Soldier", Doyle has never made Holmes narrate his own exploits. "The Adventure of the Mazarin Stone" follows the third-person mode of narration.

Unlike Holmes, the Oriental Byomkesh Bakshi has been depicted as genuinely suffering for a considerable period in "Picture Imperfect" (Bandyopadhyay, *Picture* 195-8). Also, in "Bishupal Badh" (1970), the final, incomplete story of the canon, the detective and his associate living a secluded life as a publisher, have been realistically depicted as being on the verge of separation which would obstruct their return and further collaboration. Judged in this context, Byomkesh Bakshi appears as more realistically represented than Holmes.

The White imperial detective and the brown-complexioned subaltern inquisitor differ markedly from each other in their respective methodology of investigation and approaches to criminals. Holmes follows the theory of elimination that he summarises as "When you have eliminated all the impossible, whatever remains, however improbable, must be the truth" in The Sign of Four (Doyle, *The Complete* 66). In Doyle, the criminal is, with the exception of Grimesby Roylott of "The Adventure of the Speckled Band" and Joseph Harrison of "The Adventure of the Naval Treaty", usually not a member of the family concerned or a close friend or relative but is a stranger. The detective have to deal with several unfamiliar faces in course of his investigation, most of which he discard in the usual trial-and-error method. But his methodology also involves the basic Orientalist prejudice that the Easterners are characteristically malignant and barbaric, thus imparting an anti-subaltern aspect to his approach. The writer also symbolically approaches the *Hard Boiled detective fiction* writers like Herman McNeile, Raymond Chandler, Dashiell Hammett and Brett Halliday

whose sleuths often take recourse to unlawful methods during investigation and torture their captives to make them confess when Holmes kills Tonga in The Sign of Four (82), intends to horsewhip James Windibank in “A Case of Identity” (137), and unlawfully enters the house of Charles Milverton in “The Adventure of Charles Augustus Milverton” (637).

Byomkesh Bakshi regards the Holmesian empirical proofs as fallible and depends on psychoanalysis (Bandyopadhyay, *Picture* 33). Bandyopadhyay thus opposes S.S.Van Dine’s clause that “there is no place for description not for psychological analysis [in detective fiction]” that was meticulously followed by the post-1928 Eurocentric detective stories (Todorov 50-1). The Bengali inquisitor is first introduced to the suspect who is generally either a family member or a close acquaintance, and after a series of verbal interviews and rational psychoanalysis, he identifies and captures him. Following what might be identified as the “Classic Realist Detective Story pattern” focusing more on intuition and intelligence than on physical quests, Bakshi guesses Shakuntala Singh’s lust for Ratikanta by taking a look at the Dushyanta’s blue eyes in her myth-painting in “Bonhi Patango” (Bandyopadhyay, *Byomkesh* 558); he also similarly deciphers Aurobindo Halder’s lust for Mohini Das in “Kahen Kabi Kalidas” or the motive of Santosh Samaddar’s murder of Heena Mullick in “Magno Mainak”. However, his does not follow any definite rule or order during investigation in opposition to the British detective’s meticulous maintenance of newspaper cuttings of reports on famous personalities and infamous anti-social individuals in his reference books.

While Holmes exposes himself and Watson during their rigorous outdoor adventures to lethal dangers like Tonga's poison darts in *The Sign of Four* (Doyle, *The Complete* 82), Sebastian Moran's air gun in "The Adventure of the Empty House" (548), Negretto Sylvius's cudgel in "The Adventure of the Mazarin Stone" (960), Evans's bullet in "The Adventure of the Three Garridebs" (1027-8) and poisoned roots in "The Adventure of the Devil's Foot" (783), Bakshi more follows the 'armchair conventions' of Dupin, Poirot and Marple, thus eschewing chase sequences and instances of danger in exception to "The Gramophone Pin Mystery" (Bandyopadhyay, *Picture* 63), "Adwitiya" (*Byomkesh* 751), and "Shanjarur Kanta" (921). Contrary to the British detective's fondness for disguises in stories like "The Adventure of the Mazarin Stone" and "The Adventure of Charles Augustus Milverton", Bakshi does not conceal his original appearance except in "The Inquisitor" and "Gramophone Pin Mystery". Bandyopadhyay's attempts to unravel the puzzles of human psychology symbolically make his Byomkesh Bakshi narratives 'proper crime stories' in context of Ronald Knox's convention that detective fiction to be concerned more with puzzles than with the issue of crime (*The Wordsworth* 254).

Both Sherlock Holmes and Byomkesh Bakshi are occasionally maltreated by the official police forces. However, whereas Inspector Lestrade of Scotland Yard is pitted against the consulting detective while safeguarding the imperial power's integrity, British India's police officers like Bidhubabu in the pre-1947 Byomkesh Bakshi narratives see the inquisitor as a threat to the functioning of the

imperial government. Just as Holmes reprimands Lestrade in ‘The Adventure of the Norwood Builder’ (Doyle, *The Collected* 566), Bakshi exhibits a rare courage in warning and chastising a colonial police official like Bidhubabu in ‘Where There’s a Will’ (Bandyopadhyay, *Picture* 101). That both the detectives come under the purview of law for violating civilian privacy and on mere suspicion in ‘The Adventure of the Illustrious Client’ and ‘The Inquisitor’ respectively fortifies their image as the just upholders of law.

Criminals in Doyle’s detective narratives commit crimes of international ramifications and are concerned principally with power and money rather than love interests. Moriarty of ‘The Adventure of the Final Problem’ and The Valley of Fear, Sebastian Moran of ‘The Adventure of the Empty House’, Grimesby Roylott of ‘The Adventure of the Speckled Band’ and Negretto Sylvius of ‘The Adventure of the Mazarin Stone’ are either scholastic or respectable, enjoy immunity, and evade immediate suspicion because of their privileged position in the British society. Significantly, Moriarty, Moran and Culverton Smith possess different improvised weapons like the sawed-off Von Herder air gun in ‘The Adventure of the Empty House’ and the poisoned spring Smith mails to the detective in ‘The Adventure of the Dying Detective’. Such sophisticated weapons cannot be found in the Bakshi canon with the exception of Prafulla Roy’s bicycle bell in ‘The Gramophone Pin Mystery’ and Debkumar’s poisoned match sticks in ‘Calamity Strikes’. This may symbolically attest the Orientalist conception about the Easterners’ characteristic aversion to science and technology.

The Holmesian criminals like Moriarty, Sebastian Moran, Grimesby Roylott, Jonathan Small of The Sign of Four, Stapleton of The Hound of the Baskervilles, Adelbert Gruner of “The Adventure of the Illustrious Client”, Charles Augustus Milverton, Culverton Smith, and Joseph Harrison exhibit five distinct similarities. First, other than Roylott, they meticulously follow the standard Eurocentric codes for public conduct; second, many of them like Moran, Roylott, Small and Smith have previously been associated with or possess deep knowledge of the English colonies in the East; third, they are never punished by any non-British authority or extradited out of the imperial centre of England to be tried on foreign soil; fourth, other than Gruner and Roylott, they are chivalrous and do not harm women sexually; finally, like John Clay in “The Red-Headed League” and Sebastian Moran in “The Adventure of the Empty House” they maintain etiquette even when courting arrest but never repent for their crime (Doyle, *The Collected* 124, 549).

In contrast, Bandyopadhyay’s criminals like Phonibhusan Kar and Probhat Halder show remorse on being arrested, and like Kar and Amaresh Raha of “Picture Imperfect” commit suicide by slashing wrists or shooting themselves (*Picture* 124, 243). With the exception of Raha, they do not follow any formal dress code they maintain any formal dress code. While Small, Milverton and Clay exhibit affinity for money and power, criminals in the Byomkesh Bakshi stories like Probhat Halder of “Aadim Ripu”, Ratikanta Choudhury of “Bonhi Patango”, Prabal Gupta of “Shanjarur Kanta” and Bhuvaneshwar Das of “Kahen Kabi Kalidas” are

concerned primarily with love and sexual lust. In Bandyopadhyay, crime emanates with a challenge to the traditional Bengali societal customs. In spite of his advanced age, Anadi Halder tries to marry Shiuly Mazumdar whose lover Probhat Halder murders him in “Aadim Ripu”; Pranhari Poddar is murdered by Bhuvaneshwar Das, Mohini’s husband, when he tries to project the married woman as a bait to entrap young men and earn money in “Kahen Kabi Kalidas”; Santosh Samaddar of “Magno Mainak” is forced to commit suicide when his murder of Henna Mullick is detected and his betrayal of his own country exposed; in “Bonhi Patango” Shakuntala Singh is killed as she sacrifices her husband Deep Narayan Singh for Ratikanta Choudhury; Manek Mehta of “Shaiylo Rahoshyo” is annihilated when he tries to establish an extramarital liaison with Hymabati Biswas; and Sureshwar Ghosh is murdered in “Achin Pakhi” by Nilmoni Majumdar after he kills Hashi Ghosh, Majumdar’s illegitimate daughter.

Appearing as more socially relevant and realistically depicted, Saradindu Bandyopadhyay’s Byomkesh Bakshi stories suitably challenge the perceived hegemony of Doyle’s imperially-compatible Sherlock Holmes narratives and posit an alternative form of the subgenre that might be identified as the subaltern detective fiction.

NOTES:

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3. Stewart, Nicholas. "A Postcolonial Canonical and Cultural Revision of Conan Doyle's Holmes Narratives". 3 February 2003.
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4. "Arthur Conan Doyle: The Wives of Conan Doyle". 1 February 2003.
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CHAPTER 2. B.

DETECTIVE STORIES: A POSTCOLONIAL CRITIQUE.
 IMPERIAL DOMINANCE AND THE COLONISED PEOPLE'S
 RESISTANCE: -

In Culture and Imperialism, Edward W. Said compares Rudyard Kipling's Kim with the Sherlock Holmes narratives, and identifies Arthur Conan Doyle (1859-1930) as an imperial writer whose primary interest is to uphold and sustain the British law. He writes,

“[The] union of power and knowledge is contemporary with [Arthur Conan] Doyle’s invention of Sherlock Holmes (whose faithful scribe, Dr. Watson, is a veteran of the North West Frontier)...a man whose approach to life includes a healthy respect for, and protection of, the law allied with a superior, specialised intellect inclining to science...Kipling and Doyle represent for their readers men whose unorthodox style of operation is rationalised by new fields of experience turned into quasi-academic specialties. Colonial rule and crime detection almost gain the respectability and order of the classics or chemistry” (Said, *Culture* 184).

It is natural for an author of such imperially compatible texts like The White Company (1890) and The Great Boer War (1900) to advocate Britain's colonial expansion in the Sherlock Holmes canon that exemplifies his literary best. Doyle "spent several months on the ground... [of Boer War]... in South Africa during 1900", and put in his detective narratives like The Sign of Four and "The Adventure of the Crooked Man", "a long account of ancient treachery on another continent... [that is, Asia] that has prompted the... [catastrophic]...events in London... [,]...[the imperial centre]" (Eyles 40, 17).

According to Said, "The Orient is not only adjacent to Europe; it is also the place of Europe's greatest and richest and oldest colonies, the source of its civilizations and languages" (Said *Orientalism* 1). Trevelyan uses the term "richest jewels of the English Crown" to describe the Indian colonies (391). But the Europeans, particularly the English who were the mightiest of the colonial powers, were not ready to link their own affluence to the resources of the colonies. In novels like A Passage to India and Kim and the Sherlock Holmes narratives, E.M.Forster, Rudyard Kipling and Doyle refutes any symbiotic relationship between Europe and the Asian and African continents, projecting the latter two as forming the contrasting image, idea, personality and experience of the Occident. Especially the English and French litterateurs have always tried to deal with the Orient by "making statements about it, authorising views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it", and the Holmes canon proves to be no exception (Said, *Orientalism* 3).

When Doyle published his first Sherlock Holmes story in *Beeton's Christmas Annual* in November 1887, he was influenced by the past and contemporary social and political conditions of England and the world. These included the Anglo-Sikh War (1845), the Irish Potato famine (1845), the Crimean War (1854-1856), the Indian Sepoy Mutiny (1857), the American and Afghan civil wars (1861 and 1863, respectively), the foundation of the xenophobic Ku Klux Klan in the United States of America (1865), beginning of Prussian Expansion (1864) and of the primary ideas of Communism (1867), Franco-Prussian War (1870), Victoria's becoming the Empress of India (1877), and the Zulu War (1879). The British government witnessed frequent changes at the administrative level: the recurring tenures of the Derby-Disraeli government (1852, 1858 and 1866), the premiership of Lord Palmerston (1855 and 1859), Gladstone's Liberal tenure (1868 and 1880) and the Conservative rules of Disraeli (1874) and Lord Salisbury (1885).

It is important that England's position as a colonial superpower began to face stiff challenges from other imperialists like France, Germany and Spain from the second half of nineteenth century onwards. Simultaneously, the British colonies like India, Afghanistan and South Africa began to violently resist the English colonial controls. Engel's Condition of the Working Class in England (1845) and the first volume of Karl Marx's Das Kapital (1867) seriously questioned England's capitalistic manoeuvres and, in extension, indicated their imminent end. Writing in background of the contemporary social and political conditions, it was natural that Doyle would attempt to present a calm and stolid face of the imperial centre to the colonies.

That is precisely why Sherlock Holmes protects the British imperial interests and disciplines the erratic Oriental subaltern and the White individuals associated with them without ever betraying his awareness of the unstable social and political conditions of late-nineteenth century Britain. On the other hand, he gives an impression that Britain's political stability and colonising potentialities are at their zenith more during the late Victorian Age than ever.

Composing the Holmes narratives Doyle also shows an influence of the contemporary scientific and technological discoveries and inventions. This included the discovery of the planet Neptune in 1846, the Foucaultian demonstration of earth's rotation with a huge pendulum in 1851, the establishment of the telegraph system in India in 1853, commencement of trans-Atlantic cable in 1857, the publication of Charles Darwin's Origin of Species and Descent of Man in 1859 and 1871 respectively, construction of the first practical internal combustion engine by Lenoir in 1860, inauguration of the Metropolitan underground-railway in London in 1863 (though the first deep tube railroad began operating in 1884), invention of telephone and phonograph respectively in 1876 and 1877, and Edison's patenting the incandescent lamp in 1879.¹

Sherlock Holmes's deep interest in science and technology does not only reflect the litterateur's confidence in the late Victorian and Edwardian sciences but also vindicates Said's observation that according to the European colonisers "the Orient was being outstripped and outdated by Western science" and was

“exploited by the developing sciences” (Said, *Orientalism* 65, 40). He has thus underscored the role of the European scientists in the domination of the Orient:

“To be able to sustain a vision that incorporates and holds together life and quasi-living creatures [European and Indo-European cultures] as well as quasi-monstrous, parallel inorganic phenomena [Semitic, Oriental culture] is precisely the achievement of the European scientist in his laboratory. He constructs, and the very act of construction is a sign of imperial power over recalcitrant phenomena, as well as a confirmation of the dominating culture and its naturalisation” (*Orientalism* 145-6).

Doyle’s obsession with the colonies and his constant advocacy of the “pacification of the subject race” is an example of his “imperial might” and his adherence to the imperial *clause* that “there are Westerners, and there are Orientals...The former dominate; the latter must be dominated...” (*Orientalism* 36).

Holmes giving primacy to rationality and preciseness of investigative techniques once again identifies him as an imperial figure because against the Easterners’ abhorrence of accuracy,

“the European is a close reasoner; his statements of fact are devoid of any ambiguity; he is a natural logician, albeit he may not have studied logic; he is by nature sceptical and requires proof before he can accept the truth

of any proposition; his trained intelligence works like a piece of mechanism" (*Orientalism* 38).

On the other hand, the pictures painted in stories like The Sign of Four (82-92) and "The Adventure of the Crooked Man" (365-6) serve to portray the general European conception about the demeanour of the Orientals. To the White imperialists, the Eastern subaltern populace are:

"gullible, devoid of energy and initiative, much given to fulsome flattery, intrigue, cunning, and unkindness to animals...[they] cannot walk on either a road or a pavement...[they are] inveterate liars...lethargic and suspicious... and in everything oppose the clarity, directness and nobility of the Anglo-Saxon race" (*Orientalism* 38-9).

According to Said this is significant because "*knowledge* of the Orient, because generated out of strength, in a sense *creates* the Orient, the Oriental and his world" (*Orientalism* 40).

By creating the character of Watson who has spent at least two years in India (Doyle, *The Complete* 13), and by asserting the superiority of Holmes to the surgeon (though the detective never visits the Orient such extensively) as far as the issues of power and efficiency of Orientalist knowledge are concerned, Doyle "contrasts the *local agent* [Watson] who has both a specialist's knowledge of the native

and an Anglo-Saxon individuality, with the central authority at home in London [Holmes]” (Said, *Orientalism* 44). In his capacity as the “local agent”, Watson might unwillingly jeopardise imperial interests where as Holmes, “the central authority [,] is in a position to obviate any [such] danger” (*Orientalism* 44). In the Holmes canon, Doyle repeatedly attempts to “polarise the distinction [between the West and the East]... and limit the human encounter between different cultures, traditions and societies” (*Orientalism* 46). A transgressor of this polarisation, like Dr. Grimesby Roylott of “The Adventure of the Speckled Band”, is annihilated.

Orientalism, to Said, is “a textual Universe by and large” and the “impact of the Orient was made through books” (*Orientalism* 52). It is, therefore, necessary that the scope of the Orientalists’ text should “apparently cover everything from the editing and translation of texts to numismatic, anthropological, archaeological, sociological, economic, historical, literary and cultural studies in every Asiatic and North African civilization, ancient and modern”(*Orientalism* 52). Holmes’s encyclopaedic knowledge includes information concerning the Buddhism of Ceylon in The Sign of Four (Doyle, *The Complete* 79), the Andaman natives in The Sign of Four (75), tattoo marks of China in “The Red-headed League” (113), association with the Tibetan Llama and Khartoum’s khalifa in “The Adventure of the Empty House” (544), coolie-disease from Sumatra in “The Adventure of the Dying Detective” (819) and the real egg-shell pottery of the Ming dynasty in “The Adventure of the Illustrious Client” (1043).

By practising prejudice against the colonised populace, particularly against the Easterners, Doyle was only following the ‘universal practice of designating in [his] mind a familiar space which [according to him] is *ours* and unfamiliar space beyond *ours* which is *theirs*’ though such geographical distinctions, to Said, are “entirely arbitrary” (Said, *Orientalism* 54). In this “space” was placed the erroneous ideas that Asia exudes the “feelings of emptiness, loss, and disaster”, that it is “defeated and distant”, and that the motif of the Orient “insinuates danger” and its excesses “undermine rationality” (*Orientalism* 56-57). The *experience* of the authors with such *ideas* leads to the building up of an “internally structured archive from the literature that belongs to these experiences” (*Orientalism* 58). “The journey, the history, the fable, the stereotype and the polemical confrontation” that Doyle has incorporated in his Sherlock Holmes texts come from such “internally structured archive” (*Orientalism* 58).

Though Doyle, like Rudyard Kipling, has tried to *construct* a new picture of the Orient and the United States of America, a former colony of England (though it is not traditionally considered to be a part of the Orient), Said has refused to acknowledge such arbitrary literary constructions as being genuine or artistically productive. Such acts, he opines, lead to the Western ignorance becoming more refined and complex, and not to the increase in volume and accuracy of “a body of positive Western knowledge” (*Orientalism* 58). Texts as Doyle’s can never be accurate depictions of the East because “the language...[does not] even...[try]...to be accurate” (*Orientalism* 71).

Though the Orient for Europe was, until the nineteenth century, “a domain with a continuous history of unchallenged Western dominance”, the English always treated the colonies as threatening and malignant (*Orientalism* 73). However, Doyle’s constant references to the Indians and Indian objects are baffling because

“India never provided an indigenous threat to Europe... [the] native authority crumbled there and opened the land of inter-European rivalry and to outright European political control that the Indian Orient could be treated by Europe with such proprietary hauteur – never with the sense of danger reserved for Islam” (*Orientalism* 75).

Most probably this attitude defines Doyle’s ambition to know India better than any other European ever knew it – an inclination Simon Ockley exhibits in History of the Saracens in 1708 (*Orientalism* 75).

Said’s Orientalism also explains why Watson *should be* a former British settler and physician with elaborate Oriental experiences. He writes,

“...To be a European in the Orient, and to be one knowledgably, one must see and know the Orient as a domain ruled over by Europe” (197).

Most of the early English Orientalists in India, Said notes, were legal scholars or medical men with strong missionary learnings because

“most of them were imbued with the dual purpose of investigating the sciences and arts of Asia, with the hope of facilitating ameliorations there and of advancing knowledge and improving the arts at home” (*Orientalism* 79).

In all his capacities Watson belongs to the *Institut*, the learned division of England’s army comprising of “chemists, historians, biologists, archaeologists, surgeons and antiquarians” (*Orientalism* 84).

The imperially-compatible White Western characters like Sherlock Holmes and John H. Watson were created and employed by the Eurocentric litterateurs to improve:

“the Orient as a whole, to do what scheming Egyptians, perfidious Chinese, and half-naked Indians could never have done for themselves” (*Orientalism* 90).

In spite of the fallibility and impracticality of the textual approaches to the Orient, they are undertaken by the Western authors primarily for two reasons: because these writers are not ready to confront at close quarters some “relatively unknown, threatening, and

previously distant" objects, and because they favour "the appearance of success" that serves to temporarily allay their psychosis of the East (*Orientalism* 93). To the imperialists,

"the Orient, like the fierce lion, was something to be encountered and dealt with to a certain extent because the texts made that Orient possible. Such an Orient was silent, available to Europe for the realisation of projects that involved but were never directly responsible to the native inhabitants, and unable to resist the projects, images, or were description devised for it" (*Orientalism* 94).

In spite of all its subversive ingredients like Tonga in The Sign of Four or the *treacherous* Indian sepoys in "The Adventure of the Crooked Man", the Orient and particularly India is ultimately projected in the Sherlock Holmes stories as *benign* and, more importantly, *silent*. In "The Adventure of the Three Students", the Indian student Daulat Ras turns out to be innocent of copying from a question's proof although he moves about in agitation and exhibits suspicion of the British investigator. On the other hand, Tonga does not utter a single word, not even when he is shot to death, in The Sign of Four.

Doyle pits Christianity, identifiably the predominant religion for the colonisers, against the non-Christian faith of the colonised like Hinduism and Islam in The Sign of Four, Mormonism in A Study in Scarlet and the Negroid religion in "The Tiger of San Pedro" (*The Complete* 754). Colonisation, according to

Said, involves identification and creation of religious, commercial, military and cultural interests, and the imperial Christian powers like England and France felt it to be their legitimate interest to safeguard themselves against the faith of the colonised, particularly Islam (*Orientalism* 100). Stephen Howe describes this as the coloniser's "aspiration to universality" (13). He writes,

"With the advent of a universalist, Christian monotheism, the notion was added that all outsiders were by definition not only uncivilized but ungodly...Thus for such inferior peoples to be brought under the sway of universal empire by conquest would also be to bring them access to civilization and true religion...Conquest was therefore morally justified, even divinely ordained" (14).

Changing the faith of the colonised individuals served the colonisers because the former, when taught in Christian doctrines, shed their hostility against people not practicing *their* religion and felt an erroneous religious unity with the colonisers. Nicholas Stewart notes that though Jonathan Small, in *The Sign of Four*, reposes faith in Tonga, he views his native associate through a Christian ethnocentric perspective as a "hell-hound"². Even if the colonised people change their faith, the element of mistrust remains with the colonisers to whom, even with all exceptions, a person from the East is "first an Oriental, second a human being, and last again an Oriental" (Said, *Orientalism* 102).

Doyle's, and in turn, Holmes's suspicion of any individual or object related to the Orient might also be explained by Said's observation that to the Europeans, the Orient is to be *watched* for its offensive behaviour where as they, the Europeans, remain the *watchers* of the "living tableau of queerness" (*Orientalism* 103). To Holmes, "the Oriental...[is] in need of investigation, in need even of knowledge about himself", and that is what he proposes to undertake (*Orientalism* 308).

It is significant that in Sherlock Holmes stories the Orientals or individuals connected to the East never use modern scientific gadgets or instruments, and in rare cases like that of the Ghazis who attack Watson at Maiwand with Jezail bullets in *A Study in Scarlet*, use weapons invented or devised by the Europeans (Doyle, *The Complete* 13). In *The Sign of Four* Tonga uses blow darts to kill people, Jonathan Small uses his wooden leg to kill a Pathan, and Mahomet Singh and Abdullah Khan threaten Small with a "great knife" (91, 86). In "The Adventure of the Speckled Band", Grimesby Roylott, who nurses an affinity for the East, uses a swamp adder to kill his step-daughter Julia Stoner, and in "The Adventure of the Crooked Man" Henry Wood, having had served in India, is always accompanied by the tropical ichneumon. In *Orientalism in Crisis*, Abdel Malek refers to the comparative lack of sophistication in the Oriental gadgets as instances of the time lag between Orientalist Science and that of the material under study (107-8). The Europeans' development of science and technology and the Easterners' underdevelopment in that field had resulted in the latter's being outstripped (Said, *Orientalism* 65).

All throughout his Holmes narratives Doyle identifiably exhibits a willingness to rule the natives, particularly the Orientals. To Howe, “the idea of empire has...usually been associated with European, White rule over non-Europeans, with ‘racial’ hierarchies and racist beliefs” (16). Doyle’s insistence might be explained by his erroneous perception that the colonised Easterners “have never understood the meaning of self-government” which the European colonisers characteristically do (Said, *Orientalism* 107). He also thus undertakes the task of transporting the underdeveloped empire into modernity. Said has, however, detected in such attitudes as Doyle’s a sense of power to resurrect and create the Orient (*Orientalism* 121). Holmes’s rationality and Orientalist knowledge acquired through scientific experiments, reading newspaper reports and journals on the Orient, and through “lexicography, grammar, translation and cultural decoding” have not only made him a “central authority for the Orient” (Said, *Orientalism* 121-2) but also the Orient’s principles have perceptively become *his* (*Orientalism* 129). Ernest Renan, in L’Avenir de la science (1890), has demonstrated that the Orientalist’s attempt to become *the centre* is a necessity for his arrival at the very system of things, and that is what Holmes constantly attempts althroughout the narratives (*Orientalism* 132).

Orientalism outlines the importance of pilgrimages to the Orient to the Eurocentric imperialists. Said observes,

“...A pilgrimage to the Orient has involved not only the penetration of the Orient by an imperious consciousness but also the virtual elimination of

that consciousness as a result of its accession to a kind of impersonal and continental control over the Orient” (179).

Holmes’s Afro-Asian tour covering Tibet, Persia, Mecca and Khartoum in “The Adventure of the Empty House” therefore exemplifies Doyle’s another attempt at gaining control of the eastern colonies (Doyle, *The Complete* 544).

It is important that Doyle never makes his detective deal with an Oriental woman. To Western litterateurs like Doyle and Kipling, the Oriental women express “express unlimited sensuality... [because]...they are more or less stupid, and above all they are willing” (Said, *Orientalism* 207). The Orient being a region for “untiring sensuality, unlimited desire and deep generative energies” (*Orientalism* 188), and “the association between the Orient and sex...[being]...remarkably persistent” (309), Doyle eschews indulging in fantasies about Oriental women, unlike what Gustave Flaubert in *Flaubert in Egypt* (*Orientalism* 187). Moreover, he conformed to the codes of Victorian prudery, exhibited, like a common European, the subconscious fear of being seduced by natives, and was always cautious about projecting Britain as a country precise about maintaining its etiquette. To Said, “Orientalism is a male province”, and that disallows Holmes from being accompanied by or dealing with any female during his adventures against the Easterners or those associated with them (*Orientalism* 207). The Orientalist investigator actually remains a bachelor until “The Adventure of the Shoscombe Old Place”, the last story of the canon.

The Oriental women are further banished in the context that even the Easterners like Tonga, Mahomet Singh and Abdullah Khan do not possess any female counterpart. On the other hand, Frantz Fanon explains that the White European *collective cultural unconscious* has made the colonised Orientals the symbol of both sexual potency and evil, and that the sexual favours of White women bestow the Eastern subaltern a form of recognition (Wyrick 48-9). In Black Skin, White Masks, he writes: “When my restless hands caress those white breasts, they grasp White civilization and dignity and make them mine” (63). It was, therefore, necessary for Doyle to keep White women a ‘safe distance’ away from the Easterners. That is why Julia and Helen Stoner are, in spite of their step-father Dr. Grimesby Roylott’s Oriental obsession, *brought back* to England when they reach marriageable age in “The Adventure of the Speckled Band”. It is to ensure protection of the European women from the Easterners that Doyle does not give any pro-active role to them in his Sherlock Holmes narratives.

Said notes that in the early-twentieth century Orientalism delivered the Orient to the West by “translating, sympathetically portraying, inwardly grasping” the obscure, barely-intelligible Oriental civilization, and he describes the relationship between an Orientalist and the Orient as “hermeneutical” (*Orientalism* 222). The European approach to the East is identifiably “schizophrenic” and “eccentric” (*Orientalism* 102) – an attempt to deform the East (273). In the thirty four Sherlock Holmes stories published between 1901 and 1927, beginning with The Hound of the Baskervilles and continuing up to “The Adventure of the Shoscombe Old Place”, Doyle tries to come at terms with the “chameleon-like quality” and “sublimity” of the

Easterners (Said, *Orientalism* 119) by explaining the Oriental “civilizations, religious dynasties, cultures...[and]...mentalities” as academic objects (222). His unmannerly Orientals like Tonga and Achmet are “simply the old Orientalist stereotypes dressed up in policy jargon” (*Orientalism* 321).

Said, in Culture and Imperialism, has further gone on to describe culture as a kind of “kind of theatre where various political and ideological causes engage one another” (xiv). The link between the British literary canon and its attendant culture requires special investigation. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin describe “literary canon” as “...not a body of texts *per se*, but rather a set of reading practices” and “reading practices” as “the enactment of innumerable individual and community assumptions, for example about genre, about literature and even about writing...” (*The Empire* 189). Said observes, “Partly because of empire, all cultures are involved in one another; none is single and pure, all are hybrid, heterogeneous, extraordinarily differentiated, and unmonolithic” (*Culture* xxix). It is precisely because of its heterogeneous nature that the definition of *culture* becomes even more complicated and its territory more extended. The link between different detective canons, for example, that of Holmes, Hercule Poirot or Father Brown, and its attendant imperialist culture therefore exists but in complicated intertwining.

Doyle’s conception of the Orientalist investigator at the end of the nineteenth century conforms to Said’s observation that “by the end of the nineteenth century the empire is no longer merely a shadowy presence but in the works of

writers like Conrad, Kipling, Gide ...Loti [and Doyle], a central area of concern” (*Culture*, xviii).

The definitions of imperialism and colonialism are identifiably intermingled in the Sherlock Holmes stories (*Culture* 8). The White European investigator Holmes advocates the British occupation and rule of the South Asian and African countries while being ensconced in the imperial centre of London. The amalgamation of imperialism and colonialism in the social as well as literary context between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries resulted in the creation of a “socially desirable, empowered space in metropolitan England...[which was] connected by design, motive and development to distant or peripheral worlds...conceived of as desirable but subordinate...” (*Culture* 61). Western powers like Britain allowed their metropolises to acquire and accumulate territory and subjects on a very fast scale, and Said notes that by 1914 “Europe had a grand total of roughly 85 per cent of the earth as colonies, protectorates, dependencies, dominions and commonwealths” (*Culture* 6). Doyle’s Holmes-narratives reflect the writer’s satisfaction with the power of English imperialism in late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Said notes that in the 1960s Jean-Francois Lyotard and Michel Foucault have described a “striking new lack of faith in...the great legitimising narratives of emancipation [of the colonised] and enlightenment [of the comparatively unsophisticated colonised through Western science, philosophy and literature]” practiced by such authors as Doyle, Kipling and Conrad (*Culture* 29). Holmes

is attracted to the Orient not only for the apparently criminal characteristic features of the Orientals, but also because he wants to make them knowledgeable through his own Orientalist knowledge, thus putting up a façade of Oriental liberation. The picture of the Orient in general and of India in particular that emerges out of the Sherlock Holmes stories such as The Sign of Four and “The Adventure of the Crooked Man” “exists in a deeply antithetical relationship with the development of the movement for Indian independence” such as the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857 (*Culture* 36).

The self-definition of the cultures of the natives is suppressed in Doyle’s detective stories. Tonga and Mahomet Singh in The Sign of Four and Daulat Ras in “The Adventure of the Three Students” possess no clearly demarcated self-defining culture. The assertion of their identity is prevented because such an assertion “can mobilise atavistically, throwing people back to an earlier imperial time when the West and its opponents championed and even embodied virtues designed not as virtues so to speak but for war” (*Culture* 42). The conception and construction of Doyle’s Orientalist texts was a contemporary Western *necessity* because of the development of dominant discourses and disciplinary traditions in the canon of modern intellectual history – the intellectual identifiable with the knowledgeable Whites (*Culture* 47). In Masks of Conquest: Literary Study and British Rule in India (1989), Gauri Viswanathan locates the political origin of such English studies and discourses as Doyle’s in the system of colonial education imposed on the natives in nineteenth century India. Ideas of the necessity of discipline for and its maintenance by the White youths explored in the very British Sherlock Holmes stories was first created by the colonial

administrators “for the ideological pacification and reformation of a potentially rebellious Indian population” (*Culture* 48). The Holmes narratives can, therefore, be identified to have had been conceived for dominating and disciplining primarily the Oriental colonised people. Such *classics* as Doyle’s stories were extremely Eurocentric, and, according to Said, exuded “narrow, often strident nationalism” on the part of the author (*Culture* 51).

Gayatri Chakravorty-Spivak’s assertion that the subaltern in Western discourses *cannot speak* has also been reaffirmed by Said:

“Without significant exception the universalising discourses of modern Europe ... assume the silence, willing or otherwise, of the non-European world. There is incorporation; there is inclusion; there is direct rule; there is coercion. But there is only infrequently an acknowledgement that the colonised people should be heard from, their ideas known” (*Culture* 58).

He characterises the Western culture and literature as ongoing contests “between north and south, metropolis and periphery, white and native” (*Culture* 59). They have been identified to carry an unequal relationship of force between the sophisticated, privileged Westerners and the “primitive...weaker and less developed non-European, non-Western person” (*Culture* 65). In Doyle’s detective fiction the colonised, particularly those from south-eastern Asia like Tonga of The Sign of Four or the Sumatran coolies of “The Adventure of the Dying Detective” are silent in the sense that they do not utter a single word all throughout the various references given to them in the said stories, and are

technically unsophisticated. Their silence is assumed by Doyle who does not want any voice of dissent against his apparently omnipotent and omniscient private investigator, least from an Oriental.

The first Holmes narrative, A Study in Scarlet, was published in 1887 and might be included as a British text written during the *age of empire* which Said identifies as beginning around 1878 (*Culture* 68). Under the rules of Queen Victoria (1837-1901) and Edward VII (1901-1910), Britain regarded itself as the most powerful academic, military and economic imperial centre. Under such “authority of the [Western] observer and of European geographical centrality”, the colonised native was reduced to occupy “a secondary racial, cultural, ontological status” (*Culture* 70). The Western fantasy of centrality and superiority of British culture was sustained by their obliterations of native cultures. Said’s observation on the assumed centrality of British power, juxtaposed with Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin’s canon moulded by “reading practices” which include “community assumptions”, suggests that to privilege its own imperial and colonial status, the British culture would readily accept texts affirming its imperial centrality and primacy (*The Empire* 189). Naturally Doyle’s Sherlock Holmes narratives gained unprecedented popularity soon after their first publication. Said points out the gist of Holmes narratives when he argues that the British imperial culture encouraged “canonical inclusion and exclusion” (*Culture* 70).

The identification of the *unspoken subjects*, that is, the marginalised, distorted representations of the colonised and their culture in texts accepted

by the contemporary British colonial culture would be the initial step in identifying, and thereafter questioning the canon and canonical texts such as Doyle's as constructs of imperial ideology. Said argues that the critical appraisal and reappraisal of such texts:

“entail...reading the canon as a polyphonic accompaniment to the expansion of Europe, giving a revised direction and valence to such writers as Conrad...Kipling [and Doyle] who have always been read as sports, not as writers whose manifestly imperialist subject matter has a long subterranean or implicit and proleptic life...[in the works of previous generation of writers]” (*Culture* 71).

He has detected the presence of imperial ideology in the works of writers including Spencer, Defoe, Austen (*Culture* 71) and Doyle (181).

Said has also underscored the power of novels and short stories by imperial litterateurs such as Kipling and Doyle in upholding the imperial ideology. In the “incorporative, quasi-encyclopaedic cultural form” of such writings are packed “a highly regulated plot mechanism and an entire system of social reference that depends on the existing institution of bourgeois society, their authority and power” (*Culture* 84). A Study in Scarlet and The Sign of Four, for example, are pictures of reality at the very early or very late stages in readers' experience, and the inherited reality from other such novels are rearticulated and repopulated according to their creator's situation, gifts and predilections (*Culture* 88). The Sherlock Holmes texts naturally inherit the

ideology of colonialism from the pre-Doyle litterateurs such as Austen, Dickens, Flaubert or Chateaubriand. In them Doyle rearticulates his own Orientalist observations and asserts his conception of Britain as the colonial locus and superior in fields of culture, education, etiquette, social security and investigative sciences to other imperial powers like France and Germany. According to Said, the novels written by the British authors incorporate within themselves an overwhelming concern with power and “participate in...and...contribute to an extremely slow, infinitesimal politics that clarifies, reinforces, perhaps even occasionally advances perceptions and attitudes about England and the world” (*Culture* 89). He terms it as the novel’s “consolidation of authority” (92).

The time Doyle published his second Sherlock Holmes story, The Sign of Four, a number of options, all premised upon the subordination and victimisation of the Eastern natives, had been made available to the Europeans. That included delight in the usage of power to rule the natives and secure profit from distant territories through voyages, trade, annexation and learned expedition and exhibitions, “an ideological rationale for reducing [and] reconstituting the native as someone to be ruled and managed”, the security of the situation that allows the conquerors to overlook the violence perpetrated by themselves and the process “by which, after the natives have been displaced from their historic location on their land, their history is rewritten as a function of the imperial one” (*Culture* 158-9). While narrating the biographical history of Jonathan Small in The Sign of Four and Henry Wood in “The Adventure of the Crooked Man”, Doyle identifiably chooses to execute the last option for subordinating the Oriental natives.

It is also significant that in such stories as The Sign of Four and “The Adventure of the Crooked Man”, Doyle repeatedly and obsessively alludes to the Indian Sepoy Mutiny that started on 10 May 1857 at Meerut. Said identifies the Mutiny as the “single most important, well known and violent episode of the nineteenth-century Anglo-Indian relationship” (*Culture*177). The English litterateurs like Doyle and Christopher Hibbert cited the instance of the rebellion to demand the subjugation of Indians by the “higher civilization of European Britain” (*Culture* 177). Edward Thompson, in The Other Side of the Medal (1925) singled out the Mutiny as the “great symbolic event by which the two sides, Indian and British, achieved their full and conscious opposition to each other...The Mutiny, in short, reinforced the difference between the coloniser and colonised” (*Culture* 177-8). Said reasons that, “to be British [during and after the Mutiny] meant to feel repugnance and injury – to say nothing of righteous vindication – given the terrible displays of cruelty by ‘natives’, who fulfilled the roles of savages cast for them” (*Culture* 178). Doyle, while portraying the violence and annihilations perpetrated by the “savage” Indian Sepoys in The Sign of Four, has identifies himself as a conforming British imperialist. That is also the reason why Patrick Brantlinger could detect that “the mid to late Victorian fiction...[written in English in England]...contained an immense amount of writing about the Indian Mutiny” (205).

The two aspects that Doyle had written the Sherlock Holmes stories *first* in the English language, and *second*, in Britain, are also important to account for his imperial approach. In his The Nigger Question Thomas

Carlyle advocates a language of total generality that is “anchored in unshakable certainties about the essence of races, peoples, cultures, all of which need little elucidation because they are familiar to his audience” (Said, *Culture* 123). Said observes that Carlyle thus speaks a “lingua franca for metropolitan Britain: global, comprehensive, and with so vast a social authority as to be accessible to any one speaking to and about the nation” (*Culture* 123). This lingua franca, which Doyle also invokes in his Sherlock Holmes texts, locates England at the focal point of “a world also presided over by its power, illuminated by its ideas and culture, kept productive by the attitudes of its moral teachers, artists, legislators” (*Culture* 123).

Written by Saradindu Bandyopadhyay (1899-1970), the Byomkesh Bakshi stories, on the other hand, are postcolonial in the sense that the Indian author hails from an Eastern country “colonised by Britain” and in his narratives and exudes “a concern only with the national...[that is, Indian]... culture...[during and]...after the departure of the...[British]... imperial power” (Ashcroft, et al., *The Empire* 1). In his sleuth stories, admittedly influenced by Doyle, Chesterton and Christie who begun their respective sleuth stories on Holmes, Father Brown and Poirot in 1887, 1911 and 1920, Bandyopadhyay *rewrites* the canonical stories of detective fiction (*Saradindu II* 646). He protests against the *othering* of primarily the Eastern populace in the imperially-compatible detective narratives of the White Westerners by assuming for himself and his detective an authority, voice and control of the voice. In context of Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin’s definition, Bandyopadhyay’s Byomkesh Bakshi stories might be identified as instances of the subaltern litterateur’s writing “back to the centre of

the...[British]...Empire” (*The Empire* 97). A section of the national literature - an essentiality, according to Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, for the “whole enterprise of postcolonial studies” (*The Empire* 17), was built up by Bandyopadhyay based especially on two facts. First, the British settlers in India had built their capital at Calcutta that became a *reflection* of the imperial metropolitan centre of London, and second, since the Bengal Renaissance of the 1820s to 1840s, the predominant literature in British India was that of Bengali and the British definition of “intelligentsia” catered almost exclusively to the people of Bengal while every important colonial activity was executed at and from Bengal.

Byomkesh Bakshi not only belongs to the Bengali middle class, but also incorporates within himself almost every tradition of the Indian family life, thus catering to the postcolonial *clause* that “the study of national tradition is the first and most vital stage of the process of rejecting the claims of the Centre to exclusivity” (Ashcroft, et al., *The Empire* 17). Bakshi does not possess any superhuman strength, unnatural intelligence or potency. He also does not claim uniqueness for his profession, unlike Sherlock Holmes in The Sign of Four (Doyle, *The Complete* 54). With the exception of “Shaiylo Rahoshyo”, no Byomkesh Bakshi narrative deals with supernatural incidents, and the canon eschews melodrama, violent bloodshed, mystic sages and cannibalistic natives. Bandyopadhyay thus annuls the Western (mis)representation of the Oriental Empire, particularly India, as the “site of the exotic, of adventure and exploitation” (Ashcroft, et al., *The Empire* 19). Moreover, the Moroccan explorer Muhammad Ibn Battutah (1304-c.1369), who visited Bengal in 1346, referred to

the region as “moisture laden...[and]...amply-treasured hell” and accentuated its perceived exoticness by detailing on his purchases of “one concubine for one *ashura* [or gold coin], and the young boy Lulu for two *ashura-s*” in his Rihlah (Mukhopadhyay, *Bangla* 490-1). By writing his detective fiction as an Indian in Bengali, Bandyopadhyay nullifies any such distorted representation as mentioned above and creates a postcolonial venue for a “study of the effects of colonialism in and between *English*...[that is, the postcolonial writings in English]...and writing in indigenous language” including Bengali (Ashcroft, et al., *The Empire* 24). Because he was an Indian colonised on his own territory, the author was “not forced to adapt to different landscape and climate”, but according to D.E.S Maxwell in “Landscape and Theme” (1965), had his “own ancient and sophisticated responses” to himself “marginalised by the world view which was implicated in the acquisition of English” (*The Empire* 25).

Significantly, Saradindu Bandyopadhyay does not directly oppose the British domination of India in the ten stories published before the Indian independence in 1947, which would have otherwise been confiscated on charges of sedition. As a lawyer who had practised in British-Indian courts, the author was understandably forced to resist the imperialists through cultural and literary *collusion* rather than *colliding* with them. However, in the stories written after the Indian independence and especially in “Aadim Ripu”, he celebrates the united and individual Indian struggle for independence and in context of Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin’s observations on “thematic parallels”, becomes a postcolonial litterateur and critic (*The Empire* 27).

The Australian postcolonialists further note that the theme of “construction...of houses as buildings in postcolonial location is a recurring and evocative figure for the problematic of postcolonial identity in works from very different society” (*The Empire* 28). Thus Bakshi and Ajit Bandyopadhyay’s construction of a new house at Calcutta’s Keyatala in “Room Number Dui” exhibits their problem of identifying themselves in the postcolonial society of urban, middleclass Indian Bengalis (Bandyopadhyay, *Byomkesh* 834).

Bandyopadhyay’s Byomkesh Bakshi narratives can be identified to display the political, imaginative and social control involved between the colonisers and the colonised in context of the political theories of Frantz Fanon and Albert Memmi (Ashcroft, et al., *The Empire* 29). It is significant that Bandyopadhyay chooses to express his resistance against the hegemony of the Eurocentric detective characters through Bengali. The utilisation of such pre-colonial languages, Bengali having had become a major Indian language in the eleventh century, was instrumental to a large extent for decolonisation. Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin note,

“...In India, that is in postcolonial countries where viable alternatives to *english* continue to exist, an appeal for a return to writing exclusively, or mainly in the pre-colonial languages has been a recurring feature of calls for decolonisation” (*The Empire* 30).

The syncreticist critics regard novels and short stories of the kind written by Bandyopadhyay as cross-cultural hybrids. Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin assert that,

“In India where the bulk of literature is written in indigenous Indian languages, the relationship between writing in those languages and the much less extensive writing in *english* has made such project...[as a novel or a work of fiction exclusively in an Indian language]...a powerful element in postcolonial self-assertion” (*The Empire* 30).

In the Byomkesh Bakshi stories Bandyopadhyay has not only repeatedly asserted the investigator’s nationality and identity, but by *creating* the character altogether has also challenged the very *notion* of centrality of English fictional detective characters created, for example, by Doyle, Chesterton and Christie. Byomkesh Bakshi is as intelligent as, if not more than, Holmes, Poirot or Father Brown, and his investigative techniques, though based especially on psychoanalysis, are no less efficient and valid than that of the English detectives who give primacy to the empirical evidences. Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin describe such texts as Saradindu’s short stories and novels as being “subversive” that attain sufficient potency as resistance literature (*The Empire* 33).

Unlike Sherlock Holmes, Byomkesh Bakshi is not a European and yet he does not continue to vociferously assert his precise national and regional identities through his speeches and observations. Though unlike Holmes, he is a

teetotaller, he smokes cheroots and habitually uses English words and phrases. Thus the Bengali inquisitor exhibits in his character what Homi Bhabha, Edward Braithwaite and Wilson Harris describe as “hybridisation” (*The Empire* 34). In *The Womb of Space* (1983), Harris observes that though the postcolonial texts appear to deal with divisions of culture and race, they also contain “seeds of *community* which as they germinate and grow in the mind of the reader, crack asunder the apparently inescapable dialectic of history”. According to him,

“the hybridity of present always struggle to get free from that of the past which stressed ancestry and which valued the pure over its threatening opposite, the ‘composite’. It replaces a temporal lineality with a spatial plurality” (*The Empire* 36).

The hybridity exhibited in Byomkesh Bakshi’s characterisation tries to mitigate the obtrusive influence of Eurocentric detective stories in Dinendra Kumar Ray’s conception of Robert Blake and Priyanath Chattopadhyay’s inspector in charge.

Writing in Bengali and by making Bakshi a middle-class Bengali gentleman, Saradindu Bandyopadhyay negates the influence of the English detective fiction over the means of communication of the subaltern by abrogating or denying the privilege of English literature itself. He captures and remoulds the colonial detective fiction and its style to appropriate and reconstitute it in an Indian context. He thus uses his own language as a tool to utilise it “in various ways to express widely

differing cultural experiences” of the Bengalis as separate from the English (*The Empire* 39).

In his researching the cultural purity of the Indian in general and the Bengalis in particular, in what Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin identify as the Indian “diglossic societies” in his detective fiction, Bandyopadhyay adheres to a constant procedure of decolonisation (*The Empire* 39). By doing so he privileges the *margin* represented by the educated Indian litterateurs in his postcolonial stories. He intersects the sub-genre of English detective fiction with his own indigenous one and exhibits “the creative potential” of his own language and literature (*The Empire* 44).

The Bengali language in which Bandyopadhyay writes his detective stories can be identified with the very demeanour of the general Indians as far as the *Creole continuum* is concerned. Shaped up by the “ceaseless pattern of conquest and domination”, his stories abrogate the centrality of English detective fiction by using an indigenous language to signify difference with the basic English sub-genre while employing a certain degree of sameness in the methodology of the detectives and motives of the criminals which allows it to be understood (*The Empire* 49).

It is significant in different Byomkesh Bakshi stories, for example, in “Satyanweshi” (Bandyopadhyay, *Byomkesh* 29, 33), “Pather Kanta” (45, 52, 60, 65) “Simonto Heera” (75, 80), “Makarshar Rash” (92), “Arthamanartham” (114,

115), and “Agniban” (167), Bandyopadhyay uses several English words and phrases mostly written in English itself. Such use of *untranslated* words, or in the other way, the original words from the imperial literature the Indian writer was inspired by, signifies, according to Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, “a difference” and “a certain cultural experience” that cannot be reproduced by the colonised litterateurs (*The Empire* 53). Such *untranslated* words and those retranslated back to the original source ‘not only act...to signify the difference between cultures, but also...illustrate...the importance of discourse in interpreting cultural concepts’ (*The Empire* 64). Bandyopadhyay thus reactivates the sense of polarity between the colonised Indian populace and the British colonisers and harps on the subaltern readers’ resentment against imperial domination. He forces them into “an active engagement with the horizons of the culture in which these terms [that is, the untranslated or, more precisely, re-translated words and phrases] have meaning” (*The Empire* 65).

In The Palm-Wine Drinkard (1952), Amos Tutola expresses an opinion that “alien world-views might come closer if their linguistic structures were somehow meshed” (*The Empire* 68). Bandyopadhyay identifiably *constructs* his detective fiction on the pattern of Doyle and Christie and follows the linguistic structure exhibited by the English detective stories consisting in the short, information-laden dialogues between the investigator and the narrator-associate and absence of prolonged conversation between the sleuth and the apprehended criminal. Thus he tries to bring closer the alien world views expressed in the English texts and his own ones.

Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin give primacy to the development of neologisms in the postcolonial texts to emphasise that:

“words do not embody cultural essence, for where the creation of new lexical forms in...[postcolonial texts written in]...*english*...[and postcolonial texts written in other languages of the colony]...may be generated by the linguistic structures of the mother tongue, their success lies in their function within the text rather than their linguistic provenance” (*The Empire* 71).

Bandyopadhyay employs several Bengali neologisms like “messe-bashai” (“at the boarding house”) and “stabdho-gambhir” (“silent and gloomy”) in “Satyanweshi” (Bandyopadhyay, *Byomkesh* 27, 34), “bi-sickl” (“bicycle”) in “Pather Kanta” (67), “air” for “yaar” or friend in “Makarshar Rash” (95), “gnenje” or a fold in the loin-cloth used to store coins and currency notes in “Aadim Ripu” (486), and unconventional phrases like “deep stombher aalo dhonyay dom bandhyo hoiya moriya gelo” (“the light emanating from the lamp-stand suffocated itself to death in smoke”) in “Chitrochor” (265), and “dare dare drum” – an allusion to a nonsensical phrase originally coined by Sukumar Ray – or “gur, gur, gur, guriye hama, khap petechhen Gyostho mama” – a nonsensical phrase Byomkesh uses to distract attention – in “Aadim Ripu” (477, 498). Some of these words like “gnenje” and “air” are not normally used even in colloquial Bengali, and Sukumar Ray’s nonsensical phrases do not have any proper meaning, but

they form a coherent and natural ingredient to the narrative and are never employed out of context. Such words, though they are not employed out of context, do not embody the cultural essence of the Indian subaltern or the linguistic essence of the Bengali language.

Being an Oriental litterateur Saradindu Bandyopadhyay writes out of the condition of “otherness” in his texts and asserts the “peripheries” represented by the colonised, their conditions, culture and literature as the “actual substance of experience” (Ashcroft, et al., *The Empire* 78). Byomkesh Bakshi acts, and Ajit Bandyopadhyay plays the role of an interpreter who not only interprets in his actions the representation of an Oriental detective working in the East, but also depicts him as a colonised individual who, in spite of being admittedly inspired by Chesterton about which he discusses in “Kahen Kabi Kalidas”, is as intelligent as the Eurocentric sleuths and poses a resistance against the hegemony of the White detective fiction (Bandyopadhyay, *Byomkesh* 715). Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin detect in this role of the interpreter “one of the major foci of the processes of abrogation and appropriation” of the imperial texts like those by Doyle, Chesterton and Christie (*The Empire* 80). On the other hand, Jan Mohammed finds in the introduction of writing in societies of the dominated “a development of a different kind of consciousness which might be characterised as *historical*” (*The Empire* 81). The development of the ‘historic consciousness’ through allowing the colonised individuals like Bakshi and Ajit Bandyopadhyay and their readers to scrutinise their fixed past, also allows them, in turn, to make distinctions between truth about why they have been colonised and error of what went wrong to intimidate their

independence. This permits the development of “a more conscious, critical, and comparative attitude to the accepted world picture” (*The Empire* 81).

Another important aspect of postcolonialism is an exhibition of the way the state gags the voice of the individual and regulates the means of communication (*The Empire* 84). All throughout the ten stories written before Indian independence Bandyopadhyay never exudes any reaction against the English domination or makes any reference to the Indian independence. The British administrators in Bengal “gagged” the voice of resistance in the litterateur by threatening execution, trial for sedition, castigation, ban or boycott.

Bakshi does not boast of his intellect or potencies anywhere in the thirty-three stories of the canon. With his brown complexion, casual view of life and avoidance of European dresses, Bakshi continues segregating himself from the White man and does not spoil his indigenosity.

It is to be mentioned that by avoiding any mention to the British colonisers even in the ten stories written before the Indian independence, Byomkesh Bakshi negates the presence of colonisers in India altogether. Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin define this as the “gulf of silence – the absence which is indicated in the [writer’s as well as the created character’s] ...surrender of speech and their entry into the linguistic vacuum of the [colonial] situation” (*The Empire* 86). It indicates the difference of the postcolonial texts from the colonial English detective ones.

The texts of the metropolitan canon including Doyle's detective stories allow only select experiences of the coloniser to be rendered as literature which denies the subaltern litterateur an access to the world. Saradindu Bandyopadhyay tackles the situation in two ways – first, by avoiding any direct mention of the very fact that he has been dominated, and second, by projecting Calcutta as the *metropolis of otherness* against the Holmes's metropolis of London. In The Mimic Men (1967), V.S.Naipaul opines that the mimicry implicit in postcolonial texts is permanently disabling because the imperial centre imposes disorder and inauthenticity on the margins of the empire. Bandyopadhyay has also made his detective an individual of the imperial centre in British India and a parallel force to Doyle's investigator. In his being a *very ordinary* Bengali without an unconventional lifestyle, addiction and eccentricity, Byomkesh Bakshi rejects any ostensible mimicry of the Eurocentric life and negates the concepts of disorderliness and *exotica* adhered to the Orient by the European litterateurs. It is important that Sherlock Holmes is a cocaine-addict (Doyle, *The Complete* 54), violently nationalistic (334) and goes without food for a number of days (827).

To Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, "Language is power because words construct reality" (*The Empire* 89). In a dominated society both the language and the economic structure are controlled from the imperial centre. By writing his detective stories in such a society in an indigenous language, Bandyopadhyay seeks to imperial control of the subaltern literature and depict India realistically. The Oriental nature of his language minimises its constant manipulation by the imperial tongue even

though he is physically dominated himself. The peripheral position of Bengali detective fiction is changed to a new centrality through the difference of language from that of the colonisers and through a totally different approach to the process of investigation: while Sherlock Holmes depends on empirical evidences, Bakshi takes a psychological approach. The Indian author abrogates the perceived power of authentication of the imperial centre by constructing a new approach to the process of detection and the nationality, class, caste and demeanour of the investigator. These multiplicity, and therefore, difference of perspectives as far as the language, treatment and *approach* to detective fiction are concerned, would prove instrumental in “decentring” the colonial domination and its omnipotence (*The Empire* 101).

However, to Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, a return to an idealised pre-colonial cultural condition is an impossibility (*The Empire* 109). Similar to R.K.Narayan in *The Man-eater of Malgudi* (1960), Bandyopadhyay might have incorporated several aspects of the Bengali tradition in his Byomkesh Bakshi narratives, but he had begun writing in colonial India the various indigenous cultures of which had already been interpenetrated by the culture of the colonisers. With the absence of any *pure* culture in India of the 1920s, Byomkesh Bakshi stories, like any contemporary postcolonial text, are “complex and hybrid formations” (*The Empire* 110).

During his interview with Griffiths at Mysore’s Dhvanyaloka Institute in 1986, U.R.Anantha Murthy suggested that the relationship of the ancient Indian languages like Tamil and Sanskrit to the modern Indian vernaculars is

analogous to that of Latin and modern English (Ashcroft, et al., *The Empire* 118). It, therefore, follows that all texts written in Indian languages in late colonial and early post independence India would mix a modern Indian language like Bengali with an ancient one like Sanskrit which vigorously asserts the direct continuity of some essential Indianness. This particular quality is also reflected in Bandyopadhyay's Bengali detective fiction and heightens the postcolonial response implicit in them. Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin write,

“Addressing the problem of writing in India within a postcolonial framework does not imply an acceptance of ...[the]...hegemony...[of English literature and its different genres written by the English coloniser-litterateurs], but rather the opposite – in practice it suggests the only effective way of escaping the control implicit in its very structure...The work produced by contemporary writers in language as diverse as Maratha, Bengali, Kannada, Telugu, Malayalam, etc., far outweighs in quantity and quality the work produced in *english*” (*The Empire* 121-2).

Bandyopadhyay's thirty-three Byomkesh Bakshi stories are, therefore, not only an exhibition of his resistance against the perceived potency and uniqueness of English detective fiction, but also are of sufficient excellence as to command wide critical attention as postcolonial texts.

Michel Foucault's observations on discourse have helped the postcolonial critics to identify the governing rule of postcolonialism such as what is exhibited in Bandyopadhyay's detective narratives. Said's and Foucault's postcolonial discourses invoke certain ways of thinking about language, truth and power, and their interrelationship. Foucault identifies the great system and theories of the colonisers, including the literary ones and vital truths, for example, about the demeanour and faith of the colonised populace, as harbingers of a new orthodoxy and a new tyranny. He seeks to denounce the Western conception of different Eastern cultures, customs and traditions as false because it is based on discourse and truth is relative to the "system of possibility for knowledge" (*The Empire* 167). He denies the existence of objective knowledge – something the Eurocentric detectives of Doyle, Christie and Chesterton are supposed to be in possession of – and considers all valid theory of knowledge as attempts to exercise power. According to Foucault, "Truth isn't outside power, or lacking in power. Truth is a thing of this world: it is produced only by virtue of multiple form of constraint. And it induces the regular effects of power" (131). Sherlock Holmes's quest for truth, therefore, becomes a quest for an imperial power as well where as Byomkesh Bakshi's inquisition is rendered into a powerful anti-colonial reaction against the hegemony of the Eurocentric detective fiction. According to Foucault, "We are subjected to the production of truth through power and we cannot exercise power except through the production of truths" (93). Postcolonial discourses such as Bandyopadhyay's are grounded on a struggle for power: the power of the Indian investigator against that of the Western detectives, of Bengali against English, and of the subaltern-metropolis of Calcutta against the imperial centre of London, and all these struggles seek to produce

Oriental truths that had had previously been distorted in the Orientalist literatures of the West. Bandyopadhyay's Indian stories gain significance in context of Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin's observation that,

“Power is invested in...[an Eastern]...language...[like Bengali]...because it provides the terms in which truth itself is constituted. The struggle for power over truth in some senses, mimics the metropolitan impulse of dominance, and postcolonial critics such as Homi Bhabha have sought to address this problem...only by stressing the way in which it functions...can such a mimicry be avoided and replaced by a theory and practice which embraces difference and absence as material signs of power rather than negation, of freedom not subjugation, of creativity not limitation” (*The Empire* 168).

Homi Bhabha investigates the construction of the colonised individuals within a disabling master discourse of colonialism that “specifies a degenerate native population to justify its own conquest and subsequent rule” (Ashcroft, et al., *The Empire* 178). He suggests that a thorough reading of the colonial texts like Doyle's detective narratives can recover the voice of the dominated subaltern like Daulat Ras through mimicry and parody as both a strategy of colonial subjection through “reform, regulation and discipline, which appropriates the Other” and the native's inappropriate imitation of this discourse, which has the effect of menacing colonial authority (Bhabha, *Of Mimicry* 126-7). Bandyopadhyay, the native Indian author,

threatens the authority and hegemony of the Eurocentric stories through his mimicry of the constructional framework of detective fiction as written in Europe.

The Byomkesh Bakshi stories eschew any reference to other Indian detectives and, in extension, assume their centrality in the Indian scenario. Bandyopadhyay projects Calcutta as the colonised individuals' *sole metropolis*, and depicts Bengal as the microcosm of colonial India. He thus symbolically identifies Bengal, Bengali, and the Bengali culture as representatives of the nation, national language and national culture, respectively. According to Said, both the national language and national culture are central to the organisation of anti-colonial resistance (Said, *Culture* 260). Bakshi's Bengali identity, therefore, becomes crucial for projecting Bandyopadhyay's stories as subaltern resistance texts.

Partha Chatterjee's observation that "much nationalist thought in India depends upon the realities of colonial power either in totally opposing it or in affirming a patriotic consciousness" applies for Bandyopadhyay's opposition to the presence of the British forces asserted through his ignoring them in the Bakshi stories written before 1947 and his non-reference to any colonial hallmark in the post-independence sleuth narratives (79). This leads "inevitably to an elitism of the intelligentsia [...][a class to which Saradindu Bandyopadhyay himself belonged] [...]rooted in the vision of a radical regeneration of national culture" (79). However, even if the Indian litterateurs like Bandyopadhyay try to restore India to a position of

regenerating national culture, Chatterjee points out that such efforts are employed only behind utopian dream and are, therefore, wasted.

Chatterjee's thesis shows that *evasion and avoidance* are the two vital ingredients of anti-imperialist nationalism, and that "nationalism...become a panacea for *not* dealing with economic disparities, social injustice, and the capture of the newly independent state by a nationalist elite" (Said, *Culture* 262). Bandyopadhyay's Byomkesh Bakshi stories exhibit the above-mentioned *evasion and avoidance* in the three following ways.

First of all, When Byomkesh Bakshi is consulted by Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel (1875-1950), an important Indian freedom fighter and the first deputy prime minister of independent India, in "Aadim Ripu", he becomes a part of the nationalist elite, where as stories like "The Gramophone Pin Mystery" and "Where There's a Will" testify to his rapport with the colonial administrators. However, in spite of his political connections, the inquisitor never exhibits any inclination to rule the newly-independent India.

Second, Saradindu Bandyopadhyay evades descriptions of influence of the former colonial administration in shaping up the legislature, executive and judiciary of post-independence India or how Bakshi grew out of an *adaptation* of English detective fiction. To reiterate, no Bakshi story written in pre-independence India directly depict or deal with British characters.

Finally, Bandyopadhyay identifiably does not deal in his detective stories with economic disparities among the different Indian social classes and maintains a complete silence on the different social injustices like suppression of Indian women on domestic front, trafficking, prostitution, arbitrary arrests, corruption among the administrative officials, and patronisation of criminals by higher authorities. Bakshi does not reflect on the economically underprivileged condition of rural and semi-urban Bengal, and, significantly, most of his clients belong to the middle-class.

The picture of post-independence India presented in stories like “Bonhi Patango” and “Rakter Daag” includes murders but no instance of anarchy, mass-movement, mass-extermination or violent class struggle. This particular characteristic feature of the Bakshi narratives conforms to Chatterjee’s observation that the new national state, after its establishment, is not ruled by the romantic rebels or prophets, but by pragmatic self-conscious leaders (147). The peasants and urban poor, two important constituting classes of such a state, are irrational and passionate and can be easily manoeuvred. In his detective stories Bandyopadhyay identifiably seeks to include a large number of *urban poor* into Chatterjee’s *clause* of absorbing the *urban poor* and the peasants into the state to be made functional in its development (147). Bikash Dutta, the members of Bhuteshwar’s Wrestling Club in “Rakter Daag”, the young peasants – Patal, Gopal and Bishnu – of Shantalgola in “Amriter Mrityu”, and the labourers of Manish Chakroborty’s coal mines in “Kahen Kabi Kalidas” are some of the *urban poor* people and peasants who are absorbed as participants in the post-independence Indian society:

Bikash becomes an associate of Bakshi, Bhuteshwar's club members seek to purge society of the sexual attentions of such psychological criminals as Satyakam Das, the Shantalgola peasants participate in the investigation into Amrita's death, and it might be assumed that in the absence of Gobindo Halder's manoeuvrings, Manish Chakroborty's labourers would work efficiently and contribute to the development of his business.

In spite of his nationalistic sentiments, Bandyopadhyay makes his inquisitor more a Bengali than an Indian and transforms his nationalism into a sort of topicality and regional pride. This is significant in context of Chatterjee's observation that "by transforming nationalism into a regional or state ideology, the postcolonial countries...[and their elites]...subjected themselves to a global process of rationalisation based on external norms, a process governed in the post war years of modernisation and development by the logic of a world system whose type is global capitalism, commanded at the top by the handful of leading industrial countries" (Said, *Culture* 320).

Ashis Nandy, in The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self under Colonialism and "Oppression and Human Liberation: Toward a Post-Gandhian Utopia", analyses the debilitations of colonial encounters by citing references from Foucault's analysis of power. He regards modern colonialism as a sort of crucial historical juncture in which power changes its style and first begins to elaborate the strategies of profusion. Doyle's implicit colonialism in his Sherlock Holmes stories also changes its style accordingly. Starting with an English surgeon's elaboration of his

suffering at the hands of the Afghan natives in A Study in Scarlet, the representation of colonial power is transferred to Sherlock Holmes, the Orientalist man-of-science, with his arrival in the eighty-second line, and he thereafter elaborates the various strategies for controlling the natives in The Sign of Four.

Of the two genres of colonialism Nandy describes in The Intimate Enemy – the “bandit mode” and the “mind-and-culture occupying mode” – Doyle identifiably exhibits the second mode in his detective narratives (Gandhi 15). Through the Holmes canon Doyle puts forward the argument that “imperialism was really the messianic harbinger of civilization to the uncivilized world” (15). Only after the arrival of the disciplining coloniser Jonathan Small does the cannibalistic Tonga change into a “staunch and true...faithful mate” (Doyle, *The Complete* 91); in A Study in Scarlet the Christian John Ferrier practises the predominantly colonisers’ faith among the formerly-colonised society of the Mormons and Doyle implies that they should be converted to Ferrier’s religion in order to become civilized; Daulat Ras, who escapes the excesses of colonial disciplining in India by being in the imperial centre himself, behaves suspiciously in “The Adventure of the Three Students”, thus symbolically attesting the erroneous Orientalist conception of the Oriental ambiguity.

In spite of the compartmentalisation of militaristic and cultural imperialisms, Nandy points out how colonialism enacts a separate kind of violence by postulating the colonised as negative or inverse image of the coloniser. He writes,

“[The]...colonialism... [that seeks to project Europe as the locus of civilization by emptying the colonised world of its meaning]...colonises minds [that is, it leads to bondage through psychological manipulation of the native] in addition to bodies and it releases forces within colonised societies [like that of India and the African countries] to alter their cultural priorities once and for all. In the process, it helps to generalise the concept of the modern West from a geographical and temporal entity to a psychological category. The West [as represented by Holmes through the characters of Holmes and Watson] is now everywhere, within the West and outside, in structures and in minds” (*The Intimate* xi).

That is why in spite of his and, in turn, Holmes’s nearly-obsessive interest in the Orient, and particularly India, Doyle has presented only three Indians as having separate existence – the “Hindu servant, clad in a yellow turban, white, loose-fitting clothes, and a yellow sash” and Tonga in The Sign of Four, and Daulat Ras in “The Adventure of the Three Students”. Readers find only these three Indians in direct action and existence. It is important that none of them are important representatives of the Indian culture – the Hindu being a servant, Tonga a cannibalistic Andaman native and Ras an unimportant Indian student subsumed in the disciplining influence of Britain’s educational institutes. The other Orientals like Dost Akbar and Abdullah Khan appear in narratives by colonisers within the Sherlock Holmes stories. Their cultures have not been defined and their individualities have been effaced.

Doyle's narratives also cater to Hegel's theorem that human beings acquire identity or self-consciousness only through the recognition of others (Hegel 175-88). Holmes's imperial identity is not recognised only by Watson alone but also by members of England's contemporary or former colonies like Jefferson Hope, Birdy Edwards, Tonga and Daulat Ras or by those who have prolonged association with the Orient like Dr. Grimesby Roylott. Holmes's relationship with the representatives of England's former and contemporary colonies can be defined by the Hegelian "master-slave relationship" where the master, that is, Holmes, is recognisable through his knowledge, physical power and efficiency, while the slave or the Oriental becomes a dependent 'thing'. To exemplify, Steve Dixie is overpowered by Holmes's cold, threatening attitude in "The Adventure of the Three Gables" (Doyle, *The Complete* 1051).

Nandy also indicates that colonial discourses, that include Doyle's narratives, rationalise themselves through rigid oppositions such as maturity/immaturity, civilization/barbarism, developed/underdeveloped, and that the colonial literature puts particular stress on identifying the state of being colonised with childhood (Gandhi 32). In The Sign of Four, Jonathan Small attributes to Tonga the qualities of a child by describing him as "little", "hanging about my hut", "young" and describing that he "took him in hand" (Doyle, *The Complete* 91). Similarly, Holmes pits his thoughtful approach against the immaturity of Dixie's passionate attack in "The Adventure of the Three Gables", his civilized behaviour against the uncivilized manners of Grimesby Roylott in "The Adventure of the Speckled Band", his matured judgment of

the human nature against Daulat Ras's suspicion of Europeans in "The Adventure of the Three Students", and his mechanise revolver against Tonga's primitive dart-thrower in The Sign of Four.

On the other hand, Byomkesh Bakshi might be identified as a representative of what Nandy describes as "non-players" (*The Intimate* xiv). Bakshi is the non-Westerner who is able to live with the *alternative* West constructed by the subaltern-metropolis of Calcutta and the methodology of the Eurocentric detectives adapted to an Indian climate, atmosphere and context, "while resisting the loving embrace of the West's dominant self" (xiv).

In "Oppression and Human Liberation: Toward a post-Gandhian Utopia" Ashis Nandy suggests that the "post-national ethic" must begin by "recognising the oppressed or marginalized selves of the first and second world as civilisational allies in the battle against institutionalised suffering" (*Oppression* 348). The boundaries between the colonial victors like Holmes and the colonised individuals like Byomkesh Bakshi might be replaced by a recognition of continuity between the coloniser and the dominated, but such a recognition would not only deconstruct the identity of Holmes as a coloniser but also would result in de-recognition of Bakshi as intelligent and efficient subaltern-investigator. Nandy's "post-national ethic" cannot be therefore conformed to for preserving the separate identities of Holmes and Bakshi.

In The Intimate Enemy Nandy has gone on to theorise

the emergence of a protest against the colonial cult of masculinity. He writes:

“Colonialism...was congruent with the existing Western sexual stereotypes and the philosophy of life which they represented. It produced a cultural consensus in which political and socio-economical dominance symbolized the dominance of men and masculinity over women and femininity” (*The Intimate* 4).

In the Byomkesh Bakshi stories different women like the inquisitor’s wife Satyabati, Mohini – whose brings about the death of Pranhari Poddar in “Kahen Kabi Kalidas”, Shiuly Mazumdar – whose impending marriage to Anadi Haldar forces Probhat to murder him in “Aadim Ripu”, and Shakuntala Singh – whose kills Deep Narayan Singh in “Bonhi Patango” play vital roles and, therefore, might be cited as instances of the litterateur’s protest against the male colonial discourse.

In his criticism Ranajit Guha repeatedly stresses the lack of harmony between the West and its overseas colonies. Even in the absence of direct political control, economic control and cultural hegemony of the colonisers help to prolong and sustain the colonised individuals’ sense of being ruled. In context of Guha’s problematics of continuity and discontinuity expressed in *A Rule of Property*, it is impossible that Saradindu Bandyopadhyay would be able to study the Indian past as radically affected by British power not in the abstract but concretely

because as an Indian his origin, upbringing and familial background depended historically on the power of the colonisers such as abstraction requires and appropriates not only people but also geography (Said, *Culture* 306). As imperialists the British settlers felt that their task in India was to solve “the problem of sovereignty in Bengal” in favour of the British Crown (Guha, *A Rule* 145), and Holmes’s notion of the British rule in India is chiefly concerned with the site and the incident of the Indian Sepoy Mutiny in The Sign of Four. Against this Guha suggests the dismantling of imperial historiography in Europe itself – the “aboriginal site of the colonisers’ greatest security, longevity and authority” (Said, *Culture* 306). Byomkesh Bakshi dismantles imperial historiography in two ways – by negating the total history of the British rule in India through non-mentioning, and by using the very methodology of investigation adapted from imperial-detectives like Holmes and Father Brown in a totally Indianised atmosphere, thus challenging the uniqueness of European detective fiction that thrives in the security of European climate, atmosphere and context. To Guha, the control of the colonised individuals by the colonisers is continuous and devastating, and therefore, in extension, the description of how continuity is established between the Eurocentric detective fiction and its peripheral Bengali detective fiction of the colony is an impossibility.

In “Can the Subaltern Speak?”, Gayatri Chakravorty-Spivak questions the issue of representation of the oppressed subject, thus drawing attention to the complicated relationship between the knowing investigator and the (un)knowing subject of subaltern histories. In her essay she points out the major differences between “representation” and “representability”, and in extension, to the

ambivalence of postcolonial investigation (Gandhi 2). It follows from her essay that Byomkesh Bakshi cannot depict himself as a representative of the Indian subaltern without assuming authority in the process. It also becomes problematic to precisely identify which subaltern class does he represent, and whether he is a true representative of the Indian subaltern at all.

In context of McLeod's definition that "subaltern...are those who did not comprise the colonial elite – such as the lesser rural gentry, impoverished landlords, rich peasants and upper-middle class peasants", Bakshi is a subaltern (191). But Chakravorty-Spivak points out that according to poststructuralists like Foucault and Gilles Deleuze, human consciousness is constituted *discursively* and that "...the oppressed, if given the chance ...and on the way to solidarity through alliance politics... can speak and know their condition" (*Can the Subaltern* 25). Because the subaltern subjectivity is constituted by the shifting discourses of power that endlessly speak through them, situating them in particular positions and relations, they do not construct their own identities but have them written for them. Bakshi, being a subaltern and a fictional character, has his identity constructed by Bandyopadhyay who is himself a member of the subaltern and has, in turn, his consciousness constructed by the imperialists from positions outside of himself . Because Bandyopadhyay's "consciousness is *not* a transparent representation of the self but an effect of discourse", it becomes problematic that Bakshi would be able to project himself as a *real* and *natural* representative of the subaltern investigators (McLeod 192). Chakravorty-Spivak shows concern about Foucault and Deleuze's assumption that "the...

[White]...intellectuals...[like themselves]...can serve as a transparent medium through which the voices of the oppressed can be represented” (McLeod 192). But because the subaltern is *not* a sovereign subject in control of his consciousness, an Eastern intellectual like Bandyopadhyay cannot be a transparent medium for the presentation of subaltern consciousness. To Chakravorty-Spivak, “subaltern consciousness is fiction, an effect of Western discourse”, and, therefore, retrieval of the voice of a “subaltern subject” from the colonial archives posits a risky “complicity in an essentialist, specifically Western model of centred subjectivity in which *concrete experience* is (mistakenly) preserved” (McLeod 192-3). Chakravorty-Spivak’s observations deny that the voice like that of Bandyopadhyay should be read as credible representation of the subaltern voices that also include other writers of Bengali detective fiction like Priyanath Mukhopadhyay, Kaliprashanna Chattopadhyay, Panchkari De and Dinendra Kumar Ray, because such a reading would inadvertently depend on the Western discourse. On the other hand, if the Byomkesh Bakshi stories are interpreted as having a separate existence as a part of conspicuously Indian literature running parallel to the Eurocentric detective stories, only then can they be assumed as not only faithfully representing detective fiction in colonial and postcolonial India but also offering a more complete and powerful resistance against the hegemony of Western sleuth narratives.

Chakravorty Spivak notes that the representations of “subaltern insurgency” tend to patronise men. She writes,

“Within the effaced itinerary of the subaltern subject, the track of sexual difference is doubly effected ... both, as object of colonialist historiography and as subject of insurgency, the ideological construction of sender keeps the male dominated. If, in the context of colonial production, the subaltern has no history and cannot speak, the subaltern as female is even more deeply in shadow...” (*Can the Subaltern* 28).

To her, the subaltern female exists as the *unrepresentable* in discourse – a shadowy marginalised figure whose speech would be disfigured if any attempt to retrieve her voice is made by the postcolonial critics (McLeod 193). The women characters in the Byomkesh Bakshi narratives identifiably accord with Chakravorty-Spivak’s observations. Although there are different vividly-described female characters like Satyabati, Rajani, Shakuntala Singh and Mohini, it is significant that they are controlled by their respective male counterparts – Byomkesh, Dr. Ghatak, Ratikanta Choudhury and Bhuvan Das, and cannot undertake any important action. They are not granted outdoor mobility and identifiably cannot take any decision independent of the males. They are even denied the power to utter epiphanic words, and their reactions to different instances of crime are unrecorded. The women in Byomkesh Bakshi stories suffer from what Robert Young identifies as the “problem of enunciation” (164). They get written continuously as objects of patriarchy in the patriarchal society of urban Indians, and exist, in accordance with Chakravorty-Spivak’s observations, as shadowy figures on the margins of the patriarchal realms of postcolonial literature.

In The Postcolonial Critic: Interviews, Strategies, Dialogues, Chakravorty-Spivak equates European knowledge and mirage of Western rationality with the economic domination and political hegemony of colonialism, and agrees with Foucault's and Derrida's observations that the very structure of Western rationality is racist and imperialist (7). This can be extended to demonstrate the imperial compatibility of Doyle's Holmes narratives. Contrarily, by successfully making his detective conform to a culture and modes of investigation separate from that of Holmes's, Bandyopadhyay challenges the universal validity of Western culture and epistemology as being the harbingers of the supreme and the most efficient.

Chakravorty-Spivak warns that recent concessions to marginality studies within the first world metropolitan academy serve to identify, confirm, and exclude certain cultural formations as chronically marginal. Because the *third worldism* of postcolonial studies may well perpetuate real social and political oppressions which rely upon rigid distinctions between the *centre* and the *margin*, explicit and continual identification of Byomkesh Bakshi narratives as 'third world literature' may lead to the social oppressions of the other texts belonging to the sub-genre of Bengali detective fiction (*Outside in* 55). Doyle's sleuth narratives collectively being a part of the 'first world literature', the Byomkesh Bakshi stories, according to her credo, may put up a resistance as 'third world literature' only for a certain and limited amount of time. The identification of Bandyopadhyay's detective stories as solely Indian counterparts to and resistance texts against English detective fiction reduces the risk of their turning themselves in social and political oppressions.

Frantz Fanon's postcolonial theories are also relevant in reading the Sherlock Holmes stories as colonial and the Byomkesh Bakshi stories as anti-colonial narratives. The characteristic violence shown by Holmes towards Jefferson Hope in *A Study in Scarlet*, and Tonga in *The Sign of Four*, or that exhibited by Dr. Grimesby Roylott towards his native butler in "The Adventure of the Speckled Band", conform to Fanon's assertion that "colonisation cannot be understood without the possibility of torturing, of violation, or of massacring" (*Toward the* 66).

Holmes's penchant for disguising himself has been exemplified in different Sherlock Holmes narratives. He impersonates a "drunken looking groom, ill-kempt and side-whiskered, with an inflamed face and disreputable clothes" and an "amiable and simple-minded Nonconformist clergyman" in "A Scandal in Bohemia" (Doyle, *The Complete* 103,106), as a "thin, wrinkled old man" in "The Man with the Twisted Lips"(168), a "venerable Italian priest" in "The Adventure of the Final Problem" (420), an "unshaven French ouvrier" in "The Disappearance of Lady Frances Carfax", (808), and as "a rakish young workman with a goatee beard and a swagger" in "The Adventure of Charles Augustus Milverton" (635). Significantly, with exception in "The Adventure of Charles Augustus Milverton" (637), he never wears a mask. To be masked, according to Fanon, means "to be possessed by the Other, by a force where power and authority transcend the individually human", and by avoiding the mask, Holmes avoids being possessed by the Other (Wyrick 26).

Holmes's constant assertion of his superiority to the Orientals stems from the general consideration of White men as superior to the Black and other colonised individuals (Fanon, *Black Skin* 10). Because "to speak means to assume a culture", Saradindu Bandyopadhyay identifies himself as a subaltern Indian litterateur by speaking through his investigator, and stresses on the insularity and distinctiveness of his own culture from that of the colonisers (*Black Skin* 17). It is also important that though Bandyopadhyay created the character of Bakshi after the inspiration of Doyle, Christie and Chesterton, he writes in his own subaltern language his own language because the subaltern's mastery of the colonisers' language might increase his acceptability by the White Westerners, but it alienates him from his root culture, erasing the cultural memories, and causing his dislocation from the colonised individual's community (Wyrick 32-3).

Fanon has described in details how the Eurocentric literatures like that of Doyle stereotype and belittle the colonised individuals through the processes of *infantilisation*, *primitivisation*, *decivilisation* and *essentialisation*. In colonial literature the subaltern is ever "the eternal victim of an essence, of an appearance for which he is not responsible" (*Black Skin* 35). The presentation of Tonga as cannibalistic native, of Daulat Ras as the suspicious Indian, of Steve Dixie as the adamant and unintelligent rogue and of the swamp adder as a symbol of the polarity and incompatibility of the East and the West are instances of Doyle's stereotyping of the Orient.

Sherlock Holmes's insistence on rationality stems from his psychosis of the pre-determined, unreal categories of the subjugated countries and races. According to Fanon, "For a man whose only weapon is reason there is nothing more neurotic than contact with the unreason..." (*Black Skin* 118). To a coloniser like Holmes, the subaltern is not only irrational but also possesses within him all the negative qualities – he is "an animal", "bad", "mean" and "ugly" (113-4). The White man's "racial epidermalschema" shatters the coloured subaltern into a triple person: a body, a race and a history (112). To Holmes, Tonga is a man of black body from a cannibalistic race that requires discipline and has no well-defined cultural history, and is therefore, fit to be colonised. Roylott's brutal treatment of his native butler in "The Adventure of the Speckled Band" is, therefore, not criticised when he returns to Britain.

Fanon distinguishes the differences of treatment that the colonised individuals receive from the colonisers on basis of their complexion. The Jews, being White, are compelled to internalise the stereotypes others have of them, even if only to combat them. They become, in process, "overdetermined from within". On the other hand, the Black and brown-complexioned Afro-Asians are the victims of the ideas others have of them as well as of their own appearance. That is why Holmes's reaction at the appearance of Steve Dixie in "The Adventure of the Three Gables" is somewhat more dismissive than his towards Jefferson Hope in *A Study in Scarlet* or Abe Slaney in "The Adventure of the Dancing Men".

A reversal of the racist stereotypes by assigning positive instead of the negative values to the colonised populace is an impossibility to Fanon. In Eurocentric literature the colonised individuals are always consigned to a static cultural childhood and the idea that the “Negroes...[and the other Eastern subaltern are]... backward and simple” is constantly reinforced (*Black Skin* 126).

Holmes’s constant assertion of his being a British is significant because to Fanon, race is never a “minor term”. Drawing on Fanon, Wyrick observes, “A society without class is possible, but not one without race. And the raciality is achieved only with each race ‘disalienating’ itself, thereby giving rise to racist formations” (Wyrick 41). In his making the investigator a practicing member an imperial race, Doyle subconsciously adheres to him a racial prejudice even against the general the non-British Whites.

None of the representatives of the Oriental subaltern populace presented in Sherlock Holmes narratives – be it Mahomet Singh or Tonga in The Sign of Four or Daulat Ras of “The Adventure of the Three Students” – possesses his female counterpart. Importantly, they never show any sexual attraction for the White females. To Fanon, an independent sexual pathology of the subaltern is non-existent, and sexual relationships between the Easterners and the Westerners are instances of abnormal behaviour (Wyrick 46). In spite of all their racial prejudices Doyle’s texts do not attribute any abnormal sexuality to the subaltern, although he always keeps the European women the Eastern males apart from one another. To White litterateurs like Doyle, the dark-

complexioned subaltern males symbolise repressed sexuality, and the White women characteristically invest black men with the aggressive sexuality they have been taught to abhor. Fanon writes,

“The civilized White man retains an irrational longing for unusual eras of sexual licence...projecting his own desires onto the Negro...[and other dark-complexioned subaltern males]...[.]...the White man behaves ‘as if’ the Negro... [and the other Easterners]...really had them” (*Black Skin* 165).

There is an obtrusive difference between the ways Sherlock Holmes and Byomkesh Bakshi dress themselves. Being a European, Holmes dresses himself in formal or elaborate suits, ulsters and caps, and smokes pipes. On the other hand, the Indian inquisitor uses dhoti and punjabee. Because “throughout the world, clothes signify gender, wealth and status; they express individual personality, group expectations, and social conventions”, the distinction between Sherlock Holmes the coloniser and Byomkesh Bakshi the colonised is made conspicuous through their dresses (Wyrick 68). In *A Dying Colonialism*, the traditional Algerian woman’s dress with the *haik* or the body veil becomes “a battleground for colonial and anti colonial ideology” to Fanon (Wyrick 68). Thus Byomkesh’s dress becomes a mark of his anti-colonial sentiment. Similarly the elaborate Indian saree of Satyabati grants her insularity from the “colonial fantasy of the harem” (*Dying* 46). With her elaborate drapery, she offers a

resistance to the “dream of colonisation: the colonised willingly offering up their treasures, asking to be taken” (Wyrick 69).

Fanon has also noted in The Dying Colonialism that the colonisers’ conceive the colony as a fertile female. Wyrick observes,

“In colonial discourse and individual fantasy, the land-to-be-taken is conceived as female, passive, potentially fertile, the ‘natural’ object of forceful masculine desire” (70).

In the Sherlock Holmes stories, the Orient perceptively appears not only as a female but also as a land of sensuality and fertility fit to be dominated and enjoyed. Doyle’s general avoidance of mentioning the Oriental woman out of his concern with etiquette and Victorian prudery is substituted with his very wholesome notion of the total Orient as the female. His nearly-obsessive attraction for the Orient might also be interpreted in context of this particular Fanonian observation.

In the world of Holmes and Bakshi, the initiative of the coloniser to deconstruct the difference created by the colonised individuals’ dress becomes the counter-initiative of the colonised to maintain the traditional dress code even more stringently. Fanon explains, “To the colonialist offence against the veil, the colonised opposes the cult of the veil” (*Dying* 47). Against the traditional European

formal suit, Byomkesh Bakshi's dhoti and punjabee become important anti-colonial symbols.

Fanon has also an explanation for the reason why science and technology never find detailed focus in the anti-colonial texts. It is significant that against Holmes's magnifying glass, revolver and different chemicals for conducting experiments at the laboratory, Bakshi seldom uses a gun and always depends upon psychoanalytical approach during investigation. Objects, gadgets, and technology are never values free in a colonial situation. To the resisting subaltern, the colonial gadgets and technology offer a "daily invitation [to the colonised who are tempted to use them] not to go native" (*Dying* 71). Exemplifying the instance of the pre-independence native Algerians' aversion to radio, a gadget imported by the French imperialists, Fanon describes, "Switching on the radio meant [to the Algerians] giving asylum to the occupier's words; it meant allowing the coloniser's language to filter into the very heart of the home, the last of the supreme bastions of the national spirit" (*Dying* 92). In the ambivalent postcolonial world, Byomkesh Bakshi may use the electric fan and the telephone to ease his daily life, but he exhibits a general aversion towards gadget-oriented approach to crime detection.

Watson, the English physician, can be demonstrated as a practicing coloniser in context of the Fanonian observation, "The doctor who is killed in Algeria...is always a war criminal" (*A Dying* 135). Fanon analyses the role of the colonial doctors in torturing prisoners, betraying the subaltern patients to colonial

authorities and in withholding medical supplies. He points out that “the colonizing doctor adopts the attitude of his group toward the struggle of the...[colonised]...people” (*Dying* 133). The medical practice of Eurocentric physicians like Watson is saturated with racism and profiteering where the non-European patients are treated with contempt and brutality. Watson’s being a physician does not certify to him any sort of apolitical humanitarian essence. In his practice and constant assertion of prejudice, Watson becomes more a “colonial interloper”. Wyrick observes,

“For Fanon, Western medicine is an integral part of the oppressive colonial situation. Along with other forms of science and technology, it lends a surgically gloved hand to the iron fist of military and economic domination. Despite its capacity to make...[the colonised people’s life] ...better, European medicine is understandably perceived by subject people as yet another form of conquest” (91).

Against the White physicians of Holmes narratives – like Watson himself, Grimesby Roylott of “The Adventure of the Speckled Band”. Percy Trevelyan of “The Adventure of the Resident Patient”. James Mortimer of The Hound of the Baskervilles, Culverton Smith of “The Adventure of the Dying Detective” and James Saunders of “The Adventure of the Blanched Soldier”. Bandyopadhyay pits the Indian ones – Mohan of “Makarshar Rash”, Rudra of “Agniban”, Ashwini Ghatak of “Chitrochor”, Bhujangadhar Das of “Chiriakhana” and Asim Sen of “Khunji Khunji Nari”. The subaltern doctors assumed importance during the anti-colonial wars. At their

hands the Western medicines “take on a new value. These medications [that is, the components of Western medicine – penicillin, sterile dressings, anaesthetics], which were taken for granted before the struggle for liberation [of the colonised] were transformed into weapons” (Fanon, *Dying* 140-1). The “native” doctor, who was seen as a colonial agent before the colonies’ war of liberation of the colonies started, is “reintegrated into the group...[of the struggling colonised]...during the anti colonial resistance” (142).

That Byomkesh belongs to the middle class is also significant because Fanon considers that true liberation of the colonised individuals from the colonisers is possible only when the impoverished and the middle class individuals are involved. In The Wretched of the Earth, he underscores the need for thinking, planning and acting to build up an anti-colonial nation “from the bottom up” because “the revolutionary struggle is based on the heroic aspirations of the common people” (*The Wretched* 35). Thus Byomkesh Bakshi’s importance as an anti-colonial subaltern increases manifold because he belongs to the middle class.

To Fanon, “the nation-state is the crucial political unit” (Wyrick 104). Young describes the nation as:

“a kind of cooperation...the border that allows other nations to recognise it as a nation, to send its representatives there, so that it can participate in the global community of nations...[;]...[it is a]...community without communal values” (60).

To become a nation the people should not only resemble each other as closely as possible but should also speak a common language (Young 60). In order to stress the importance of post-independence India as a distinct nation, Bandyopadhyay has made his principal protagonists practicing Hindus while simultaneously imbibed the non-Bengalis like Bhuvaneshwar Das of “Kahen Kabi Kalidas”, and Deep Narayan Singh and Purandar Pandey of “Bonhi Patango” with general Bengali traits and language.

Byomkesh Bakshi’s Calcutta as well as Jonathan Small’s Agra have been divided into ‘Western’ zones consisting of well-built, brightly-lit areas resided in by the British imperialist, and the dirty, ramshackle, native zones. The Agra Fort with its distinctive “modern part” and “old quarter” in The Sign of Four might be cited as one of the examples (Doyle, *The Complete* 86). Similarly, the delta-shaped seedy, deserted *pally*-region of pre-independence Calcutta in “Satyanweshi” has been projected against the aristocratic southern-Calcutta locality where Sir Dwigendranarayan, an imperial collaborator, resides in “Shimonto Heera” (Bandyopadhyay, *Byomkesh* 77). Fanon notes that “the colonial world is divided into compartments” (*The Wretched* 27). The two faces of colonial Calcutta, therefore, acquire a colonial connotation.

Byomkesh Bakshi’s identity as a middle-class individual as distinct from the bourgeoisie and the mercantile classes assumes significance in Fanon’s indictment of the bourgeoisie for its being morally and intellectually despicable.

Underscoring the importance of the middle-class individuals in national struggle and indicting the bourgeoisie and the merchants, Fanon writes,

“Neither financiers nor industrial magnets are to be found within this national middle class. The national bourgeoisie of underdeveloped countries is not engaged in production, not in invention as building, nor labour; it is completely canalised into activities of the intermediary type. Its innermost vocation seems to be part of the racket” (*The Wretched* 150).

That Bakshi has no relation to the mercantile society, his father being a schoolteacher and mother a housewife, helps in his retaining importance as an anti-colonial resistor (Bandyopadhyay, *Byomkesh* 434).

Fanon stresses that the native intellectuals like physicians, engineers, litterateurs, artists and teachers – a group to which Bandyopadhyay belongs – should “throw...[themselves]...body and soul into the national struggle” and not act like adopted children of the colonisers, by “greedily...[trying]...to make Western culture their own” (*The Wretched* 233, 218). After re-educating themselves and intimidating fetishization by Western cultures, the subaltern intellectuals must educate the common people because “everything depends on them” (197). Bandyopadhyay assumes a special significance in the postcolonial India as the litterateur who can resist and teach commoners to participate in anti-imperial resistances. As an artist he works in three stages, thus according in turn with the qualities that Fanon finds indispensable in an

anti-colonial subaltern artist (Wyrick 142). He first successfully imitates and thereby distorts the Western conventions of detective fiction to prove that as a native intellectual he is as smart and talented as the Europeans litterateurs. Second, he glorifies the traditional Indian styles of composing fiction and in stories like “Durgo Rahoshyo”, deals with themes of India’s heritage to put the Indian culture at par with the Western ones. And third, by making the hero of his stories a Bengali middle-class individual, he inspires the subaltern into discerning a national hero in Bakshi and induces in them an urge to be intellectually efficient as the Indian detective.

It is important that like Doyle, Sherlock Holmes is not an Englishman. Doyle was born at Edinburgh in Scotland to Irish Catholic parents – Charles Altamont Doyle and Mary Foley. According to Leslie S. Klinger, the full name of the British investigator is William Sherlock Scott Holmes which includes an identifiable Scottish element ³. On the other hand, Duncan MacDougald Jr., identifies “Sherlock” to be Irish in origin (Baring-Gould, *The Annotated I* 10). Doyle subsumes the detective in his imperial ideology when he depicts Holmes as asserting himself as a patriotic Briton by inscribing “V.R” or *Victoria Regina* on the drawing room wall in “The Adventure of the Musgrave Ritual” (Doyle, *The Complete* 334). Both “Sherlock” and “Holmes” are not common British name or surname and do not indicate the proper nationality of the investigator. With the ambivalence of his nationality the imperial investigator himself becomes a hybrid character. On the other hand, in spite of being an Indian, Bakshi frequently uses English words in his dialogues, and smokes cheroots in “The Gramophone Pin Mystery” (Bandyopadhyay, *Picture* 45), cigarettes in “Picture

Imperfect" (233) and hookah in "Achin Pakhi" (*Byomkesh* 661). He also exhibits preference for European food that includes cutlets, eggs and tea stored in thermo flasks in "Chorabalee" (131). He has been educated according to the European standards, maintains a European punctuality and adheres to Eurocentric codes of chivalry even when he wears dhoti-punjabee all the time. With the juxtaposition of European and Indian behavioural features Byomkesh Bakshi is also a hybridised character.

Bakshi's adherence to the European customs like smoking cheroot, maintenance of punctuality, food habit and usage of Western gadgets might be cited as instances of what Bhabha indicates by "colonial mimicry". They indicate those colonial meanings and identities which are "almost the same, but not quite" and designate the ethical gap between the normative vision of post-Enlightenment civility and their distorted colonial (mis)imitations (Bhabha, *The Location* 86). Bhabha observes,

"Between the Western sign and its colonial signification there emerges a map of misreading that embarrasses the righteousness of recordation and its certainty of good government" (*The Location* 95).

In his mimicry of the European standards of living Bakshi systematically misrepresents the foundational assumptions of colonial discourses like the Sherlock Holmes stories by articulating them "syntagmatically with a range of differential knowledge and personalities that both estrange...[their]... 'identity' and produce new forms of knowledge, new modes of differentiation, new sites of power" (*The Location* 120).

Bakshi's power of psychoanalysis is different from the empirical power of Holmes's investigation. His knowledge of the Indian mind, demeanour, social system, and mythology differs from Holmes's encyclopaedic knowledge ranging from Stradivarius violins, including the Buddhism of Ceylon, to the warships of the future that significantly excludes a psychoanalytical approach (Doyle, *The Complete* 79). Even if Byomkesh follows different European customs and uses English words and phrases in his dialogues, he uses them sparingly only to sustain his vernacular that has been mixed with the colonial vocabulary as a result of prolonged imperial rule and uses Western technology for easing his domestic life in Calcutta. This exemplifies how Bakshi's mimicry inaugurates the process of anti colonial self-differentiation through the logic of inappropriate appropriation.

To Bhabha, the simple presence of the colonised Other within the textual structure of different Eurocentric texts is enough evidence of the ambivalence of the colonial text. Such an ambivalence destabilises the claim of the colonial narratives like the Sherlock Holmes stories for absolute authority or unquestionable authenticity. That is why stories like The Sign of Four, "The Adventure of the Three Students" and "The Adventure of the Three Gables" lose their power to represent racial purity of the colonisers. Because the "colonial presence is always ambivalent" and, therefore, hybridised, Bhabha observes that "hybridity is a problematic of colonial representation and individuation that reverses the effects of the colonialist disavowal, so that other 'denied' knowledges enter upon the dominant discourse and estrange the basis of its authority...its rule of recognition" (*The Location* 107,114). He

describes this “partialising process of hybridity” as a “metonymy of presence” (*The Location* 115). Therefore the presence of Afro-Asian natives in *The Sign of Four*, “The Adventure of the Three Students” and “The Adventure of the Three Gables” exemplifies the hybridity of the Sherlock Holmes stories.

Doyle has not only creates stereotypes out of the subaltern characters like the savage Tonga, the suspicious Daulat Ras, and the undependable Abdullah Khan and Mahomet Singh and the swamp adder but also jokes about their desire to be ruled. Tonga’s relationship with Small who treats him as a “young snake” and takes him around for exhibition, and Mahomet Singh’s reposing faith in him become ironically comical. Holmes’s mistrust of Daulat Ras because he is an Indian and Small’s trust in Tonga in spite of his being a native are as contradictory as Small’s sense of ownership of the Agra treasure and his wavering between the conception of the Orient as the land of treasures and lethal enteric diseases. Bhabha terms this ‘displacement’ of the Empire and colonised individuals’ value by imperial litterateurs like Doyle as “colonial doubling”. He writes,

“Colonial doubling...is...a strategic displacement of value through a process of metonymy of presence. It is through this partial process, represented in its enigmatic, inappropriate signifiers – stereotypes, jokes, multiple and contradictory belief, the ‘native’ Bible – that we begin to get a sense of a specific space of cultural colonial discourse. It is a separate space, a space of separation – less than one and double – which has been

systematically denied by both colonialists and nationalists who have sought authority in authenticity of *origins*" (*The Location* 120).

In the Byomkesh Bakshi narratives can be discerned "the emergence of a radically protean political entity at the moment of anti colonial insurgency" through Indian literature (Gandhi 130). The indeterminate zone or 'place of hybridity' that bridges the polarity of the coloniser and the colonised is characterised by communication, negotiation and translation. Though Byomkesh Bakshi has been constructed as a subaltern investigator to resist the supremacy of the English detectives like Sherlock Holmes and Father Brown, Bandyopadhyay registers his anti-colonial resistance not by direct *collision* but by literary and cultural *collusion* – first by adapting himself to the Eurocentric culture and thereafter creating a world necessarily without the imperialists. His communication of the creation of an efficient subaltern investigator to readers habituated with reading Eurocentric detective novels by the English litterateurs like Doyle, Christie and Chesterton gains significance in this context. Anti-colonial politics begins to articulate its agenda in the "place of hybridity", and "the construction of a political object that is new...properly alienates...[the colonised individuals'] ...political expectations and changes...the very forms of...[the subaltern's]...recognition of the moment of politics" (Bhabha, *The Location* 25). Though Bakshi is a fictional character, he becomes a 'political object' by incorporating within himself the voice, reaction and resistance of the Indians against the British colonial occupation.

According to Robert J.C. Young, hybridity:

“involves processes of interaction that create new social spaces to which new meanings are given. These relations enable the articulation of experiences of change in societies splintered by modernity, and they facilitate consequent demands for social transformations” (79).

The hybridised character of Byomkesh Bakshi offers a creative space of articulation and demand, revolt and resistance, and innovation and negotiation for many of the contradictory social channels operating and developing within the Bengali society in late pre-independence and early post-independence India.

It follows from Bhabha that Bakshi’s maintenance of a pure Bengali culture separate from that of the Eurocentric one of Sherlock Holmes would be an impossibility because cultures are not “holistic, separated and static with pre-given cultural contents and customs” (*The Location* 34). McLeod regards cultures as porous and always leaking into each other and crisscrossing supposed barriers (McLeod 228). Bakshi’s smoking of cheroot, frequent usage of English words and preference for European food are examples of his cross-cultural identity.

While constructing his detective Saradindu Bandyopadhyay has cautiously avoided dealing with the history of the Indian detective fiction and of the Indian themselves, with the exception of the pre-independence Hindu-Muslim riots in “Aadim Ripu”. According to Bhabha, “The present of people’s history ... is a practice

that destroys the constant principles of the nation culture that attempt to hark back to a 'true' national past, which is often represented in the reified forms of realism and stereotype" (*Nation* 303). By avoiding depiction of the Indian history and by not allowing history to become the background for his stories other than "Durgu Rahoshyo", Bandyopadhyay symbolically preserves the national culture of the Indian readership.

Bhabha emphasises that the idea of the nation, the language of those who write of it and the lives of those who live in it are ambivalent (*Nation* 1). It is therefore natural that Sherlock Holmes who lives in the imperial Britain and speaks the colonial language of English would be as ambivalent as the subaltern, Bengali-speaking character of Byomkesh Bakshi. The cultural dissemination is, however, more pronounced in Bandyopadhyay's sleuth stories than in Doyle's detective narratives because of the British author's maintenance of the insularity and uniqueness of his investigator as Britain's representative.

In the conclusion, it requires mention that Doyle's description of the British weather in stories such as "The Adventure of the Cardboard Box" (*The Complete* 287), "The Adventure of Charles Augustus Milverton" (632), "The Adventure of the Six Napoleons" (645), "The Adventure of the Golden Pince-Nez" (671) and "The Adventure of the Missing Three-Quarter" (687) finds relevance in Bhabha's equating England's weather with the "most changeable and immanent signs of national difference" (*Nation* 319). It encourages within Doyle:

“[the] memories of the ‘deep’ nation crafted in chalk and limestone; the quilted down; the moors menaced by the wind; the quiet cathedral towns; that corner of a foreign field that is forever England. The English weather also revives memories of its daemonic double: the heat and dust of India; the dark emptiness of Africa; the tropical chaos that was deemed despotic and ungovernable and therefore worthy of civilizing mission” (*Nation* 319).

Doyle’s projection of Sherlock Holmes as a representative of the British imperial power is thus reinforced by his presentation of the English weather.

NOTES:

1. Klinger, Leslie S. “Life and Times of Mr. Sherlock Holmes, John H. Watson, M.D, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, and Other Notable Personages”. 1 February 2003.
<<http://webpages.charter.net/lklinger/Chrotabl.htm>>
2. Stewart, Nicholas. “A Postcolonial Canonical and Cultural Revision of Conan Doyle’s Holmes Narratives”. 3 February 2003.
<http://www.qub.ac.uk/english/imperial/india/conan_doyle.htm>
3. Klinger, Leslie.S. “Life and Times of Mr. Sherlock Holmes, John H. Watson, M.D, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, and Other Notable Personages”. 1 February 2003.
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CHAPTER 3. A.

THE HISTORY OF DETECTIVE FICTION IN INDIA AND ABROAD: ITS MODIFICATION BY ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE AND SARADINDU BANDYOPADHYAY: -

As far as the history of the emanation of detective fiction is concerned, there are contradictory opinions. Literary historians, as Ousby points out, have traced it to the Bible (Daniel, Susanna and the elders) and to the puzzle tales of the Enlightenment like Voltaire's Zadic (1747) where the protagonist, following the method of logical deduction, describes the physical appearance of a horse and a dog he has never seen (*The Wordsworth* 253). Christopher Pittard identifies the *Newgate Calender-s*, first published in 1773, as the precursors of sleuth stories ¹. In contrast, according to Shovan Tarafdar, Aryan literature, written between 1500 B.C and 550 B.C, predates European literature². In this context, Ranojit Chattopadhyay and Siddhartha Ghosh identify the parable of Sarama, the dog that helps gods to track down the *Poni*-group of cattle-snatching dacoits in the 10th *Mandala* of the *Rig Veda* written in 1500 B.C, as the "first detective story of the world" (747). Other examples of primitive detective stories include the 16th Century Italian tale that was translated into French in 1719 by the Chevalier de Mailly, and subsequently into English in 1722 as The Travels and Adventures of Three Princes of Sarendip, Alexandre Dumas's The Three Musketeers and the La Comedie humaine series by Honore de Balzac.

However, the first meticulously recorded and constructed detective story, according to Michael Seidman, Julian Symons and Douglas G. Greene, was written in English by Edgar Allan Poe and, therefore, predates the properly demarcated Indian/Bengali detective fiction³. Significantly, though English detective fiction was not influenced by the sub-genre of any other European language, it influenced the Bengali detective fiction considerably. The Indian litterateurs failed to avoid and isolate themselves from the influence of the language and different literary sub genres of the principal colonisers, and the Bengali detective stories written between 1890 and 1950 mostly reflect this influence.

The ingenuous characteristic features of the English detective fiction that have had served as the model for writers in other languages include the concept of the arm-chair detective, of a third person narrator who is the best friend of the detective but not the detective himself, and the sleuth's employment of many physical and psychological stratagems in detecting criminals.

Seidman, Symons and Greene refer to The Adventures of Caleb William (1794) by William Godwin that deals with an amateur investigator and an efficient police spy, and to Memoires (1828) by Eugene-Francois Vidocq – the Parisian *Surete* chief with criminal antecedents, as being the two important precursors to detective stories. Pittard observes,

“One of the earliest examples of...[detective stories]...were the four volumes of the Memoires of Eugene-Francois Vidocq...published between 1828 and 1829. Vidocq’s position is particularly interesting, as before becoming a detective he had been an infamous forger and prison-breaker, and the role of the detective as halfway between respectable society and the criminal would continue to be developed well into Victoria’s reign”⁴.

Ousby, Seidman, Symons, Greene and Pittard have unanimously pointed out that the clearly demarcated history of European detective fiction started in the 1840s with Edgar Allan Poe (1809-1849) and his fictional detective, C. Auguste Dupin⁵. In the five short narratives, referred to as “tales of ratiocination or reasoning” – “The Murderers in the Rue Morgue” (1841), “The Gold Bug” (1843), “The Mystery of Marie Roget” (1842-3), “Thou Art the Man” (1844) and “The Purloined Letter” (1845) – Poe has had brought the basic ingredients of primitive detective stories together and initiated almost every significant principle used by detective story writers even in the twentieth century.

It can be noted that Poe’s narratives exhibit some important characteristic features that were later to be followed by every writer of English detective fiction of the early twentieth century. First, his detective is a White Christian European who belongs to one of the powerful imperial countries – France. Second, C. Auguste Dupin is brilliant and eccentric, and is accompanied by an “obligingly imperceptive [but once again a White European] friend who narrates the story” (*The Wordsworth* 253). Third, Dupin is, to quote Seidman, Symons and Greene, “abrupt, contemptuous of the police, and more like a reasoning

machine than human being”⁶. In Bloody Murder, Symons writes. “Aristocratic, arrogant, and apparently omniscient, Dupin is what Poe often wished he could have been himself, an emotionless reasoning machine” (39). Fourth, the detective is not in service of any police force, but is what Doyle popularised in his Holmes narratives as “the private investigator”. Fifth, Dupin confronts mystery with a “coherent, though not exclusively scientific methodology of detection, and he produces the solution with a triumphant flourish that both surprises and satisfies the readers” and the same procedure is followed by Holmes and Poirot⁷. Finally, Poe neither vividly describes nor presents any strong female character in the Dupin narratives, an attitude that can be noticed in Doyle.

With the initiation and maintenance of regular police forces along with their detective departments in different European countries including England, France and Germany from the late 1840s onwards, the sub genre of detective fiction came to achieve popularity and readership. Seidman, Symons and Greene cite Diary of an Ex-Detective (1860) and The Lady Detective (c. 1861) as two of the more popular English detective stories of 1850s and 1860s by anonymous writers⁸. William Russell’s Recollections of a Police Officer (1856), Experiences of a French Detective (1861), and Experiences of a Real Detective (1862), Ellen Price’s The Trail of the Serpent (1861), and East Lynne (1864), were also widely read. The in-service detective officials depicted in these short stories and novels were popular enough in colonised India as to inspire Darogar Daftor (1892), the first Bengali detective fiction written by Priyanath Mukhopadhyay, a resident of Calcutta, the contemporary Indian capital.

According to Pittard, the character of Inspector Bucket portrayed in Bleak House (1852) by Charles Dickens (1812-1870) is “the first British literary detective”. He writes,

“With Bucket, Dickens at once created the prototype of the literary detective, and emphasised his uncertain status in society, as the figure who stands halfway between respectable society and criminals (who would, by the end of the nineteenth century, become configured as a race apart). Like Dupin, Bucket has an air of omniscience, and while not quite arrogant, his confrontation of Sir Leicester Dedlock during the course of his investigation is certainly self-assured”⁹.

Great Expectations (1860-1) and The Mystery of the Edwin Drood (1870) point to the *sensation novel* of the 1860s.

The sub genre of the sensation novel matured in Wilkie Collins (1824-1889) and Mary Elizabeth Braddon (1837-1915) – the writer of Three Times Dead (1860) and Lady Audley's Secret (1862). Seidman, Symons and Greene identify Collins as “the...best [writer]...of detective novels”¹⁰. In The Moonstone (1868), which represents a shift towards detective fiction in that the mystery was clearly defined, Collins presents a detailed picture of the rose-loving Sergeant Cuff making convincing logical deductions from the given facts, though there is no murder or a crime of highest magnitude. The Woman in White (1860)

dealing with the investigation of Marian Halcombe and The Law and the Lady (1875) starred by Valeria Woodville are Collins's other sensation novels.

Prior to the appearance of Sherlock Holmes in the late 1880s, Emile Gaboriau (c.1832-1873) of France and Anna Katharine Green (1846-1935) of the United States of America had established their respective fictional investigators, Monsieur Lecoq – “the professional detective”, and Inspector Ebenezer Gryce, respectively, as convincing and apparently real characters through such novels as L'affaire Lerouge (1867), Monsieur Lecoq (1868) and The Leavenworth Case (1878). Gaboriau's The Slaves of Paris (1868) stresses the colonial ideology implicit in the contemporary European sleuth stories. Seidman, Symons and Greene also include, in addition to B.L. Farjeon, Thomas W. Speight and Fergus Hume as “writers of genuine detective novels...of...the mid 1880s” other than Reginald Barrett¹¹. The central character of the White investigator dealing with White criminals particularly of Europe remained the prominent feature of these detective stories, and the Australian publishers turned down Hume's The Mystery of a Hansom Cab (1898) to stress that “no Colonial could write anything worth reading” (Symons 60). All the female characters, like those in Hume's Madame Midas (1888), are also European or American Whites, residing in societies that adhere to the Euro-American social conventions, and even the locale in these stories is urban Europe or America. The detectives are either in-service policeman or share an apparently good rapport with the regular police personnel who alternatively perpetrate the imperial control in contemporary eastern colonies. This relationship of bon homie is broken in the Sherlock Holmes stories where the investigator is openly critical of and ironic about the

abilities and efficiency of the government police and detective forces who often turn situations complex and difficult for the investigating officers through their mutually aggressive rivalry.

Most of the instances of crime dealt with in the pre-Sherlock Holmes stories are not of international ramification. The main action does not involve a large number of countries, and the narratives exhibit a claustrophilic character. The investigating sleuths, in absence of developed gadgets and forensic sciences, depend more on their logical reasoning for identifying criminals. Most importantly, the Western detective story writers prior to 1880 have not had vociferously advocated the expansion of imperial controls in the East – a phenomenon observable in Doyle's Holmes narratives.

Sherlock Holmes differs from the earlier European fictional detectives in not only his dependence more on physical evidences and scientific experiments than on simple logic, but also in his serving as the mouthpiece for expression of Doyle's ideas of the British cultural supremacy and England's prowess as an omnipotent coloniser. Through Holmes Doyle advocates and justifies the British rule of the Orient, particularly India. Moreover, the detective always fortifies and vindicates his deductions with the help of different bio-chemical experiments, and uses his encyclopaedic knowledge, newspapers and reference books to identify and analyse the anti-social personalities and their behavioural traits even before he has come in actual contact with them. His pragmatism, that apparently borders on eccentricity, makes him stab at the carcass of a dead pig with a "barbed-headed spear" in "The Adventure of Black Peter" (620), join a group of opium addicts at an opium den to detect the whereabouts of "an enemy" in "The Man with the Twisted Lip" (169), and minutely analyse

cigars' ashes to decipher the addiction of an initially-unknown assailant in A Study in Scarlet (53). The detective, according to Ousby, incorporates within himself "a strong feeling for the atmosphere of late Victorian and Edwardian London, an interest in the methods of Victorian science...a subtle sense of the macabre, and a chivalric concern for justice and the unjustly oppressed", which preciously point out the author's own ideology, and help Holmes stand out as separate from the other contemporary fictional sleuths (*The Wordsworth* 850).

Through his characterisation of Holmes, Doyle introduces readers to an impartial, mechanical sleuth who, in his demeanour, is more like Dupin: a reasoning machine than a human being. It, however, deserves mention that Dupin does not find plenty of scopes for expressing his emotions during his adventures: he prefers to remain confined to his house and to depend more on permutations-combinations of paraphernalia of the crime to analyse and zero in the criminal without undertaking strenuous outdoor chases. On the contrary, in spite of his statement, "Crime is common. Logic is rare. Therefore it is upon the logic rather than upon the crime that...[the detective]...should dwell" in "The Adventure of the Cooper Beeches" (Doyle, *The Complete* 252), Holmes depends more on rigorous outdoor adventures than on arm-chair logical analysis. In stories like "A Scandal in Bohemia" and "The Adventure of the Mazarin Stone", he takes the help of disguise. Unlike Dupin, Holmes, during most of his adventures, comes across a number of characters, including different beautiful women like Irene Adler in "A Scandal in Bohemia", Violet Smith in "The Adventure of the Solitary Cyclist", and Violent Hunter in "The Adventure of the Copper Beeches" but never betrays his emotions to and about them, or ruminate about his meetings with his female clients. The women in Sherlock Holmes stories, contrary to those in the Lecoq and Dupin narratives,

are conspicuous by their silence and lack of action in spite of their being physically present in most of them.

Again, in contrast with Lecoq or Dupin, Sherlock Holmes deals with crimes of international ramifications. To exemplify, he wages war against trans-Atlantic groups of criminals in The Valley of Fear and “The Adventure of the Final Problem”, detects missing letters lethal enough to start international war in “The Adventure of the Second Stain”, and recovers a confidential international naval treaty in “The Adventure of the Naval Treaty”. His clients are international figures: the King of Bohemia in “A Scandal in Bohemia”, the prime minister of Britain and the Secretary for European Affairs in “The Adventure of the Second Stain”, and a member of the British royal family in “The Adventure of the Illustrious Client”. Significantly, most of these clients are directly or indirectly concerned with the spread of European, and more specifically, British imperialism. Moreover, unlike Dupin’s and Lecoq’s, Holmes’s field of investigation is not bound within England but spread over the United States of America in The Valley of Fear, Tibet, Norway and Persia in “The Adventure of the Empty House” and Switzerland in “The Adventure of the Final Problem”. Doyle thus grants mobility and flexibility to his White imperialist sleuth as far as possible.

The most significant difference that distinguishes Holmes narratives from the other Eurocentric detective stories written before the 1880s concerns the identity and distinctiveness of the criminals. It is important that most of the criminals in the Sherlock Holmes stories – for example, Jefferson Hope of A Study in Scarlet, Jonathan Small and Tonga of The Sign of Four, Grimesby Roylott of “The Adventure of the Speckled Band”,

McGinty of The Valley of Fear, James Calhoun of “The Five Orange Pips”, Sebastian Moran of “The Adventure of the Empty House” and Culverton Smith of “The Adventure of the Dying Detective” – are either residents of or have direct or indirect links with England’s former or contemporary colonies, particularly India and the United States of America. In his detective stories, Doyle, an Orientalist as Edward W. Said identifies him, identifiably implies that guile and crime being intimately and intricately associated with the psychological and cultural constructs of the colonised people, particularly the Orientals, and because stints at the colonies necessarily corrupt the White colonisers, the Westerners have the right to seize colonies and dominate the colonised populace (*Culture* 184). Through the aggressively patriotic and nationalistic character of Holmes, an instance of which exhibited in his bulleting “V.R” or *Victoria Regina* on his drawing room wall in “The Adventure of the Musgrave Ritual” (*The Complete* 334), Doyle underscores the perceived cultural supremacy of England and judges the Orientals like Tonga, Mahomet Singh, Abdullah Khan of The Sign of Four and Daulat Ras of “The Adventure of the Three Students” against the colonisers to highlight the colonised individuals’ perceptively inferior culture, ludicrous dresses, and malignancy. While dealing with a person associated with the Orient, the investigator takes extra precaution but also often tends to patronise him not only to assert his (Holmes’s) own superiority in being a *pure* White European living in Europe, but also to identify himself as a British citizen – a representative of world’s most powerful imperialist country. In contrast, Gaboriau, Collins and Poe have nowhere aggrandised their aggressive Whiteness; nor do they express the perceived cultural and intellectual superiority of their fictional detectives in a manner Doyle does.

Doyle's ingenuousness in and success at creating Holmes influenced Arthur Morrison (1863-1945) to introduce Martin Hewitt in *Strand* in 1894, and Emmuska Orczy (1865-1947) to create 'the Old Man in the Corner' and Lady Molly of Scotland Yard (1910). While the narratives about Hilda Wade and Miss Cayley were serialised in *Strand* by Grant Allen, L.T.Meade wrote about the adventures of "Dr. Clifford Halifax, M.D". Other post-Sherlockian popular detective fiction include the adventure tales of the 'scientific detective' Dr. John Thorndyke written by Richard Austin Freeman (1862-1943) in which readers know every detail of the crime, those of the 'blind detective' Max Carrados by Ernest Bramah, and of the 'members of the detective family' – Paul Beck, Dora Myrl-Beck and young Beck – by M. McDonnell Bodkin.

The most important post-Sherlockian sleuth belonging to what Pittard refers to as "the Golden Age of Detective Fiction", is Father Brown created in 1911 by Gilbert Keith Chesterton (1874-1936)¹². Seidman, Symons and Greene note that though Chesterton's detective stories "contain some of the most ingenious detective puzzles ever devised", they suffer from the defect of being fantastic against the precisely rational Sherlock Holmes stories ¹³. The Innocence of Father Brown (1911), The Wisdom of Father Brown (1914), The Incredulity of Father Brown (1926), The Secret of Father Brown (1927) and The Scandal of Father Brown (1935) present a White English Christian clergyman "as round and dull as a Norfolk dumpling" of mediocre monetary and social status, who reads crime and criminals in a Christian ethnocentric perspective, and attempts to make the criminals submissive through religion (*Merriam Webster's* 179). Though Brown is identifiably English and is an upholder of the religion of the West, he does not vociferously assert his nationality or

advocate British colonialism. Chesterton's art of writing detective fiction profoundly influenced the Indian/Bengali litterateur Saradindu Bandyopadhyay in his creating the character of the Bengali middle-class detective, Byomkesh Bakshi. About the transition between Holmes and the likes of Father Brown, Julian Symons writes,

“In writing about most of Sherlock Holmes's immediate successors one has to make a change of gear. The interest of their work lies in the cleverness with which problems are propounded and solved, rather than in their ability to create characters or to write stories interesting as tales rather than puzzles. The amount of talent at work in this period gives it a good claim to be called the first Golden Age of the crime story, but it should be recognised that the metal is nine-carat quality, whereas the best of Holmes stories are almost pure gold...” (65).

Influenced by Doyle as they were, the early twentieth century Euro-American detective storywriters continued to present their sleuths as being exclusively White and in their stories Orientals continue to invariably have criminal links. These narratives came to unconsciously betray their writers' imperial ideology, and the early twentieth century American sleuth stories exhibit a xenophobic temperament in their protagonists.

Early twentieth century American writers of detective fiction include Jacques Futrelle who created Professor S.F.X Van Deusen – the “uncompromisingly omniscient” detective, Arthur B. Reeve, and Melville Davisson Post

whose detective, Uncle Abner, lives in the pre-Civil War western Virginia, and reads crime and detection in moral terms. Seidman, Symons and Green write,

“The last part of the 19th century was dominated by the fictionalised memoirs of Allan Pinkerton, beginning with The Expressman and the Detective (1874). In 1882, a steady stream of dime-novel detective adventures began appearing, featuring such characters as Old Sleuth, Old King Brady and Nick Carter”¹⁴.

In Uncle Abner, Master of Mysteries (1918), Post created the first coloured detective character in English literature, and has brought about the issue of the intelligent colonised individual in fiction. However an atmosphere of Christian belief and practices subsumes Abner in the dominant group of the colonisers and thus denies him a proper representation as a coloured man and voice. About the early American sleuths, Raymond Chandler writes,

“Their characters lived in a world gone wrong, a world in which, long before the atom bomb, civilisation had created the machinery for its own destruction and was learning to use it with all the moronic delight of a gangster trying out his first machine-gun. The law was something to be manipulated for profit and power. The streets were dark with something more than night”¹⁵.

By creating the character of Raffles, “the amateur cracksman”, E.W.Hornung, Doyle’s brother-in-law, defied his stern observation that the criminal must not

be made a hero. Raffles is a shady figure but possesses within him the snobbery often exhibited by Holmes. To Sukumar Sen, this is an instance of the juxtaposition of the super sleuth and super criminal in a single person for production of a superior detective (9). Arsene Lupin by Maurice Leblanc and Hamilton Cleek by Thomas W. Hanshew are other two fictional investigators of the 1920s with criminal antecedents. Though the Lupin and Raffles narratives differed in the thematic treatment from those of Holmes, the detectives remain essentially the White Eurocentric ones.

With the decline in the sales of the two popular literary magazines, *The Strand Magazine* and *Lippincott's* during the First World War, which Symons relates to the broad socio-economic changes taking place in wake of the War in Bloody Murder: from the Detective Story to the Crime Novel, the British short stories were replaced by detective novels mostly written by women. Mary Roberts Rinehart – the creator of the “Had I known...” school, Carolyn Wells and Marie Belloc Lowndes whose The Lodger (1913) unravels the mysteries of the Jack the Ripper murders begun in London in 1888, belong to this period. The *mystery novels* simultaneously gained prominence, and contemporary writers of this sub genre included A.E.W Mason (the creator of Inspector Hanaud), who wrote At the Villa Rose (1910) and The House of the Arrow (1924), Gaston Leroux, author of the locked room puzzler, The Mystery of the Yellow Room (1909), and E.C. Bentley who, in Trent's Last Case (1913), introduces a sleuth (Philip Trent) who is not a reasoning machine but actually falls in love with the widow of Sigsbee Manderson, thereby expressing humane emotions.

The period between 1918 and 1939, “the Golden Age of Detective Fiction” according to, other than Pittard, Julian Symons, saw the emergence of another Orientalist detective, Hercule Poirot, formerly with the Belgian police department, in the writings of Agatha Christie (1890-1976)¹⁶. Starting with The Mysterious Affairs at Styles (1920), Christie expresses her Orientalist attraction and biasness in Murder on the Orient Express (1934), Ten Little Niggers (1939) and Murder in Mesopotamia, which, while focussing on the murder of Louise Leidner, stresses the impossibility of a harmonious coexistence of the West and the East. The elderly English spinster Miss Marple is another of her popular creations.

Dorothy Sayers (1893-1957), another Golden Age writer, introduced Lord Peter Wimsey – “the dashing young [English] gentleman-scholar whose erudition and native curiosity set[s] him apart from the ordinary detective” – in Whose Body? (1923). Wimsey also appears in novels like The Unpleasantness at the Bellona Club (1928), Strong Poison (1930), The Nine Tailors (1934), and Busman’s Honeymoon (1937).

About Christie’s and Sayer’s narratives, Stephen Knight observes, “[These]...novels are restricted in setting, class and behaviour, realising in a mandarin way the patterns of southern English bourgeois world” (Knight 82). According to Pittard,

“The detective-figures operating within [the] cloistered environment...[of the early twentieth century]...can be seen as closely identified with them

privileged classes. Christie's Miss Marple, for example, in contrast to the militant detective heroines of the more recent crime fiction, is in many respects the embodiment of the sheltered, upper-middle-class English village life; ...Sayer's Lord Peter Wimsey...is a caricature of the English aristocrat conceived with an immensely snobbish, loving seriousness"¹⁷.

Other popular detective characters of the period between 1920 and 1940 include Philo Vance conceived by S.S.Van Dine in 1926, Margery Allingham's Albert Campion (1928 onwards), Inspector French by Freeman Wills Crofts, Ellery Queen's detective of his own name, Anthony Berkeley's Roger Sheringham, Anthony Gethryn by Philip Macdonald, Dr. Gideon Fell and Sir Henry Merivale by John Dickinson Carr, Perry Mason by Erle Stanley Gardner, Roderick Alleyn by Ngaio Marsh, John Appleby by Michael Innes, Nigel Strangeways by Nicholas Blake, and Nero Wolfe by Rex Stout. A.A.Milne's The Red House Mystery (1922), Frances Noyes Hart's The Bellamy Trial (1927) and C.P.Snow's Death under Sail (1932) initially enjoyed wide readership but failed to create lasting detectives.

The fictional detectives of the Golden Age exhibit similar and distinct characteristic features as separate from the other pre-Sherlockian and post-Sherlockian sleuths. First, all the Golden Age detectives are either British or American; but no other European writer could follow and maintain the standards for writing detective fiction as set forth by Leroux and Gaboriau. Second, though most of these detectives had been conceived on lines of Dupin and Holmes, they are not secluded or mechanical, and appear as sympathetic and socially pro-active characters. Even as they analyse, though not in accordance with

Holmes's empirical and deductive procedure, and chase, they exhibit emotions like Trent who marries the suspect in Trent's Last Case. Third, even as these writers exhibit an awareness of the centrality of their position as the privileged Whites, they are not xenophobic – the strain of which can be most noticed in the contemporary American writers; nor do they vociferously advocate Britain's imperial conquests. Fourth, Seidman, Symons and Greene point out that the Golden Age writers took great pains to make their investigators appear real and convincing, and in the process, deceived readers by drawing fantastic maps of the scenes of murder, timetables and segregate lists of clues¹⁸. In The Murder of Roger Ackroyd (1926), Agatha Christie reveals the narrator, Dr. Sheppard, as the real murderer at the end – a literary device first executed. Fifth, the Golden Age detectives are not arrogant and omniscient like Holmes, but are gentlemen created to conform to the public taste and are alterable with changes in readers' mood and opinion. Even when Doyle and Chesterton were confronted with the differences in the general readers' changes of opinion, they did not alter the basic behavioural traits and approaches of Holmes or Brown. Finally, detectives like Poirot, Wolfe and Wimsey conform to the *Twenty Golden Rules* set down in 1928 by Monsignor Ronald Knox who, to maintain the *purity* of detective fiction, co-founded with Anthony Berkeley, the Detection Club in 1930 with Chesterton as its first president. Similar rules were promulgated by S.S. Van Dine (Willard Huntington Wright) in order to curtail tricks that the detective storywriters of the 1920s and 1930s had been playing with the unsuspecting readers. Todorov notes that the rules made it compulsory that the detective, as soon as he discovers a clue, should convey it to the readers, and that detective fiction should be more concerned with puzzles rather than the crime itself and should elaborate its puzzles in strict obedience to the rules of logic and fair play (Todorov 50). In late 1930s' stories like the Nero Wolfe, Nigel Strangeways, John Appleby

and Perry Mason narratives, the attendant Watson-like character vanished, and readers came in direct association with the detective.

According to Seidman, Symons and Greene, detective stories from Poe up to the early works of John Dickinson Carr, Ellery Queen and S.S. Van Dine, followed the Classical pattern¹⁹. Though the plots of such stories were tightly woven, the authors could not achieve realistic characterisation. The restrictive pattern of such Classical detective fiction that separated it from thrillers, adventure stories, chase novels and spy stories, was abandoned in the American authors, Dashiell Hammett and Raymond Chandler. The American *Hard Boiled* school of which Carroll John Daly, the creator of Race Williams, was the founder put, according to Ousby, et al., “murder back in the hands of people who commit it with real weapons for real reasons, not just to provide the reader with a puzzle” (*The Wordsworth* 254). *The Black Mask*, a detective fiction magazine founded in 1920 by H.L. Mencken and George Jean Nathan, particularly carried the Hard Boiled stories reflecting the realities of post-World War I America in direct opposition to Doyle’s deliberate veiling of the real social and political conditions of contemporary Europe, in general, and England, in particular, in his Sherlock Holmes stories. “With its tough, down-at-heel private eyes [that is, the detectives] and its sleazy urban world of vice and hoodlums” (*The Wordsworth* 254), the Hard Boiled detective story school established itself more firmly prominently and at par with the Sherlock Holmes narratives when Hammett’s Sam Spade and Chandler’s Philip Marlowe – private investigators working for meagre fees – appeared in 1929 and 1939, respectively.

The sleuths of Hard Boiled detective fiction are characterised by their honesty, ruthlessness and a casualistic approach towards sex and deception. For example, in The Maltese Falcon (1930) Sam Spade does not allow his lust for the suspected murderess to impede the course of justice. Pittard writes,

“...The hard-boiled investigator...[was]...a tough, independent, often solitary figure, a descendant of the frontier hero and cowboy, but as re-imagined in the 1920s, a cynical city dweller...He can achieve a degree of control, but , unlike the classic Holmesian detective, he cannot restore order and set all to rights. The basic narrative pattern pits this lone investigator against brutal criminals, often in league with a corrupt power structure”²⁰.

Though Seidman, Symons and Greene have isolated only Jonathan Latimer – the creator of Bill Crane, and Ross Macdonald as being the other two important writers belonging to the Hard Boiled school, James M. Cain and Horace McCoy’s The Postman Always Rings Twice (1934) and They Shoot Horses, Don’t They? (1935) are written according to the Hard Boiled conventions. W.R.Burnett’s Little Caesar (1929), Paul Cain’s Fast One (1932), Mickey Spillane’s early Mike Hammer novels published between 1947 and 1952, David Goodis’s Dark Passage (1947), Gil Brewer’s thirty novels written from 1951 to the 1960s, and the first female Hard Boiled writer Leigh Brackett’s five novels and Jim Thompson’s Nothing More than Murder (1949), The Killer Inside Me (1952) and A Hell of a Woman (1954) are other reputed Hard Boiled stories.

Ousby, et al., have distinguished two other sub-genres in detective fiction that have emanated out of the Classical and Hard Boiled detective stories: the crime novel, which puts more stress on criminal psychology than on mystery, and the police novel in which the investigating officer is an efficient police officer, contrary to the characterisation of the official force in stories such as Doyle's (*The Wordsworth* 254). Of the former type, Ousby, et al., include Anthony Berkeley Cox, Patricia Highsmith, Julian Symons and Ruth Rendell as the important writers. Of the latter, which portrays "the policemen heroes at odds with the bureaucracy", enquires "into the social and personal origins of crime" and is able "to propound a neat puzzle when the occasion requires", John Creasey, Ed McBain and Nicholas Freeling were the important contributors (*The Wordsworth* 254).

Though Seidman, Symons and Greene, in "Detective Story", have also included spy fiction, but in situations where both the crime and the criminal are known to the readers and to all the protagonists as observed in the spy novel, the detective's role of undertaking arduous investigation is minimised, and he, instead, begins to play the role of an executioner. David Seed observes,

"The spy story is a close but distinct variation on the tale of detection with the difference that there is no discrete crime involved but rather a covert action which, as John Cawelti and Bruce Rosenberg argue, transgresses conventional, moral or legal boundaries. The action is self-evidently political since it involves national rivalries and constantly veers towards a paranoid vision of 'violation by *outside* agencies' and 'violation of individual

autonomy by *internal* agencies'. A further distinction from the detection genre is that the investigator is often himself an agent and therefore, unlike Todorov's ideally detached detective, is implicated in the very process he is investigating. And since the genre is defined by its international subject, the novels can only be partly explained through formalist analyses like that of Bruce Merry" (Seed 115).

With the absence of the elements of mystery and deduction, spy short stories and novels like Erskine Childers's The Riddle of the Sands (1903), W. Somerset Maugham's Ashenden (1928), Graham Green's A Gun for Sale (1936), Horace McCoy's No Pockets in a Shroud (1937), Eric Ambler's A Coffin for Dimitros (1939), and above all, the James Bond stories of the 1950s by Ian Fleming, have been excluded by Ousby, et al., in their discussion of detective fiction (*The Wordsworth* 254). Robert Ludlum's The Chancellor Manuscript (1977), The Bourne Identity (1980), and The Parsifal Mosaic (1982), and Frederick Forsyth's The Odessa File (1972), The Dogs of War (1974) and The Fourth Protocol (1984) are other reputed spy novels.

While the Sherlock Holmes stories deal with the serious implications of social and political crimes and record their debilitating influence on specially the English social life, a considerably less serious strain of crime writing appeared in England after the conclusion of the Second World War. As recorded by Steve Holland in The Mushroom Jungle, these stories were published in paperback editions, and tried to relate the exhibition of the detective's intelligence in the Holmes narratives to the American "tough guy

and gangster” pulps. The trend was initiated by Frank Dubrez Fawcett, Harold Kelley and Stephen Frances, who were encouraged by the success of James Hadley Chase’s No Orchids for Miss Blandish (1939). Ted Lewis, who followed Jack’s Return Home (1970) with six more crime novels until 1980, have been regarded by Pittard, and Rennison and Shepherd in Waterstone’s Guide to Crime Fiction as the finest figure of the 1970s’ revival of British noir²¹. In the late 1980s, Maxim Jakubowski’s Black Box thrillers and Blue Murder imprints, and the writings of Jim Thompson, David Goodis and Cornell Woolrich became popular British neo-noir stories. Ian McEwan’s The Innocent, Colin Bateman’s Cycle of Violence and Ian Banks’s Complicity assimilated thriller conventions with the serious treatment of wider historical conflicts, a trend first observable in Doyle’s “His Last Bow”. Will Button in “The State We’re In” (1995) have identified the 1990s’ British crime stories as efforts to expose the dwindling economic and social influence of England after fifteen years of erratic Conservative rule under Margaret Thatcher. Pittard notes that though these novels and short stories have been influenced by the American hard-boiled protagonists, they are, in a revival of the trends in Sherlock Holmes narratives, distinctively English in tone, style and settings that include Walthamstow, Manchester, and Meadow Road near the Oval Cricket Ground²².

American crime writing between 1970 and the commencement of the 21st century show revivifications of the traditional patterns of literary noir. Edward Bunker’s No Beast So Fierce (1973) and Little Boy Blue (1981) deal with effects of imprisonment and deprivation from a criminal’s point of view, George V. Higgins’s The Friends of Eddie Coyle (1970) with love, revenge and betrayal, Craig Holden’s The River Sorrow (1995) with sexual obsession and wrong man plots, and James Ellroy’s novels of the

1980s and 1990s with post-Second World War violence in Los Angeles. The protagonists of new investigative series are eccentric and concern themselves with crime especially in the northern American cities and towns, like the alcoholic policeman Matt Scudder created by Lawrence Sanders in A Stab in the Dark, Amos Walker by Loren Estleman in The Midnight Man, the Vietnam veteran, Cooper MacLeish by Sam Reaves in A Long Cold Fall (1991). Other late American crime novel protagonists include the guilt-ridden New Orleans Black detective, Lew Griffin, created by James Sallis, the Cajun detectives – Dave Robicheaux and Rene Shade – by James Lee Burke and Daniel Woodrell, respectively, Dave Brandstetter by Joseph Hansen, and the hard-drinking detectives – Milodragovitch and Sughrue – introduced by James Cumley in the first half of the 1990s. In an instance of the development of detective family stories, Joe Lansdale relates the White investigator Hap Collins to the gay Afro-American Leonard Pine in Savage Season and Two-Bear Mambo, while Spenser develops a strong family bond with his Black assistant, Hawk and the Jewish psychiatrist, Susan Silverman, in the Chandlersque novels of Robert B. Parker. The post-modern American detective stories denote a significant shift from the tradition of the Sherlock Holmes narratives. The Holmesian intelligence and theory of deduction have been replaced by chase, firings and tortures on the captives, sexual assaults, and vociferous attacks against the American consumerism – an issue that is attacked by Ross Macdonald in The Underground Man (1971) and James Hall in Buzz Cut (1996). These stories also eschew the issue of patriotism that is so much a feature of Doyle's detective stories.

The emergence and steady evolution of the sub genre of detective fiction in European and particularly English literature profoundly affected the

literature of the colonies, particular those of England. In the late nineteenth century, England had its Indian headquarters in Calcutta, Bengal, which was, until December 1911, the administrative as well as cultural capital of India. Long before 1947, Bengali had evolved itself into a strong and important language with rich literary heritage, and in pre-independence India, the sub genre of detective fiction had become more distinct and popular in Bengali than in any other Indian language. In fact, there is no evidence that any other Indian language and literature contained, in contemporary India, a detective character as popular as Byomkesh Bakshi. Had there been any, the adventures had never been meticulously chronicled.

Byomkesh Bakshi, the Bengali middle class private investigator who calls himself 'the inquisitor', first appeared in the *Bashumati* periodical in 1932. He was preceded by a number of primarily Bengali fictional detectives who were constructed after the European detectives like Holmes, Poirot and Father Brown, and were, in fact, Euro-centric investigators with Indian/Bengali names that work in a climate and atmosphere found mostly in England.

Though Nagendranath Gupta (1861-1940) wrote "Churi Na Bahaduri" ("Theft or an Act of Bravado?") in the April 1886-edition of *Bharati*, a monthly literary magazine edited by Swarnakumari Debi (1855-1932), the history of Bengali detective fiction formally began in April 1892, with the publication of "Banomali Daser Hatya" ("The Murder of Banomali Das"), the first story of the 206-tale-strong Darogar Daftor ("The Office of the Officer-in-Charge")-series written by Priyanath Chattopadhyay (1855-1947), an employee with the detective department of Calcutta Police (started in 1868) between 1878 and

1911. In Sangshad Bangla Sahityasangi, Sisir Kumar Das observes, “Priyanath Mukhopadhyay first started [the] trend [of detective fiction] in Bengali literature” (96). In its review of the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth volumes of Darogar Daftor, the June 1893-issue of *Bharati* wrote, “What Mukhopadhyay is trying to do is noble to us” that echoed Damodar Debsharma’s observation, “We can easily count Babu Priyanath Mukhopadhyay’s detective narratives as highly original sensational novels” (Mukhopadhyay, *Darogar* 5-7). The first book of the series, which ran for twelve years, was published by Baninath Nandi on behalf of M/s. *Sikdarbagan Bandhob Pustakalaya O Sadharan Pathagar*, Calcutta, though he was later succeeded by Upendrakishore Choudhury.

The first formal Bengali detective fiction introduced a police officer-in-charge working under the British administration against the colonised members of his own community, and Mukhopadhyay’s very conception of the protagonist pointed to an overwhelming influence of the imperial canon. The stories were based on the real-life experiences of the author, who, being an administrator and the receiver of British titles and honours, regarded the Indians as dangerous thieves and necessarily malignant. In his other novels, Tantia Bhil, Detective Police, Thagi Kahini (“The Thagis”), Boer Yuddher Itihash (“The History of the Boer War”) and the autobiographical Tetrish Bathshorer Police Kahini, ba, Priyanath Jeevani (“Police Tales of Thirty-three Years, or, Priyanath’s Autobiography”), Mukhopadhyay points out to the various aspects of “superb governance” by the English colonisers. Ranajit Chattopadhyay and Siddhartha Ghosh write, “Priyanath was just a story teller, not a litterateur per se. He simply chronicled his experiences in contemporary Bengali language.” (748). But his anti-colonised ideology received a wide readership “among the

Bengalis, the Assamese, the Hindustanis, the Oriyas, the Maharastrians, the Sikhs and the Englishmen” (Mukhopadhyay 8). The 30 April 1893-issue of *Hope* commented, “Babu Priyanath Mukherjee is well-known to the public as a writer of popular detective fiction, and his latest volume, Kulsam, sustains his previous reputation” (Mukhopadhyay, *Darogar* 6). It was only in Ingrej Dakat (“The Englishman Dacoit”) that he obliquely hinted at the evil in the colonisers’ psyche. That Mukhopadhyay was an employee of the Calcutta Police, an institute founded in 1856 to control and obliterate the Bengali nationalists, was itself an assertion of his ignoble collaboration with the imperialists. In “About Kolkata Police: the Empire at its Zenith”, the official website of the police branch informs:

“In 1856 the Governor-General promulgated an Act treating Calcutta Police as a separate organization and S. Wauchope, who was then the chief magistrate of Calcutta, was appointed as the first commissioner of police. He had to face difficult days because of the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857, the first upsurge against British rule. He *handled the situation ably* (italics mine) and was knighted for his achievement. During the incumbency of his successor V.H. Schalch the Calcutta Police Act and the Calcutta Suburban Police Act, which are still in force, were enacted in 1866. Two years earlier (1864) the Commissioner of Police had become the Chairman of the Justices as well and a Deputy Commissioner was appointed to look after the executive police. It was Sir Stuart Hogg who first set up the Detective Department in Calcutta Police in November 1868 with A. Younan as the superintendent and R. Lamb as the first-class inspector...”²³.

The trend initiated by Mukhopadhyay was sustained by Girish Chandra Basu (1865-1933) in “*Sekaler Daroga Kahini*” (“The Contemporary Police Tales”) that was published in *Nabajeevan*, a periodical edited by Akshay Sarkar, in 1893. Three years later Kaliprashanna Chattopadhyay (1863-1919) published “*Bankaullar Daftor*” (“Bankaullah’s Office”) in which he narrated twelve exploits of Barkatullah who was popularly referred to as Bokaulah, and thereafter, Bankahullah – the police inspector employed by the Calcutta Police commissioner, Sleeman, to annihilate the *Thagis*. Ironically, most of Bankahullah’s raids were directed against the Bengali youths whom the British detectives had labelled ‘terrorists’ but who were actually the young Indian freedom fighters fighting against the colonisers. Significantly, in spite of all his efficiency, Inspector Bankaullah remains subordinate to the British commissioner and has to remain satisfied only with the colonisers’ patronisation. In his collaborating with the imperialists to torment people of his own country, Bankahullah exemplifies what the British administrators in India aimed at: they educated the Indians and employed them under themselves only to use them either as clerks – the ‘writers’ – or to control and exterminate their own countrymen. However, that Chattopadhyay has chosen to write about a Muslim could be interpreted as his attempt at bridging the communal gap between the two principal religions of India that have been estranged by the intermittent riots engineered by the colonisers.

The historian Harishadhan Mukhopadhyay (1862-1938) first contributed to the realm of children’s detective fiction in Bengali. The writer of the history of Calcutta published “*Hatyakari Key*” (“Who is the Murderer?”) in the April 1890-issue of

Bharati. His “Ascharya Hatyakanda” (“The Perplexing Assassination”) published in *Sakha O Sathi* is the first Bengali thriller for adolescents (Chattopadhyay and Ghosh 748).

Bhuvanchandra Mukhopadhyay (1842-1916) continued with the police fiction convention in the six-volume Markin Police Commissioner (“The American Police Commissioner”) which has White Westerner as the chief protagonist and whose total action occurs in the Occident. His Samaj Kuchitro (“The Dirty face of Society”), Haridasher Guptakatha (“Haridash’s Secrets”) published in the early 1880s, however, focussed more on societal scandals than on heinous crimes. His other crime stories include Bilati Guptakatha (“Secrets of the West”) and London Rahoshyo (“London’s Mystery”), a translation. Kshetra Mohon Ghosh and Surendra Mohon Bhattacharyya were the other contemporary writers of police stories.

Mukhopadhyay’s instance is not only an example of the failure of the pre-Saradindu Bandopadhyay Bengali detective story writers to avoid the direct influence of the European, particularly, English sleuth story writers, it also indicates the trend of the contemporary Indian investigators to seek safe refuge in a colonial background, under the protection and authority of the perceptively superior Western imperialists. Sarat Chandra Sarkar’s “Goyenda Kahini” (“Detective Tales”)-series serialised between 1894 and 1898, the “Detective Galpo” (“Detective Stories”)-series which republished anonymous contributions to *Hitobadi* published from Kalighat, Calcutta, by Nirod Boron Das, were no exception.

Sukumar Sen has identified Panchkari Dey (1873 – 1945) as the first Bengali litterateur to “serialise indigenously conceived detective story” (6). However, Ranojit Chattopadhyay and Siddhartha Ghosh differ:

“Whereas Priyanath Mukhopadhyay wrote tales based on his own experience, Panchkari Dey blended romance with those ingredients. Nevertheless, his stories were not original – at best, they were Western tales in Eastern garb” (749).

Dey’s detectives, Debendra Bijoy Mitra, Arindam Basu and Gobindoram appeared in a total of twenty eight stories, including “Neelbashana Sundari” (“The Beauty in Blue”) (1904), “Hartoner Naola” (“The Trick of the Cards”), “Mayabini” (“The Mysterious Lady”), “Manorama” (“The Enchantress”) and “Hatyakari Key” (“Who is the Assassin?”) between the 1910s and 1920s. It is important that in his characterisation of Debendra Bijoy Mitra, his principal investigator, the writer exhibits certain characteristic features common to all the Bengali sleuths in late pre-independence India. First, while creating Mitra, Dey relied heavily on Wilkie Collins and Emile Gaboriau’s construction of their respective detectives, and on the plotting of the Sherlock Holmes stories. Identifiably a combination of Sergeant Cuff and Lecoq, Mitra is a thinly veiled European detective who investigates in an Oriental locale. Second, both Debendra Bijoy Mitra and Arindam Basu Dey’s are (in-service and retired) police officials (employed with the imperialist Calcutta Police), similar to the sleuths in the stories by Collins, Wood and Braddon. That they are not independent or private investigators denotes the absence of general administrative powers and

freedom to take independent decisions that the British colonisers denied to the colonised Indians. Third, apart from having a name common to the Bengali landlords who were, in late pre-independence India, the *de facto* representatives of the British administration, Mitra exhibits hybridity in his dress too – a mixture of the traditional Indian/Bengali and European formals comprising of plated shirt with hard cuffs, open-breasted sleeveless coat made of china silk, black bordered processed dhoti, and Derby shoes (Gupta, *Byomkesh* 11). In his introduction to the second volume of Saradindu Omnibus, Pratul Chandra Gupta underlines Mitra's imperial compatibility by comparing him with Edward-VII (*Byomkesh* 11). The manner in which Mitra and Basu dress themselves exemplifies the extent to which the English societal norms and conventions had influenced the colonised populace in India. Fourth, both Mitra and Basu wage investigation within the city of Calcutta like Boranagar, Behala and Hazra Road, and have their residence in the metropolis. Regions outside the metropolis was not considered safe for these hybridised colonised detectives who had deliberately distanced themselves from the Indian freedom struggle and who apprehended, as “criminals” or *thangare-s*, Indian youths fighting against the British colonisers. Finally, following the convention of the English writers of detective fiction, Dey has presented his sleuths as belonging to the affluent section of the society. Like a European, Mitra uses a landau, hansom cab and phaeton whenever he goes out.

According to Sen, Dey has exhibited marked originality in his detective narratives by introducing the idea of the *super sleuth* in his characterisation of Arindam Basu (6). A similar idea has been suggested in Doyle's portrayal of Mycroft Holmes in “The Adventure of the Greek Interpreter” (“Neelbashana Sundari” bears evidence of Dey's

acquaintance with this particular Sherlock Holmes story), but not explicitly stated. The Bengali litterateur distinguishes the levels of dignity and societal positions of the two detectives – Mitra and Basu – according to their age: Basu is senior to Mitra. Dey has also been one of the earlier writers of detective fiction to indicate a personal relationship between the two Bengali investigators – Arindam Basu is Debendra Bijoy Mitra's grandfather-in-law. In Basu's having criminal antecedents, Sen detects a reaffirmation of the ancient Indian belief that only a (former) criminal can be most efficient in apprehending a defaulter (Sen 6). He compares Basu with Leblanc's Arsene Lupin, and states, "The great thief we read about in the detective stories [Panchkari Dey had] written for children, was a great police officer of contemporary age and the Indian predecessor of Mycroft Holmes" (6).

Besides Swarnakumari Debi, Hemendra Mohon Basu (1866-1916), a renowned industrialist of colonial Calcutta, was also instrumental in imparting maturity to the Bengali detective stories: in 1896 he initiated the *Kuntalin Puraskar* for original Gothic, humorous, fantasy and detective stories, and the winners of the award for sleuth stories included Rajoni Chandra Dutta of Srihatta Bejura School, Dinendra Kumar Roy, Jagadananda Roy of Santiniketan, and Saralabala Dasi Sarkar (1875-1961) whom Ranojit Chattopadhyay and Siddhartha Ghosh identify as "the first woman writer of detective fiction in India" (749).

The period between 1890s and 1940s was the colonial period in Bengali detective fiction. Starting from Priyanath Mukhopadhyay and extending upto Mihir Kumar Sinha's "Mohon"-series, the writers were consciously or unconsciously influenced directly and moulded by the shifts in the realm of contemporary Western detective stories. This

trend is reflected in Harihar Sheth's "Adbhut Guptolipi" ("The Mysterious Cryptogram") published in *Pradip* (1905) and Ambika Charan Gupta's *Swarnabai* (1909) serialised in *Goyenda Galpo*, a monthly he himself edited. On the other hand, *Nandan Kanan*, the first monthly Bengali crime magazine that strengthened this colonial conception, came to be published from Calcutta regularly from 1902 onwards. It was published by Upendranath Mukhopadhyay, and edited and anonymously contributed by Dinendra Kumar Ray (1869-1943), whose two hundred and seventeen odd narratives on the exploits of the anglicised Robert Blake, started with "Bidhir Bidhan" ("The Justice of Fate"), were serialised in "Rahoshyo Lahori" ("Collected Mystery Tales").

Robert Blake was the most popular prototype Eurocentric investigator in pre-independence India in the 1910s and 1920s, and in his characterisation of the British detective, Ray had depended on different English periodicals, particularly *Union Jack* and the *Sexton Blake*-series to the point of being indicted for plagiarism. Arun Chattopadhyay states, "The Bengali writer literally copied from the Western periodicals" (4).

Contrary to Panchkari Dey, Dinendra Kumar Ray did not forcibly and ludicrously Indianise his White detective created on lines of Holmes and Father Brown. Set in London and its suburbs, the Robert Blake narratives like "Ayesha", "She", "Ruposhi Marubashini" ("The Desert Beauty"), "Bhuter Jahaj" ("The Phantom Ship"), "Chiner Dragon" ("The Chinese Dragon") and "Jaal Mohanto" ("The Dubious Priest") easily give their readers the illusion of reading fiction by an English author. In his introduction to the second volume of *Saradindu Omnibus*, the noted Bengali literary critic Pratul Chandra Gupta writes,

“It was not Panchkari Dey but Dinendra Kumar Ray whose detective stories could first successfully captivate millions of young hearts. He had also been inspired by – nay, he had literally translated several European sleuth narratives, but he differs from Dey because unlike the latter, he had not given an Indian garb to an identifiably Western investigator or had attempted to create a Calcutta out of Caliente. The related merits and demerits notwithstanding, the Robert Blake stories, in our childhood, seemed to be the very epitome of London geography. Our first acquaintance with the embankments of the Thames, the locality of Fulham in southern London, the Croydon aerodrome, Sohopara or Piccadilly was only through Roy’s exciting tales...” (*Byomkesh* 7-8).

Apart from exhibiting a concern with the faithful representation of a White coloniser in an imperial country like England, the Blake stories suffered from anachronisms, incongruity and other situational impossibilities that developed from the author’s attempts to enlist different European gadgets in his stories. Gupta comments,

“The pre-First World War readers were credulous as well as cooperative. In one of...[Ray’s popular]...detective stories, the sleuth comes across mountains and springs within one hour of leaving Howrah station! In another story by an early writer, the investigator discovers the plundering

dacoits in a distant house by affixing a microscope in a hole on the trunk of a tree...!” (*Byomkesh* 8).

Ray’s success in popularising the fictional sleuth led to an unprecedented spurt in composition of detective stories between the 1910s and 1930s and paved way for the growth of post colonial response in them. Ranajit Chattopadhyay and Siddhartha Ghosh write,

“For four decades between 1890 and 1930, the Indian detective story writers had endeavoured hard to satisfy the contemporary readers’ palette. They had not only made acquaintance with the dreaded criminals possible for the otherwise reclusive Indian commoner, but also had thrown light on different societal problems. Above all, they demonstrated how, even after having multiple annihilations in the plot, Shakespeare’s Hamlet and Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay’s Krishnakantar Will (“The Will of Krishnakanta”) differ from detective fiction.

During this period, the influence of Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay in Bengali literature had waned, and had been replaced with Rabindranath Tagore’s and Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyay’s. Contemporary mystery writers were captivated by their lyricism, efficiency of plot-construction and psychoanalytical excellence...” (749).

In the 1920s, Bengali detective fiction matured further, though in the colonial perspective, in Hemendra Kumar Roy’s narratives like “Jakher Dhan” (“The Hard-

guarded Treasure”) (first published in *Mouchak*, a monthly for adolescents), “Jayantar Kirti” (“Jayanta’s Achievements”), “Manush Pishach” (“The Human Monster”), “Shahjhaner Mayur” (“Shahjahan’s Peacock Throne”) and “Padmaraag Buddha” (“The Carbuncle Buddha”). Roy (1888-1963) introduced three sets of detectives – the Jayanta-Manik-Sundarbabu group, the Hemanta-Rabin group and Inspector Satish. Though exhibiting originality in the issue of event management in stories, Jayanta, Manik and Hemanta strictly adhere to the rules of detection promulgated by Poe and Doyle. Kulada Ranjan Roy (1878-1950) merely translated English detective stories into English and Premankur Atarhi (1890-1964) Indianised The Hound of the Baskervilles into Jalar Petni (“The Apparition of the Swamp”) in *Mouchak*.

Contribution to children sleuth literature, started by Hemendra Kumar Roy, found abundance in Monoranjan Bhattacharyya (1903-1939), who began to satirise the cult in his stories on Hukkakashi like “Padmaraag” (“The Carbuncle”) (first published in *Ramdhanu* in 1928), “Ghosh-Choudhurir Ghori” (“Ghosh-Choudhury’s Watch”) and “Sonar Harin” (“The Gold Stag”), a trend first started by Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) in “Detective”, a short story, in the June 1898-issue of *Bharati*. He also started the trend of naming detective stories in alliterative words²⁴. Importantly, Bhattacharyya’s detective remained a representative of the colonisers – only Hukkakashi, being a Japanese gentleman, represented an Oriental imperial power. Shibram Chakroborty (1903-1980) created Kolkekashi, Prabhat Kumar Mukhopadhyay (1873-1932) created Gobardhan and Mohit Mohon Chattopadhyay, in the late 1950s, introduced Bhomboldas and Kebalram to depict the imperial investigators as objects of

ridicule and stinging satire. This trend was sustained in the emanation of Parashar Verma in "Goyenda Kabi Parashar" ("Parashar – the Litterateur-Sleuth") (1956). Premendra Mitra (1904-1988) constructed a detective whose epiphanic flairs for writing always ended in his poems' finding their way to dustbin.

The launching of different investigators' series between 1930 and 1940 first underscored the shifting of the contemporary Indian detective fiction from the colonial phase to its post colonial avatar. In his contributions to the *Rahoshyo Chakro* (Mystery)-series edited by Monoranjan Chakroborty, and in Reshmi Fansh ("The Silk Noose"), Shomon Sabhar Kriti ("The Exploits of the Annihilators") and Katamundur Karshaji ("The Tricks of the Severed Head") (the last two were serialised in *Kytayani Goyenda Granthamela* series), Gajendra Kumar Mitra (1908-1994) created Tarun Gupta, an essentially Bengali detective, concerned, for the first time, with problems typical to the Bengali society in pre-independence India. Sourindra Mohon Mukhopadhyay (1884-1966) wrote Aram Bagh ("The Pleasure Garden") and Rishi Moshai ("The Ascetic") in the *Nabakatha Granthamela* ("The New Voices")-series published by Radharomon Das whose maiden venture was the *Rahoshyo-Romanchyo-Adventure* ("Mystery-Romance-Adventure")-series. Sumathanath Ghosh (1909-1984) wrote Moron Golap ("The Lethal Rose") in the *Kytayani Goyenda Granthamela* ("The Kytayani Collection of Detective Stories")-series published by Nripendra Kumar Basu from 1935 onwards. In the last section of the decade, *Deb Sahitya Kutir*, a Calcutta-based publishing company brought out the *Kanchanjunggha*-series contributed by Hemendra Kumar Roy, Naresh Chandra Sengupta, Buddhadeb Basu, Nripendra Krishna Chattopadhyay, Shaiylobala Ghoshjaya and Probbabati Debi Saraswati who later started the *Krishna*-series on the adventures of

Krishna, a woman sleuth. The same company was responsible for the resurgence of colonialist detective fiction writing in the late 1950s when it began to publish the adventure tales of the anglicised Deepak Chatterjee by Swapankumar in the *Biswachakra*-series and Sourendra Mohon Mukhopadhyay's *Prohelika*-series.

It was in 1942, when the anti-British campaign had reached a crucial state in Bengal and Punjab, that Sashodhar Dutta (d. 1952) began his *Mohon*-series and introduced a rural picaro championing the cause of the dominated Bengalis. *General Printers and Publishers Limited*, which, in 1938, had published the *Bichitryo Rahoshyo*-series, benefited immensely from these exploits of the "Robin Hood of Bengal" edited by Mihir Kumar Sinha until Dutta's death (Chattopadhyay and Ghosh 750). The popularity of the *Mohon*-series precisely indicated the changing sentiments of the colonised Indian readers. However, Abhijit Gupta is dismissive of the qualitative efficiency of both Swapankumar and Dutta:

'The high seriousness and erudition of the Byomkesh Bakshi stories were however suitably counterpointed by the execrable productions of Sashodhar Dutta and Swapan Kumar. Their respective protagonists, Mohon and Deepak Chatterjee, were the source of a host of unforgettable one-liners which have become the stuff of legend...Coming to Feluda from Mohon and Deepak Chatterjee may seem almost anti-climactic...' ²⁵.

In the same decade, Nihar Ranjan Gupta (1911-1986) began the first of his eighty odd stories about the adventures of Kiriti Roy and his associate, Subrata. In the anterior flap of the cover-jacket of Kalo Bhromor ("The Black Wasp" – the first Kiriti Roy story) (Kolkata: Mitra and Ghosh Publishers Private Limited, 1985. Rpt. 2004), Pramathanath Bishi (1901-1985) thus describes the anglicised investigator:

"Kiriti Roy is six and a half feet tall, fair and stout. His curled hair is mostly combed back, and the black celluloid spectacles make his clean-shaved face highly attractive".

In Tarafdar's description of Kiriti Roy as "...the typical Eurocentric investigator – clad in the familiar hat and ulster" is exemplified the failure of Gupta to avoid the Western literary influence²⁶.

In the Byomkesh Bakshi stories, whose first narrative, "Pather Kanta", was published in the June 1932-issue of *Bashumati*, Saradindu Bandyopadhyay sought to efface the colonial heredity of Indian detective fiction. In the *introduction* to Byomkesh Diary ("The Diary of Byomkesh") (Calcutta: P.C.Sarkar and Company, 1933), he states,

"Readers have often questioned whether...[the Byomkesh Bakshi]...stories are not the duplicate copies of English detective fiction. For their kind information, all these are my original contributions...Many people nurse a snobbish attitude to the sub-genre of detective fiction as if it were an inferior

form of literature. I think it is erroneously conceived. I do not feel ashamed to write what Edgar Allan Poe, Conan Doyle and G.K.Chesterton could” (*Byomkesh* 1005).

The litterateur’s being from a *third world* country like India is significant in the post colonial perspective. “[The term]...‘third world’ retain[s]...[its]...power because...[it]...suggest[s] an alternative culture, an alternative ‘epistemology’, or system of knowledge” (Young 17-8). His writing his detective stories in Bengali itself is a post colonial response:

“In African countries and in India, that is in post colonial countries where viable alternatives to *english* continue to exist, an appeal for a return to writing exclusively, or mainly in the pre-colonial languages has been a recurrent feature of calls for decolonisation. Politically attractive as this is, it has been seen as problematic by those who insist on the syncretic nature of post colonial societies. Syncreticist critics argue that even a novel in Bengali or Gikuyu is inevitably a cross-cultural hybrid, and that decolonisation projects must recognise this. Not to do so is to confuse decolonisation with the reconstitution of pre-colonial reality” (Ashcroft, et al., *The Empire* 30).

Lauding the originality and efficiency of Bandyopadhyay’s contribution, Abhijit Gupta writes,

“Till Quentin Tarantino hit upon the happy – but by no means original – idea of rehabilitating the cops and hitmen of forgotten Fifties pulp in pulp fiction, they had inhabited a half-forgotten, ill-lit corner of our consciousness, always well-dressed, always giving chase or being chased, superbly suave even in the direst of vicissitudes. All this changed with the coming of...Byomkesh Bakshi. [He]...threw away the three-piece suit, the rakish fedora, the regulation brier and slipped into the...comfortable dhoti-punjabi...”²⁷.

“Satyanweshi (“The Inquisitor”), regarded the first story of the canon because it first introduces the inquisitor and his associate to one another, was written in 1933 – a most crucial juncture in the history of the Indian nationalist movement, particularly for Bengal where the youths “taught in western philosophy, Vivekananda’s *Nabavedantabad* and Bankim [Chandra Chattopadhyay’s]...patriotism, had thrown themselves in an...[all-out]...armed struggle against the British colonisers” (Pahari 254). With the exception of the Bengali detective fiction written between 1890 and early 1930s, the social and political turmoil came to be reflected in contemporary Bengali literature. While Priyanath Mukhopadhyay, Kaliprashanna Chattopadhyay and Bhuvan Chandra Mukhopadhyay were directly employed under the British administration and came to maintain silence about, if not praise, the excesses of the colonial rule, Bandyopadhyay was a lawyer practicing in the British dominated Indian courts until 1938 (after which he moved to Bombay to write film scripts) and, understandably, could not exhibit an active interest in

the nationalist movement. Nevertheless, he registers his protest against the colonial excesses and the colonial encroachments in the realm of Indian/Bengali literature through the path of Fanonian *collusion*: by making Byomkesh Bakshi and Ajit Bandyopadhyay identifiably Bengali, by making them deliberately ignore anything made in the West, and by making them avoid referring to anything British or European at all. He thus creates a post colonial world which has been constructed by the imperialists but which effectively shuts them out from its society.

Of all the Bengali sleuths created up to the 1930s, Bakshi was the first to have a Bengali middle class background and had no previous record of serving under the imperial forces. He was, like Holmes, the first private investigator in Bengali detective fiction and the first to have a biographer-friend like Ajit. Unlike Blake or Mitra, Bakshi is not a typical European investigator oddly disguised as an Indian; neither are his locales ludicrous superimpositions of the Orient on the Occident. He does not live in the imperial metropolis of London, but in Calcutta inhabited by the colonised populace and does not frequently use landaus or phaetons. Dinendra Kumar Ray, Priyanath Mukhopadhyay and Kaliprashanna Chattopadhyay frequently refer to British governance and customs in their stories where as Saradindu Bandyopadhyay maintains a total silence. His detective also differs from the other contemporary Bengali detectives in his dress. Bakshi wears dhoti and punjabee against the elaborate ulster-hat of Kiriti Roy or Mitra's combination of English and Indian traditional dresses. His first name is uncommon but is not aristocratic like that of Mitra. Influenced by the English sleuth stories as they are, Robert Blake, Debendra Bijoy and

Bankaullah wage on-spot investigations and undertake outdoor adventures in contrast with Bakshi who depends more on his intuitive powers for detection.

It is significant that while Panchkari Dey's and Dinendra Kumar Ray's investigators are supermen capable of feats requiring enormous physical and mental potency, Bakshi is never presented as being extraordinary in appearance and faculties. Ajit Bandyopadhyay describes the first appearance of the detective at Dr. Anukul's boarding house without any superlatives:

“He looked to be about twenty-three or twenty-four. His demeanour was that of an educated person. He was fair, well-built and handsome, and his face radiated intelligence. But he seemed to have fallen on bad times lately; his dress was in dishabille, his hair was uncombed, his shirt looked frayed and his shoes too had taken a rough hue for lack of polishing. He had an expression of eager anxiousness on his face...” (Bandyopadhyay, *Picture 5*).

Of all the fictional Bengali detectives up to the 1930s, Bakshi is the youngest when he makes his appearance in “The Inquisitor” at the age of “twenty-three or twenty-four” – that suggests his capacity for continuing with his investigations longer. Bandyopadhyay makes his sleuth narratives exceptional by detailing about the family background of the detective: Bakshi's father is a teacher of mathematics, and his mother is a Vaishnavite (Bandyopadhyay, *Byomkesh 434*), and by providing him with a full family comprising of Satyabati, Khoka, Ajit Bandyopadhyay and Puntiram.

The most notable characteristic feature of the Byomkesh Bakshi stories that distinguishes them from the other contemporary Bengali detective narratives is the conspicuous absence of the colonisers. Although ten of the thirty three Bakshi narratives – “Satyanweshi”, “Pather Kanta”, “Shimonto Heera”, “Makorshar Rash”, “Arthamanartham”, “Chorabalee”, “Agniban”, “Upasanhar”, “Raktomukhi Neela” and “Byomkesh O Boroda” – were written before the Indian independence, it is significant that no White European, except a senior police officer in “Pather Kanta” and the English police commissioners referred to in absence by Bakshi in “Satyanweshi” and “Arthamanartham”, has got a presence or role in the seven other stories, and in the twenty three narratives written after 1947. Contrary to Mitra or Blake, Bakshi does not refer any case to the higher White officials or wait for their permission to start his investigations. Bandyopadhyay’s criminals are not the nationalists whom Bankaullah and Mitra chase, but are ignoble antisocial individuals. While the earlier sleuths continue their investigation up to a certain extent, identify the criminal, and get him/her arrested or executed by the colonial policemen, Bakshi tries to decide the punishment of the criminals by himself, and except in “Bonhi Patango” and “Satyanweshi”, seldom involves the police at his own accord. In Sherlock Holmes stories the awarding of the death sentence to the criminals is suggested, if not explicitly stated, at the end of the narratives: for example, Jim Browner in “The Adventure of the Cardboard Box” and Patrick Cairns in “The Adventure of the Black Peter” are certain to be executed. It was a common practice among the British colonisers to hang the Indians, particularly the Bengali and Sikh youths, without a proper trial; but in the Byomkesh Bakshi stories no Indian is sentenced to death. On the other hand, criminals like Prafulla Roy in “The Gramophone Pin

Mystery”, Phonibhusan Kar in “Where There’s a Will” and Amaresh Raha in “Picture Imperfect” commit suicide that might be interpreted as the sign that the Indians preferred suicide to arrest and torture by the British colonisers. In spite of their being criminals, Roy, Raha and Kar retain enough self respect as to commit suicide before being pilloried in front of the commoners. Also, Byomkesh Bakshi lacks a “daftor” (office) – the convention having been initiated by the colonisers themselves.

That Bakshi knows how to use a revolver has been suggested in his holding one while apprehending the homeopathic physician in “The Inquisitor” (23), but he does not use guns, a colonial gadget, except in “Bonhi Patango” and “Amriter Mrityu”. On the other hand, Debendra Bijoy Mitra, the American police commissioner and Robert Blake possess revolvers and readily wield and fire them while chasing criminals.

The Byomkesh Bakshi stories also began to differ from the contemporaries in their detailed treatment of love, romance and human relationships. For example, Panchkari Dey, Bhuvan Chandra Mukhopadhyay and Dinendra Kumar Roy, focus exclusively on crime and detection without any reference to the complex interrelationship among the human beings including the sleuth and the criminal. In contrast, Byomkesh Bakshi narratives like “Where There’s a Will” (Byomkesh Bakshi-Satyabati), “Picture Imperfect” (Rajani-Dr. Ghatak), “Bonhi Patango” (Shakuntala Devi-Inspector Ratikanta Choudhury), “Aadim Ripu” (Probhat Halder-Shiuly Mazumder), “Kahen Kabi Kalidas” (Aurobindo Halder-Mohini), “Shanjarur Kanta” (Prabal Gupta-Deepa Bhattacharyya) and “Magno Mainak” (Henna-Jugal Chand) contain at least one pair of lovers. Bakshi has himself been

presented in roles of a husband, a friend and a father. While most of the English detective stories by Doyle, Chesterton and Christie are singularly free from the author's vivid portrayal of the love sequences and relationship among the lovers, and Dinendra Kumar Ray, Panchkari Dey, Nihar Ranjan Gupta and Priyanath Mukhopadhyay never depict the detective or his acquaintances as lovers in lengthy courtship or post-marital dialogues, Saradindu Bandyopadhyay's stories put much stress on the portrayal of human relationships and courtship and thus achieve uniqueness.

The 'return to the Indian roots'-consciousness propagated by Bandyopadhyay was instrumental in giving rise to three important crime fiction periodicals in the 1940s: *Rahoshyo Romanchyo*, edited jointly by Bimal Kar (1921-2003) and Arun Bhattacharyya (1925-1985), *Rahoshyo Chakro* edited by Srikrishna Goswami, and *Detective* by Dhruva Sarkar. Prashad Sinha's *Chalantika*, initially a literary magazine, metamorphosed itself into a detective fiction journal in 1948-9. *Romanchyo*, another important detective fiction periodical, was conceived in 1932 by Mrityunjoy Chattopadhyay, its editor between 1933 and the late 1950s, and the contributors included Premendra Mitra, Shaiylojananda Mukhopadhyay (1909-1976), Panchugopal Mukhopadhyay (1910-1957), Pronob Roy, Sunil Kumar Dhar, Fanindra Paul, Achintyo Kumar Sengupta (1903-1976), Probodh Kumar Sanyal (1905-1983), and Somnath Lahiri (1909-1984). From its first edition of 32 pages published on 9 January 1932 onwards, each litterateur was to contribute original stories on the exploits of Investigator Pratul Lahiri and his companion, Biswanath Chakroborty, in subsequent

issues, and was to consciously avoid referring to the Western methodology and intervention.

Bengali detective fiction of the 1950s was contributed, other than Premendra Mitra, by Pronob Roy (1908-1975), the editor of *Romancho* for two subsequent issues, who demanded in his stories that the criminal be looked as a human being. Panchanan Ghoshal (1907-1990), a former police executive, resuscitated the style of Priyanath Mukhopadhyay in his personal police memoirs like Rakto Nadir Dhara ("The Bloody River"), Pocketmar ("Pickpocket") and Bikkhyato Tadanta Kahini ("Famous Tales of Detection"), and composed the multi-volume Aparadh Bigyan ("Criminology"). Raj Sekhar Basu (1880-1960) asserted the triumph of the colonised over the coloniser in his prodigal Rakhai Mustaphi, whom Sherlock Holmes is forced to consult after journeying from London to Calcutta in Neel Tara ("The Blue Star"). While Gobindolall Bandyopadhyay wrote *in cognito* about Dilip Sanyal and Tridib Choudhury, Parimal Goswami popularised Brajobilash with an unconventional excellence in the art of disguise. The Indianisation of the investigators in the late fifties continued in narratives of Bidhayak Bhattacharyya, Dhirendralall Dhar, Samoresh Basu (1924-1988), Santosh Kumar Ghosh, Manobendra Bandyopadhyay, Nirendranath Chakroborty, Adrish Bardhan (b. 1932), Sudhangshu Kumar Gupta and Gouranga Prashad Basu -- the writer of Kanya Kalanko Katha ("The Scandal of Women"), Neelima Nishsheshey Nihato ("Neelima's Exhaustive Extermination") and Geeta Kapurer Atmohatya ("Geeta Kapur's Suicide"). Bardhan's Indranath Rudra and Samoresh Basu's Gogol achieved most popularity.

The sixties' Bengali literary detectives exhibit signs of decadence in originality. Written in post-independence India, the stories of this decade

did not exhibit any pronounced post colonial response though they had moved away from the Western conventions of crime fiction. There is no actual psychological development of the sleuths and the sixties' detective stories exerted their influence only for a very short period. Significantly, none of the other Indian languages seems to have so successfully produced and popularised literary investigators as Bengali. Conceived in the late 1960s, Karamchand has remained the only popular sleuth in Hindi. While Krishanu Bandyopadhyay wrote fifty stories on Bashab's adventure, Ananda Bagchi (b. 1932), Tarapada Roy, Sobhon Shom (b 1932), Robin Deb and Sreedhar Choudhury created Satyapriyo, Garjan Goyenda, Subho Choudhury, Robin Deb and Shankar Choudhury, respectively. Amit Chattopadhyay (who wrote several Pratul Lahiri-stories), Hiren Chattopadhyay (creator of Sudhamay and Mac Choudhury) and Himanish Goswami ("Dey and Daw"), Sunil Kumar Ghosh and Sukhomoy Mukhopadhyay are the other sixties' Bengali crime story writers. Gurnek Singh's Amaresh-tales deserve mention because he learned Bengali which was not his mother tongue to write exclusive detective narratives.

Between 1970 and 1979, Satyajit Ray created Feluda and Hari Narayan Chattopadhyay introduced Parijat Bakshi – the fictitious nephew of Byomkesh Bakshi – to enrich the subgenre on the indigenous lines of Saradindu Bandyopadhyay. Samoresh Basu created Ashok Thakur, Syed Mustafa Shiraj (b. 1930) introduced the retired Colonel Niladri Sarkar, Kamakshi Prashad Chattopadhyay created Anukul Verma, Priyabroto Mukhopadhyay popularised Partha Gupta, Indrajeet Roy wrote narratives on the exploits of Rakesh, Kali Kinkar Karmakar on that of Chitta

Chatterjee, Ashapura Debi (1909-1995) on Botokesto Sardar and Manjil Sen on Shadashib. Anish Deb (b. 1951) wrote short tales of detection without any protagonist.

Prodipto Roy's Jaga Pishi and Monoj Sen's Damayanti were two popular women investigators of the 1970s. They challenged the patriarchal conventions of confining women indoors in the detective stories. It can be observed that in a Bengali detective story a woman directly involved in the plot is either a nymphomaniac transgressor, an un-ashamed offender or knows much more than she should have.

It is important that in this decade Himangshu Sarkar, for the first time, created a rogue-detective who could be identified with the protagonists of the Western hard boiled narratives written by Dashiell Hammett and Raymond Chandler (*The Wordsworth* 254). Narayan Sanyal's adventures of Sherlock Hebo parodies Doyle's creation from an Indian/Bengali point of view. In the late seventies, Sukumar Sen unsuccessfully tried to impart a historical perspective to detective fiction, similar to Saradindu Bandyopadhyay's "Durgo Rahoshyo" in his exploits of Kalidas. His most important contribution, however, is Crime Kahinir Kaalkranti, an authoritative historical analysis of the development of the Indian and Bengali detective stories over the ages.

Satyajit Ray (1921-1992) has contributed bounteously to the realm of Bengali crime fiction single-handedly in the seventies and eighties. His Feluda,

whose first adventure, Feludar Goyendagiri ("Feluda's Investigation") was published in 1965, is a Bengali (bachelor) gentleman of 26 Rajani Sen Road, Calcutta, who undertakes daring outdoor adventures in company of his cousin and narrator, Tapesh or 'Topshey' and the detective story writer, Lal Mohon Ganguli better known as 'Jatayu'.

In Ray's creation the post colonial response is achieved through the detective's hybridity and cultural ambiguity. Feluda's modes of detection are based on the science of deduction, popularised by Doyle in his Sherlock Holmes narratives. He depends, much like the English investigator, on empirical evidences, is strongly built, six feet tall, and is an expert in shooting with Colt, which, unlike Byomkesh Bakshi, he always carries with him. The detective who makes no qualms about imprinting 'Prodosh C. Mitter, Private Investigator' on his visiting card, exhibits a wide mobility in the thirty plus stories written on him, Robertsoner Ruby ("Robertson's Ruby") , Jato Kando Kathmandutey ("Incidents at Kathmandu"), Bombaiyer Byombete ("Bombay's Rogues"), Darjeeling Jamjomat ("Theft in Darjeeling") and Sonar Kella ("The Golden Fort") being the more famous among them. Abhijit Gupta observes,

"For over two decades, Ray dominated the field like no one had done before but it is also true that fewer and fewer practitioners were producing crime fiction with any degree of seriousness"²⁸.

The period between the eighties and the beginning of the twenty first century is yet to find a significant contributor to the sub-genre of Bengali

crime story. Sekhar Basu and Nirendranath Chakroborty have undertaken experiments in composing a few crime stories. Pratul Chandra Gupta's narratives on the adventures of Shadu Thakuma, an elderly widow, could not multiply because of his untimely death. Chattopadhyay and Ghosh note,

“The Bengali detective stories of the eighties and afterwards have taken an unexpected turn. We are now encountering stories suited more to the palette of the younger generation of these days. Most of the modern detective story writers are litterateurs of no mean repute. They have stretched the confines of the subgenre to an unprecedented level. Geography, history and science are now being freely used to make detective stories resemble study materials in general knowledge!” (754).

Among the Bengali fictional detectives of the nineties', Arjun created by Samoresh Majumdar (b. 1943), Tito, Papan, Kakababu and Santu created by Sunil Gangopadhyay (b. 1934), and Fatik introduced by Sirshendu Mukhopadhyay (b. 1935) are more popular. But both Majumdar and Gangopadhyay write stories that could be identified more with the adventure tales than proper detective narratives. Shastipada Chattopadhyay's Pandav Goyenda, the detective team comprising of five adolescent investigators – Babloo, Billu, Bhombol, Bachchhu and Bichchhu – and their dog, Panchu, characterise the primarily adolescent face of the nineties' tales of detection. Prior to his death in 2003, Bimal Kar had written a number of detective stories with the Bengali gentlemen – Kikira and Tarapada as the protagonists, the only exception

to the decade where the detective stories are essentially Indian/Bengali and free from any Western influence.

Presided by Sukumar Sen, several distinguished Sherlock Holmes fans, including Pratul Chandra Gupta, Premendra Mitra, Santosh Kumar Ghosh, Samoresh Basu, Debipada Bhattacharyya, Arun Kumar Mitra, Nirendranath Chakroborty, Subhadra Kumar Sen, Ranjit Chattopadhyay, Ananda Bagchi and Badal Basu, established *Holmesiana*, a Calcutta-based crime story club, on 27 August 1983 to ensure regular and spontaneous participation in detective story writing though in the post colonial perspective. The club has stopped functioning.

The subgenre of detective fiction is one of the more read ones in any literature, more so in English, French and Bengali. With the passage of one hundred and twenty years since its conception in Priyanath Mukhopadhyay's retrospective narratives, Bengali detective fiction has rapidly altered itself. Just as Arthur Conan Doyle had overwhelmingly expressed his imperial ideology through Sherlock Holmes, Saradindu Bandyopadhyay has been most instrumental in imparting a post colonial fact to Indian crime story writing.

NOTES:

1. Pittard, Christopher. "Victorian Detective Fiction: an Introduction". 14 March 2005. <<http://www.crimeculture.com/Contents/VictorianCrime.html>>

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3. Seidman, Michael, Julian Symons, Douglas G. Greene. "Detective Story". Microsoft ® Encarta ® Online Encyclopaedia 2003. 1 April 2003. <http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_761559994/Detective_Story.html#endads>
4. Pittard, Christopher. "Victorian Detective Fiction – an Introduction". 14 March 2005. <<http://www.crimeculture.com/Contents/VictorianCrime.html>>
5. See The Wordsworth Companion to Literature in English. Ian Ousby., ed. Ware-Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Reference, 1988. Rpt. 1998. 253; Seidman, Michael, Julian Symons, Douglas G. Greene. "Detective Story". Microsoft ® Encarta ® Online Encyclopaedia 2003. 1 April 2003 <http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_761559994/Detective_Story.html#endads> ; and Pittard, Christopher. "Victorian Detective Fiction – an Introduction". 14 March 2005. <<http://www.crimeculture.com/Contents/VictorianCrime.html>>
6. Seidman, Michael, Julian Symons, Douglas G. Greene. "Detective Story". Microsoft ® Encarta ® Online Encyclopaedia 2003. 1 April 2003. <http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_761559994/Detective_Story.html#endads>
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
9. Pittard, Christopher. "Victorian Detective Fiction – an Introduction". 14 March 2005. <<http://www.crimeculture.com/Contents/VictorianCrime.html>>
10. Ibid.

11. Seidman, Michael, Julian Symons, Douglas G. Greene. "Detective Story". Microsoft ® Encarta ® Online Encyclopaedia 2003. 1 April 2003. <http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_761559994/Detective_Story.html#endads>
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14. Ibid.
15. See Pittard, Christopher. "American Hard-Boiled Crime Fiction, 1920s-1940s: a Brief Introduction". 14 March 2005 <<http://www.crimeculture.com/Contents/Hard-Boiled.html>>
16. See Symons, Julian. "What They Are and Why We Read Them: Golden Age Detective Fiction". The Murder of Roger Ackroyd: A Collection of Critical Essays. Nilanjana Gupta., ed. New Delhi: Worldview, 2001.
17. Pittard, Christopher. "Classic Detective Fiction: a Brief Introduction". 14 March 2005 <<http://www.crimeculture.com/Contents/Classic%20Detective%20Fiction.html>>
18. Seidman, Michael, Julian Symons, Douglas G. Greene. "Detective Story". Microsoft ® Encarta ® Online Encyclopaedia 2003. 1 April 2003. <http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_761559994/Detective_Story.html#endads>
19. Ibid.

20. Pittard, Christopher. "American Hard-Boiled Crime Fiction, 1920s-1940s: a Brief Introduction". 14 March 2005. <<http://www.crimeculture.com/Contents/Hard-Boiled.html>>
21. Pittard, Christopher. "Brit Grit: an Introduction to British Noir". 14 March 2005. <<http://www.crimeculture.com/Contents/Brit%20Grit.html>>
22. Ibid.
23. "Kolkata Police: About – The Empire at its Zenith". 6 January 2004. <<http://www.kolkatapolice.org/emripe.asp>>
24. See Tarafdar, Shovan. "Sahitye Detective" ("Detectives in Literature"). *Anandamela* 29:1. 20 April 2003. 11.
25. Gupta, Abhijit. "Murder in Bengal". 20 January 2005. <http://www.banglalive.com/ipatrikaa/sanglap/SanglapDetail16_8_2004.asp>
26. Tarafdar, Shovan. "Sahitye Detective" ("Detectives in Literature"). *Anandamela* 29:1. 20 April 2003. 13.
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28. Ibid.

CHAPTER 3.B.

**IMPERIAL TEXTS VERSUS POSTCOLONIAL NARRATIVES:
EXISTING CRITICISM ON THE SHERLOCK HOLMES AND
BYOMKESH BAKSHI STORIES: -**

Although several critical commentaries have been written on the biography of Arthur Conan Doyle and on the methodology, dress, and scientific experiments conducted by the “world’s greatest detective” since the writer’s death in 1930, critical works rereading the Sherlock Holmes stories as imperially compatible texts are limited in number¹. On the other hand, even at the commencement of the twenty first century, there is no formidable criticism of the Byomkesh Bakshi narratives in the postcolonial perspective.

In the list of “Further Reading” to the Sherlock Holmes narratives in Sherlock Holmes: a Centenary Celebration (London: John Murray, 1986), William S. Baring-Gould’s Sherlock Holmes of Baker Street (New York: Clarkson N. Potter, 1962), Michael Harrison’s L. Sherlock Holmes (New York: E.P.Dutton, 1977) and Michael Hardwick’s Sherlock Holmes – My Life and Crimes (London: Harvill Press, 1984) have been mentioned as the authentic biographies of Sherlock Holmes, while S.C. Robert’s Doctor Watson (London: Faber and Faber, 1931) and Michael Hardwick’s The Private Life of Dr. Watson – Being the Personal Reminiscences of John H. Watson (New York: E.P.Dutton, 1983) as those of John H. Watson, other than eight biographies of Doyle, including Adrian Conan Doyle’s The True Conan Doyle (London: John Murray, 1945), and Arthur Conan Doyle’s autobiography – Memories and Adventures (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1924) (129). Allan Eyles recommends twenty seven critical works as being important to understanding the canon (Eyles 129). The *Janus Books*

Limited's webpage, titled "List J: Detective Fiction, Jack the Ripper, and Sherlockiana", available as a link to <http://www.sherlockian.net>, also lists two hundred fifty six books – serial number 232 to 487 – under "Sherlock Holmes". It is significant that none of the books mentioned above could be discerned to contain criticism of the Sherlock Holmes stories in the postcolonial perspective studying Holmes's character as an Orientalist imperialist, though in several sections of the fifty six short stories and four novels, Doyle has obtrusively asserted his colonial ideologies. Even the second volume of William S. Baring-Gould's The Annotated Sherlock Holmes (New York: Clarkson N. Potter, 1967) does not include any of such postcolonial critical works (807-24). Moreover, in his autobiography, Doyle has maintained a complete silence about the issue of his narratives being literature on the British Empire.

Even at the beginning of the twenty first century works reading the Holmes canon in postcolonial perspective are limited in number. The following nine collections of critical essays and treatises might be cited as have achieved prominence.

Catherine Wynne's The Colonial Conan Doyle: British Imperialism, Irish Nationalism and the Gothic examines how British imperialism, Irish nationalism, and Catholic allegiance are juxtaposed in the detective stories of Doyle who is generally perceived as an English defender of the British Empire and apologist but whose father was an Irish resistor against the British rule and whose uncle resigned as the principal cartoonist for the *Punch* magazine after it ridiculed the Catholic Pope. By

placing the Sherlock Holmes narratives within a colonial context, the complexity of which is evident in Doyle's gothic tropes of shifting landscapes, disguised criminalities, spiritualism, and sexual anomalies and conflicts, she underscores the importance of colonialism in his fiction, but does not illustrate the several aspects of the Saidian Orientalism in Holmes's attitude to and interactions with the people from the East in general and India in particular.

Wynne especially focuses on the phenomenon in modern Irish literary criticism which treats Celtic litterateurs like Bram Stoker, Oscar Wilde, William Butler Yeats and James Joyce writing during the union of Britain and Ireland between 1801 and 1922, as *metrocolonial* subjects whose psychic landscape and socio-political attachments were contoured by their interstitial location between the ruling centre and the subjugated margins of the Empire. Their ethno-national duality conditioned a likewise differently textured ambivalence toward the cultures of both imperial assertion and colonial resistance, of which their representational interests and strategies seem in part symptomatic. In her criticism, the writer seeks to extend the recent critical trend by placing a British native and lifelong resident in a culturally ambiguous Irish company while pointing out that Doyle, whose fictional detective appears as "a definitively English sleuth", was not only "of southern Irish descent" but gradually came to balance his imperialistic enthusiasm with guardedly Irish nationalist sympathies (3, 7). Irishness and Irish politics present in the detective, military and mystical aspects of Doyle's fiction are segregated for separate analyses.

In The Urban Jungle: Reading Empire in London

from Doyle to Eliot, Joseph McLaughlin describes the effects of Britain and the British culture on colonised people and demonstrates how the influence worked both ways. Focusing on the relationship between the literature of British imperialism and early Edwardian metropolitan culture, he offers an account of the cultural confusion caused by bringing the foreign home, and how narratives and language formerly used to describe the colonies became ways of reading and writing about life in London – “that great cesspool into which all loungers and idlers of the Empire are irresistibly drained” (*A Study* 13). A major section of canonical literature by Doyle, Margaret Harkness, Joseph Conrad, T. S. Eliot, William Booth, and Jack London display this inversion of colonial rhetoric. By deploying the metaphor of “the urban jungle”, litterateurs like Doyle and Conrad reconfigure the urban poor as “a new race of city savages” and read urban culture as a “Darkest England” – a region like Africa that is full of danger and novel possibilities. Though McLaughlin refers extensively to Edward W. Said’s Orientalism in course of his work, a detailed analysis of the Indian scenario in Doyle’s imperial perspective is not undertaken.

Patrick Brantlinger’s Rule of Darkness: British Literature and Imperialism, 1830-1914 deals with the relationship of British Imperialism to racial ideology. The author writes, “Empire involved military conquest and rapacious economic exploitation, but it also involved the enactment of often idealistic although nonetheless authoritarian schemes of cultural domination. The goal of imperialist discourse is always to weld these seeming opposites together or to disguise their

contradiction” (861). This double aspect of imperialism gains significance in context of the colonial situation in the middle of the twentieth century and afterwards. In his critical work, Brantlinger discusses causes for the emergence of pro-British nationalistic literature after the Indian Sepoy Mutiny of 1857, and his arguments can be stretched to analyse the imperial ideologies expressed in the stories of Doyle, Edward Morgan Forster or Rudyard Kipling in the post-1857 British literary canonical perspective.

In his internet-treatise, “A Post-colonial Canonical and Cultural Revision of Conan Doyle’s Holmes Narratives”, at http://www.qub.ac.uk/english/imperial/india/conan_doyle.htm, 21 July 1999-revised edition, Nicholas Stewart, “redefi[nes] the British literary canon as imperial construct and influence”, and analyses two specific Sherlock Holmes narratives – The Sign of Four and “The Adventure of the Speckled Band” – to underline the precise areas that make the two stories “Doyle’s imperially compatible text[s]” and reflect the writer’s “fear and rejection of intercultural experience[s]”.

Joseph A. Kestner’s Sherlock’s Men: Masculinity, Conan Doyle and Cultural History takes as its subject the ways in which the entire Holmes canon “served to model male gender behaviour”(7), as social pressures upon male identity became particularly acute in the early-twentieth century, citing references to his Masculinities in Victorian Painting (1995). In this study he attempts to chart Doyle’s shifting concerns about the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century masculinity by analysing the Holmes narratives in chronological groupings to produce a

Victorian, an Edwardian, and a Georgian Holmes. Although the writer has acknowledged that ‘stabilising bourgeois, hegemonic masculinity’ was Doyle’s general project, he sees such definitions as always being “inwardly conflicted” (13) and reveals many strains and contradictions contained within the illusion of a monolithic masculine identity during late Victorian and early Edwardian periods. Kestner’s book especially discusses issues concerning the function of regulating, policing, and investigating cultural institutions and practices, the consequences of imperialism for masculinity, the criminal as transgressive masculinity, the functions of law promulgated by the colonisers and the punishment meted out by them to the colonised individuals, and the presentation of international politics in the Sherlock Holmes stories.

In Sherlock Holmes: Victorian Sleuth to Modern Hero, edited by Charles R. Putney, Joseph A Cutshall King, and Sally Sugarman, a collection of papers from the 1994 *Conference of the Baker Street Breakfast Club* at Bennington-Vermont, Philip K. Wilson, Patrick Campbell, Nicholas Meyer and Edward B. Hanna discuss the changing the social and imperial history of England that had imparted a colonial character to the late nineteenth century detective stories like Doyle’s, and include the issues of Sherlock Holmes’s work-ethic, rereading Holmes as an archetypal hero, and the influence of the Sherlock Holmes narratives on the twentieth century detective and science fiction.

In the Adrienne Johnson Gosselin edited Multicultural Detective Fiction: Murder from the ‘Other’ Side, Patricia Linton reads detective novels

by the subaltern litterateurs like Linda Hosan as resistant texts against the imperial hegemony, though in the American perspective (17-36). Wayne Templeton's "Xojo and Homicide: the Postcolonial Murder Mysteries of Tony Hillerman" presents a postcolonial criticism of detective stories but, once again, from the viewpoint of an American (37-60). In the twelfth and sixteenth chapters, John Cullen Gruesser and Gosselin relate multicultural detective fiction to Black writing and Harlem Renaissance. Multicultural Detective Fiction does not read the Holmes stories as containing Doyle's imperial ideology, though the issue of postcolonialism and resistance through subaltern detective stories have been addressed.

Upamanyu Pablo Mukherjee, in "Empire and Its Discontents: Three Narratives of the Indian Mutiny of 1857" – his address to the South Central Modern Language Association's 59th Annual Meeting at Omni Austin Hotel Downtown, Austin, on 1 November 2002 – had described how the late nineteenth-century Indian writing in English as well as the contemporary general Indian literature begun to register vociferous protest against the imperial domination and socio-cultural hegemony of the English colonisers, which ultimately culminated in such postcolonial detective stories like Saradindu Bandyopadhyay's. His Crime and Empire: the Colony in Nineteenth-Century Fictions of Crime deals with the issues of principally the British Empire, imperialism and policing (1-3), and postcolonial analyses of the discourses on imperial ideology (8-12) in the introductory chapters. A historical survey of crime writing and colonisation of India and other English colonies (23-37) is followed by a section on the anti-colonial and patronising attitudes adopted by different English litterateurs and

politicians, from Fielding to Peel (45-58). In the fourth chapter, Mukherjee has dealt with subaltern detective fiction as a mean to “resist the New Police”, while the fifth and sixth describe representation of the Indian criminals and the Indian Sepoy Mutiny in the late nineteenth century English and Indian novels, operations against the thuggees, and refer to the writings of Meadows Taylor and other novelists of the Mutiny. However, with its limited references to Doyle’s assertion of colonial and Orientalist ideologies in his Holmes narratives (188), Mukherjee’s work is not a detailed criticism of the Sherlock Holmes stories in an anti-imperial perspective.

The list concludes with a reference to Jeffrey Richards’s “Sherlock Holmes, Arthur Conan Doyle and the British Empire”. In this essay, Richards seeks to identify those particular areas in the Holmes narratives where Doyle can be observed obtrusively championing colonial control of the Orient, and contrasts the Holmes canon with Kipling’s imperially-compatible stories like The Jungle Book (1894) and Kim (1901) that are set in India.

While a formidable part of Sherlockian criticism has been undertaken in the United States of America, a former British colony, by American critics, most of these works start with the identical supposition that Holmes is the best fictional detective in the world, who has transcended the realms of literature to gain the stature of an icon. Importantly, even though different Sherlock Holmes stories incorporate within themselves Doyle’s imperial ideology, few critics have explicitly

identified him as an Orientalist and censured him for being a relentless champion of the British imperial interests at the cost of the Eastern subaltern populace.

The lack of postcolonial readings of the Holmes canon can be explained on the following grounds. First, Holmes having been rendered “world’s greatest detective” (*The Wordsworth* 850) through Doyle’s artistic excellence, readers generally tend to overlook the persistence of the imperial strain which makes Doyle’s conception defective and demeaning to the former British colonies. Second, by demonstrating themselves as Orientalists and advocating in favour of the British imperial interests, Holmes and Watson externally manifest the contemporary European commoners’ dream of expanding their colonial control, and were overwhelmingly accepted as ardent champions of the cause of the empire. The myth of the Orient being the land of “the Sphinx, the Genii, half-imagined, half-known...monsters, devils...terrors...desires” (Said, *Orientalism* 63) had induced in the Western psyche a general distrust and psychosis of the East and the Easterners who “in everything oppose the clarity, directness, and nobility of the Anglo-Saxon race [and the other Whites]” (39). Holmes and his associate’s attempts to marginalise the Oriental Other in the realm of literature was therefore hailed by the common Europeans who assumed a sort of self-assuring victory over the Orient when Tonga is fired at in The Sign of Four or when Daulat Ras is rigorously interrogated in connection to the leakage of examination’s question papers in ‘The Adventure of the Three Students’. Third, the postcolonial perspective, according to Robert J.C. Young, is directed against the imperialists and can be detected especially in the writings of those Eastern litterateurs whose countries were

once colonised by Britain and other European countries (Young 2). Young's assertion may well lead to the assumption that such a strain would not be normally undertaken by the Western, particularly European critics. Fourth, the Sherlock Holmes narratives, in spite of their bearing references to Doyle's imperial ideology, focus principally on the detective's ingenious methodology applied in apprehending criminals, and are more read for their forensic interests. Finally, by an explicit postcolonial criticism of Doyle would entail the European critics' admission of the Western Orientalist prejudices against the colonised populace, and as such would expose not only Doyle but also themselves to the censure of the colonised readers.

Although Saradindu Bandyopadhyay's Byomkesh Bakshi narratives, which form one of the more popular groups of Indian sleuth fiction, first depicted since 1892 an investigator who is conspicuously a member of the colonised Indian subaltern populace, they have never been explicitly read as instances of postcolonial resistance against the perceived omnipotence and uniqueness of the European detectives. At different points in his detective stories, the writer, who commenced his narratives in British India, challenges the Western supremacy revealed in characters such as Sherlock Holmes and Father Brown by depicting Bakshi as an Oriental middleclass gentleman who adheres strictly to his native Bengali tongue and counters the Eurocentric conventions for methodology, dress and daily life through his own hybridity in those specific aspects. In his interview to Partho Chattopadhyay published in the *Ananda Bazar Patrika* on 22 October 1968, his session with Pratul Chandra Gupta in March 1970, and in his diary, Bandyopadhyay has had discussed how he manoeuvred the

influences of Western detective story writers like Poe, Doyle, Christie, Edgar Wallace and Jack London into creating an extraordinarily intelligent and talented but identifiably Bengali investigator (*Saradindu II* 637, 647). Kshetra Gupta rightly comments, “Like Saradindu, his detective is overwhelmingly Bengali though belonging to a later generation” (Gupta, *Satyajiter* 8).

It is important that unlike Doyle, Saradindu Bandyopadhyay did not write any definite autobiography. Some of his diary entries, letters, and the prosaic “Aamar Lekhok Jeevoner Adiparbo” (The Early Years of My Literary Life) and “Hwritkompo” (Fear) have been collectively published as “Deenlipi – 1918 O 1920” (Diaries of 1918 and 1920), “Mon-Konika” (Fragments of Mind) and “Atmojeevankatha” (Autobiographical Lines) in the twelfth volume of *Saradindu Omnibus* (241-466). Although he does not detail about his Indianised conception of Byomkesh Bakshi in “Atmojeevankatha”, letters written to him by Mohitlall Majumder from Dacca on 10 and 30 August 1940, and by Raj Sekhar Basu from Calcutta on 9 July 1951 and 21 March 1957 contain references to how he had successfully emancipated the subgenre of Bengali detective fiction from their state of insipid collaboration with the Eurocentric tales of investigation (Bandyopadhyay, *Saradindu XII* 432-3, 440, 443). He also initiated the convention of countering the strenuous and rigorous adventures in European and particularly British detective stories with psychological approach to unravelling of mystery.

In spite of the wide popularity of the thirty three narratives, postcolonial criticism of the Byomkesh canon is limited to Sukumar Sen's Crime Kahinir Kalkranti (Kolkata: Ananda Publishers Private Limited) published in the 1980s in which the author traces the growth of Indian and Bengali detective fiction from 1892 and briefly analyses how Saradindu Bandyopadhyay resisted the Eurocentric detective fictions' hegemony through his Bengali inquisitor. In her *Translator's Note* to Picture Imperfect and Other Byomkesh Bakshi Mysteries, Sreejata Guha has limited her criticism by pointing out to the "Indian context" of Bandyopadhyay's detective stories (viii). Also, Brian Hatcher's translation of his narratives in journals like *The Toronto Review of Contemporary Writing Abroad* (19:2, Fall 1997-edition) and *Critical Asian Studies* (34:3, 2002-edition) does not focus on their postcolonial connotations. Repeated Internet searches through *Google* and *MSN* have also failed to procure satisfactory results and references in this context. Therefore, in this thesis I propose to fulfil the lacunae which have been persisting in critical studies on Indian /Bengali detective fiction by tracing the growth of the Indian/Bengali detective fiction in colonial India, and through an exhaustive postcolonial reading of the Byomkesh Bakshi canon.

Significantly, Bandyopadhyay has avoided direct identification of Byomkesh Bakshi as his anti-imperial spokesperson. To identify a literary creation as a type is to narrow down the premises for its interaction and interpretation. The Bakshi narratives can be read not only as detective stories by a resisting subaltern Indian, but also as social, historical and psychoanalytical novels. It also requires mention that Bandyopadhyay had been educated under the British system of

education in colonised India first at Munger and thereafter Vidyasagar College, Calcutta until 1919, and after passing law from Patna in 1926, he remained a probationary lawyer under the British judicial system in India until 1929 (Bandyopadhyay, *Saradindu II* 635). Ostrusive and vociferous protests against the British colonisers would not only have affected his profession, but also attracted the colonisers' inhibition and censure.

Bandyopadhyay was born in Jaunpur, Uttar Pradesh, on 30 March 1899, and spent his early life principally in Bihar and Maharashtra. It was not possible for him to associate himself psychologically with and depict a realistic picture of the nationalist struggle waged by the Bengali revolutionaries in and around Calcutta. The Byomkesh Bakshi canon therefore eschews the issue of the inquisitor's strenuous participation in the anti-colonial struggle in Bengal. However, he remains a champion of the Indian cause just as Doyle is that of the British Empire.

In spite of the fact that the Byomkesh Bakshi narratives are the most popular detective stories in India, works on translation of these stories into international languages have been sparing. Professor Brian A. Hatcher of Illinois Wesleyan University, Bloomington, has painstakingly translated some of Saradindu Bandyopadhyay's stories in different editions of *The Toronto Review of Contemporary Writing Abroad*, for example, in its Fall 1997 (volume 16 number 1) and Spring 2001 (volume 19 number 2) issues, *Journal of South Asian Literature*, and *Routledge-Critical Asian Studies* {for instance, in the 34:3 (2002), 465-70-edition}.

Sreejata Guha of Stony Brook University, published Picture Imperfect and Other Byomkesh Bakshi Mysteries, a collection of seven Byomkesh Bakshi narratives published by the Penguin Books India in 1999.

The Calcutta-based crime story club, *Holmesiana*, was inaugurated on 27 August 1983 by several distinguished critics and litterateurs including Sukumar Sen, Pratul Chandra Gupta, Premendra Mitra, Santosh Kumar Ghosh, Samoresh Basu, Debipada Bhattacharyya, Arun Kumar Mitra, Nirendranath Chakroborty, Subhadra Kumar Sen, Ranjit Chattopadhyay, Ananda Bagchi and Badal Basu, to ensure regular and spontaneous participation in detective story writing and criticism of the Indian/Bengali detective stories including Saradindu Bandyopadhyay's . The literary centre could not function because of deaths of its members.

With their intrinsic anti-imperial ideology, the Byomkesh Bakshi stories have retained their popularity as postcolonial narratives even in the beginning of the twenty first century. This thesis aims to show how Saradindu Bandyopadhyay deftly countered the colonial hegemony of the Eurocentric detective fiction by creating the Bengali gentleman-inquisitor and posited a subaltern resistance against the perceived omnipotence of such Western fictional sleuths as Sherlock Holmes.

NOTE:

1. Seidman, Michael, Julian Symons, Douglas G. Greene. "Detective Story". Microsoft ® Encarta ® Online Encyclopaedia 2003. 1 April 2003. <http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia/761559994/Detective_Story.html#endads>

CHAPTER 4.

STUDIES IN IMPERIAL IDEOLOGY: THE SHERLOCK HOLMES STORIES.

A. A STUDY IN SCARLET: -

A Study in Scarlet, the first Sherlock Holmes story, was published in *Beeton's Christmas Annual*, in November 1887. The story, which Arthur Conan Doyle began to outline on 8 March 1886, was initially titled A Tangled Skin and initially introduced the detective as Sherringford Holmes and his associate, Doctor John H. Watson, M.D., whom the writer created in remembrance of Lecoq's Father Absinthe and Don Quixote's Sancho Panza, as Ormond Sacker (Eyles 11-2). The names "Sherlock Holmes" and "John Watson" later evolved out of the American jurist and medical pioneer Oliver Wendell Holmes, the bishop Thomas Sherlock and his father, William Sherlock, two Nottinghamshire cricketers – Sherwin and Shacklock, the Devon bowler Sherlock, the violinist Alfred Sherlock, and James Elmwood Watson, a member of the Southsea Literary and Scientific Society and a former physician to the British consulate at Newchwung, Manchuria (Eyles 11, and Baring-Gould, *Annotated I* 10). This requires mention that in creating Byomkesh Bakshi, Saradindu Bandyopadhyay might have been influenced by the renowned Bengali barrister, industrialist, patriot and politician, Byomkesh Chakroborty (1855-1929). Having practised as a lawyer, Bandyopadhyay was acquainted with the reputation of Chakroborty.

In the first chapter of the novel, Watson narrates the history of his medical education and about his military background. He particularly informs that he had initially been attached to “the Fifth Northumberland Fusiliers as Assistant Surgeon” (Doyle, *The Complete* 13), and has had served in India. Doyle’s obsession with and tendency of maintaining a cautious distance from anything Oriental in general and Indian in particular is, importantly, displayed from the very third line of the novel onwards. He openly identifies south-eastern Asia as “the enemy’s country” (13). The degree of readiness that Watson exhibited when he “at once entered [his] new duties” (13) is an indication of his willingness to actively suppress the natives thus perpetuating the English domination over them.

Once the physician, who has had previously been accustomed to the safety provided by England to its primarily-White residents and to the self-assurance emanating from English medical education, leaves the realms of the Occident and enters the Orient, he begins to suffer. In Afghanistan he is struck on the shoulder by “a Jezail bullet, which shatter[s] the bone and graze[s] the sub-clavian artery” (13). Significantly, Watson is saved from the Oriental “murderous Ghazis” not by the natives but by Murray, his identifiably White orderly (13). Even when he is brought to the safe confines of the British camp – “the base hospital at Peshawar” (13), he is not completely safe because members of the base camp, which symbolically becomes the microcosm of the imperial locus of England, are always outnumbered, and are therefore

under constant threat in the Empire. Soon the recuperating surgeon is “struck down by enteric fever” (13), a tropical disease.

The first chapter of A Study in Scarlet is significant in the imperial aspect because, first of all, it establishes the biographical backdrop for its narrator that embodies a singular opposition between heroic British military strength and an oppositional, primitive colonised populace. More importantly, it exhibits Sherlock Holmes as the Orientalist who makes use of his knowledge of the Orient to keep particularly the Oriental colonies in control, and Watson is revealed as an ex-army official who has had the experience of actively suppressing the sub-continental natives. The detective and the physician are thus displayed as the cult representatives of the West who cater to the contemporary British cultural outlook. Moreover, in his being a member of the imperial army, Watson befits the idea of the anti-native Orientalist and conforms to Said’s observation, “The cult of the military personality was prominent [in late nineteenth century European colonies], usually because such personalities had managed to bash a few dark heads...” (*Culture* 181).

A representative of the colonisers as Watson is, he considers everything emanating from and related to the Orient in general and India, one of England’s larger colonies in 1887, in particular as the legitimate property of England. The *property* includes the *Oriental vices* too, like the “enteric fever” which he describes as “that curse of our Indian progression” (Doyle, *The Complete* 13). Here Doyle seems to imply that with the elimination of such *curves* as the enteric fever, the colony would

become a steady source of resource for the imperial locus. The effect of prolonged association with the colonies on the imperial capital of London is demonstrated when, in the rapidly changing scenario, Doyle identifies the city with a “great cesspool into which all the loungers and idlers of the Empire are irresistibly drained” (13). Dependence on the wealth of the colonies affected the colonisers by making them lazy, and this posed a danger for the supporters of imperialism because of its potency to inhibit the colonisers’ inclination for expanding their empire through continuous and rigorous conquests. A stint at the Indian sub-continent obtrusively affects the imperial representative by emaciating his physique and darkening his complexion – the primary source for his self-identification as being “superior”. Stamford describes Watson “as thin as a lath and as brown as a nut” (13).

In Orientalism, Said stresses the role and requirement of science in helping imperialists perpetuate their domination of the natives. In this context it might be pointed out that Sherlock Holmes is “a first-class chemist”, and Stamford describes him as “a little too scientific for his taste” (Doyle, *The Complete* 14). His statement is confirmed when Holmes describes details about the old guaiacum test (14), “the microscopic examination for blood corpuscles” (15), and the *Sherlock Holmes test* related to the identification and confirmation of suspicious stains as those caused by dried blood (15). The guaiacum test especially indicates the detective’s enriching his subaltern knowledge because Christopher Morley notes in Sherlock Holmes and Doctor Watson: a Textbook of Friendship that the guaiacum or lignum vitae tree is native to the West Indies and northern South America (Baring-Gould, *Annotated I* 150). Though “his studies

are very desultory and eccentric”, Holmes has “amassed a lot of out-of-the-way knowledge” that he applies not only to improve the realm of forensic sciences but also to identify the precise atmosphere of the colonies and behaviour of the colonised, decide and act accordingly (Doyle, *The Complete* 14). His knowledge of Trichinopoly cigar made from the dark tobacco cultivated near Madras (the old Chennai) is also a part of his Orientalist self-education (22). Watson later applauds him for bringing “detection as near an exact science as it ever will be brought in this world” (23). On being first introduced to his later-life narrator and constant companion, he immediately guesses that the surgeon had “been in Afghanistan” (14) because Watson’s skin had become dark during his service at the tropics and only in Afghanistan, an Oriental country, could “an English army doctor...see much hardship” and get “his arm wounded” (18). Samuel F. Howard points out in “More about Maiwand” (published in the January 1957-issue of *The Baker Street Journal*) that the physician could not have visited Afghanistan but South Africa where the British army had lately concluded a colonial war against the Zulus between 1879 and 1880 (Baring-Gould, *Annotated* 1162).

Holmes’s presumptions like “Now we have the Sherlock Holmes test and there will no longer be any difficulty” (Doyle, *The Complete* 15), his confidence that he would infallibly turn out to be a good musician if Watson does not object to the sound of violin (15), and his assertion, “I suppose I am the only one in the world... I’m a consulting detective” (18), are, in fact, attempts to establish himself as a supreme authority in whatever he does. Even his techniques of detection are based on the supposition that “there is nothing new under the sun” (21). His confidence is a part of his

preparing and presenting himself as a compatible coloniser who can always be trusted for his efficiency. Doyle excuses his detective's pride by allowing him an encyclopaedic knowledge revealed in his references to different murder cases and various aspects of crime because of which Stamford calls him "a Walking Calendar of crime" (15). While exhibiting his familiarity with crimes and criminals from different parts of the world, the detective alludes to cities like Frankfort, Bradford, Montpellier and New Orleans (15) that are scattered over at least two continents – Europe and North America. In Watson's list of 'his limits' and as already mentioned, Holmes excels particularly in subjects of science – Botany, Geology, Chemistry and Anatomy (16-7), and this assumes significance in context of Fanon's demonstration in A Dying Colonialism how the Western science and technology is an integral part of the oppressive colonial situation and helps in the imperial military and economic domination over the natives (Wyrick 91). The investigator is also well versed in martial techniques – singlestick playing, boxing and fencing (Doyle, *The Complete* 17) because every coloniser must be capable of self-protection, and H.T.Webster points out in "Observations of Sherlock Holmes as an Athlete and Sportsman" that even canes and hunting crops often become formidable weapons at his hands (Baring-Gould, *Annotated I* 157). On singlestick, Ralph A. Ashton writes in "The Secret Weapons of 221 B Baker Street", "[It]...is essentially a slashing, whacking, battering, beating and clubbing sort of weapon", thereby becoming an implement for Foucaultian discipline at the hands of the coloniser (Baring-Gould, *Annotated I* 157). Holmes completes his self-identification as a conforming imperialist in his possession of "a good practical knowledge of British law" which he inevitably applies

against the subaltern individuals like Tonga to obliterate or control them as and when required (Doyle, *The Complete* 17).

Even though Watson is a representative of the imperial military forces, in the novel he is constantly made to self-efface in order to project the detective as being superior not only to the colonised populace but also to himself by constantly referring to him in superlatives like “his reasoning was close and intense”, “his conclusions were as infallible as so many propositions of Euclid”, and “so startling would his results appear to the uninitiated that until they learned the processes by which he had arrived at them they might well consider him as a necromancer” (17). To fortify the perceived intellectual superiority of the detective, the physician confesses that having harboured a suspicion about Holmes’s deductions regarding “a stalwart, plainly-dressed individual...walking slowly down the other side of the street” as being a “retired sergeant of Marines”, he was forced to admit his own error when the man, on being enquired, said, “A sergeant, sir, Royal Marine Light Infantry, sir...” (19). Later, when Watson and Holmes visit the scene of Enoch J. Drebber’s murder, the former fails to detect any evidence that might lead to the identification of the murderer, but he “[has]...such extraordinary evidence of the quickness of his (Holmes’s) perceptive faculties that...[he has]...no doubt...that [Holmes] could see a great deal which ...[is]...hidden from [himself] (20). The identifiably British detective is always confident about his own excellence and investigative skills and gives expression to his perception of his own superiority by intermittently referring to his perceptively unique “intuition”, by distancing himself from the official police detectives and the privately employed

investigators, and by lampooning Dupin and Lecoq as “a very inferior fellow” and “a miserable bungler”, respectively (18).

Holmes’s satiric comments about Dupin and Lecoq not only reveal Doyle’s attempt to grant unchallengeable omnipotence and excellence to his own detective but also highlight the author’s attempts at lambasting representatives of other imperial countries, both Lecoq and Dupin being French detectives, and France being an imperial opponent of Britain. Doyle, however, appears to imply that Dupin and Lecoq are *real* characters in order to grant realism to his own fictional detective (18). Significantly, Edgar Allan Poe, the American creator of Dupin, and Gaboriau, the French introducer of Lecoq, belong respectively to one of the former colonies of England that had emerged as a formidable force against its own coloniser, and France.

From the very first Holmes narrative onwards , Doyle has had been cautious about imparting to his detective an insularity from the general governmental police forces and their official investigators to give him a separate and independent identity. Working under the orders of the British government, the police detectives could not take independent decisions where as Holmes does not wait for an order from the British administrators to wage investigation. Stressing on his own intellect and efficiency, Sherlock Holmes negates the excellence and participation if not the existence of every other imperial detective lest he or she come to share an Empire and readership which would otherwise have been his own. During his discussion with Watson regarding his trade, he says,

“Well, I have a trade of my own. I suppose I am the only one in the world. I’m a consulting detective, if you can understand what that is. Here in London we have lots of Government detectives and lots of private ones. When these fellows are at fault, they come to me, and I am generally able, by the help of my knowledge of the history of crime, to set them straight...” (18).

In the above quoted speech the detective supposes that Watson as well as the general readers would not be able to understand and appreciate the paraphernalia of his investigative techniques, and thus chances that they would objectively view the validity of and thereafter challenge his investigative modus operandi are minimised.

In A Study in Scarlet, Holmes not only patronises the two representatives of the government detectives, Lestrade and Gregson, but also does he point out the polemic relationship between them, and implies, in turn, that the mutual rivalry might be the primary cause for their inefficiency:

“Gregson is the smartest of the Scotland Yarders...he and Lestrade are the pick of a bad lot. They are both quick and energetic, but conventional – shockingly so. They have their knives into one another, too. They are as jealous as a pair of professional beauties...” (19).

The imperial military and police forces could not afford mutual rivalry and differences if they are to maintain their control over the colonies.

Holmes attests his own superiority when he points out that apart from his own perception, Gregson also “knows that [Holmes is]... his superior, and acknowledges it to...[him]” (19), while simultaneously depicting the hypocrisy of the governmental forces by saying, “but he (Gregson) would cut his tongue out before he would own...[that Holmes is intellectually his superior]...to any third person” (19-20).

In the first Holmes narrative, Doyle deals with the problem of the colony, former or contemporary, by focussing on three Americans – Jefferson Hope, Enoch J. Drebber and Joseph Stangerson. The arrival of these formerly colonised individuals at the imperial locus of London disturbs the British society and results in chaos and death. The newspaper reports Watson reads following Drebber’s death reflect a subtle xenophobia and the general mistrust among the British citizens of the new settlers and members of Britain’s former and contemporary colonies. While the *Daily Telegraph* advocates “a closer watch over foreigners in England” (27), the *Daily News* describes the migrating people as being *driven* (*italics mine*) to England’s shores: “a number of men who might have made excellent citizens were they not soured by the recollection of all they had undergone” (28), thus referring to their polemic relationship with their former colonisers and underscoring the impossibility of a harmonious mixing and peaceful cohabitation of the coloniser and the colonised.

It is important that Doyle, writing in an imperial perspective, presents the Americans as being physically distorted, and somewhat different from the general appearance of the British. While Drebbler with his “curling black hair...low forehead, blunt nose, and prognathus jaw” is implied resemble an ape and an Oriental because of his black hair (21), Hope is described to possess a “dazed, savage face” (33) which negates his own appearance from the perceptively sober countenance of the British colonisers. Allen Eyles observes, “Americans feature prominently in many... [Sherlock Holmes]...stories, although if this was intended to enhance the appeal of the cases in the United States, it is surprising how many of them are unsavoury villains” (Eyles 24).

In the second part of the novel, ironically subtitled “The Country of the Saints”, Doyle has, according to Eyles, presented a “stodgy, dispensable, and controversial” history of the American state of Utah and a distorted description of one of America’s religious sects, the Mormons (Eyles 14). Everything about Utah is “arid and repulsive” (Doyle, *The Complete* 35), and the second part of the novel symbolically opens with a dreary scene of desert and death on “the Great Alkali Plain” (34-7), which indicates the dangers, aridity and sterility lurking in regions of one of Britain’s former colonies. The novel also contains a lengthy and biased depiction of the perceived debilitations in the society of the Mormons in context of which the author satirises the American region he describes as “the Country of the Saints” and suggests that the total religious sect and its followers are bound to be annihilated in near future. Doyle appears

to imply that the distinct religious sect of the Mormons is a 'standard' American religion, and in this light writes at length to refer to the different malevolent and socially debilitating practices prevalent in one of Britain's former colonies:

“...To express an unorthodox opinion was a dangerous matter in those days in the Land of the Saints...so dangerous that even the most saintly dared only whisper their religious opinion with bated breath, lest something which fell from their lips might be misconstrued, and bring down a swift retribution upon them. The victims of persecution had now turned persecutors on their own account and persecutors of the most terrible description. Not the Inquisition of Seville, nor the German Vehmgericht, nor the Secret Societies of Italy, were ever able to put a more formidable machinery in motion than that which cast a cloud over the State of Utah.

Its invisibility, and the mystery which was attached to it, made this organisation doubly terrible. It appeared to be omniscient and omnipotent, and yet was neither seen nor heard. The man who held out against the Church vanished away, and none knew whither he had gone or what had befallen him. His wife and his children awaited him at home, but no father ever returned to tell them how he had fared at the hands of his secret judges. A rash word or a hasty act was followed by annihilation, and yet none knew what the nature might be of this terrible power, which was suspended over them. No wonder that men went about

in fear and trembling, and that even in the heart of the wilderness they dared not whisper the doubts, which oppressed them.

At first this vague and terrible power was exercised only upon the recalcitrants who, having embraced the Mormon faith, wished afterwards to pervert or to abandon it. Soon, however, it took a wider range. The supply of adult women was running short, and polygamy without a female population on which to draw was a barren doctrine indeed. Strange rumours began to be bandied about – rumours of murdered immigrants and rifled camps in regions where Indians had never been seen. Fresh women appeared in the harems of the Elders – women who pined and wept, and bore upon their faces the traces of an unextinguishable horror. Belated wanderers upon the mountains spoke of gangs of armed men, masked, stealthy, and noiseless, who flitted by them in the darkness. These tales and rumours took substance and shape, and were corroborated and recorroborated, until they resolved themselves into a definite name. To this day, in the lonely ranches of the West, the name of the Danite Band, or the Avenging Angels, is a sinister and an ill-omened one.

Fuller knowledge of the organisation which produced such terrible results, served to increase rather than to lessen the horror which it inspired in the minds of men. None knew who belonged to

this ruthless society. The names of the participators in the deeds of blood and violence done under the name of religion were kept profoundly secret. The very friend to whom you communicated your misgivings as to the Prophet and his mission might be one of those who would come forth at night with fire and sword to exact a terrible reparation. Hence every man feared his neighbour, and none spoke of the things which were nearest his heart..." (40).

In its reversing the Christian doctrine of "love thy neighbour", the society of the Mormons appears as a Manichean opposite to Christianity that is perceptively the principal imperial religion, while the society itself has been given an ironic and brutalised portrayal by the Christian author. Doyle also points out that the colonised individuals, when imparted with the power to rule, would definitely fail to construct an efficient government.

In the second part of A Study in Scarlet, Doyle exposes a patriarchal society that considers women as "heifers" to public censure and ridicule (40). The idea of pagan prophets, here Joseph Smith (1805-1844) and Brigham Young (1801-1877), has not only been lampooned, the author also has separately mentioned in a footnote on the fortieth page, "Herber C. Kemball, in one of his sermons, alludes to his hundred wives under ... [the] endearing epithet [of heifer]", in order to underscore that the Mormon Prophet and the Elders are polygamous, morally lax, and therefore, lack the legitimacy to rule. In In the Footsteps of Sherlock Holmes (London: Cassell and

Company Limited, 1958), Michael Harrison asserts that the British reading public of 1887 was quite willing to believe these slanders on the Mormons. Quoting Harrison, William S. Baring-Gould points out that mid-Victorian England was convinced about the Mormons' stealing English servant-girls to spirit them out of the country and to make them White slaves in Mormon harems, and there were riots over this religious sect especially when the girls compared their lot below-stairs with the prospects offered of life in a state which has never known unemployment (Baring-Gould, *Annotated I* 208). By choosing an individual with twenty seven wives to be a commander, Doyle ironically judges the west-ward migration of the Mormons in 1846-7 against the journey of the Israelites towards the chosen land and exposes the formers' inherent contradictions and perceptively evil psychological construction.

The scene of John Ferrier's verbal confrontation with Brigham Young might be viewed symbolically as that between Christianity and Mormonism presented in accordance with Doyle's Christian ethnocentric perspective (Doyle, *The Complete* 49). Young resents Lucy Ferrier's marriage with Jefferson Hope because the latter is a "Gentile" or Christian (40). Importantly, John Ferrier has continued to support if not obtrusively practise his own religion, identifiably Christianity, even after his being saved from the Great Alkali Plain by the Mormons. Doyle poignantly depicts the persecution of the Christians by the pagan Mormon believers: John Ferrier is murdered (46), Lucy Ferrier is abducted, forcibly married to Drebber – a pagan – because of which she "pine[s] away to die" (46), and Hope is made to suffer from the strains of an arduous journey to help the Ferriers escape "the Country of the Saints"(41-7), from the

agony of losing his beloved Lucy Ferrier (47), and from aortic aneurism (48). In a rather Apocalyptic conclusion to the novel, the villainous pagan Americans – Drebber and Stangerson – are annihilated, significantly by a fellow American, and Jefferson Hope, the upholder of Christian interests and symbolic crusader, is not sentenced but is allowed to die naturally out of an aneurism-burst “with a placid smile upon his face” (52). Doyle overwhelmingly and obtrusively sympathises with Hope, and all throughout the second section of A Study in Scarlet, he continues to satirise the Mormon faith and customs not only because they are non-Christian and intimidating the spread of a predominantly imperial religion, but also because the non-Christian individuals belong to one of Britain’s former colonies that has had become superior to the imperialist. The novel might therefore be identified as the first of the several imperially compatible narratives of the Sherlock Holmes canon.

CHAPTER 4. B.

THE SIGN OF FOUR: -

Arthur Conan Doyle's second Sherlock Holmes narrative, The Sign of Four, was first published as "The Sign of the Four" in the February 1890-issue of *Lippincott's Monthly Magazine* from both Britain and the United States of America. The novel was written at a time when the writer had undertaken to write Micah Clarke to challenge the hegemony of the Scottish litterateur Walter Scott in the realm of historical novels. Like A Study in Scarlet, The Sign of Four also contains different references to Doyle's colonial ideology.

The second novel of the Sherlock Holmes canon begins with a reference to the detective's addiction to seven percent solution of cocaine (Doyle, *The Complete* 54). However, the primordial supposition that the coloniser cannot be ideologically erroneous and the fact that the consumption of cocaine was not illegal in the 1890s, allows Doyle the scope to excuse Holmes and he expects readers to comply (Eyles 16). The investigator says,

"My mind...rebels at stagnation. Give me problems, give me work, give me the most abstruse cryptogram, or the most intricate analysis, and I am in my own proper atmosphere. I can dispense them with artificial stimulants. But I abhor the dull routine of existence. I crave for mental exaltation. This is why I have chosen my own particular profession, or

rather created it, for I am the only one in the world” (Doyle, *The Complete* 54).

Thus Holmes’s addiction is depicted as a mean to continue his intellectual exercises which would, in turn, allow him to devise ways for safeguarding England’s internal security and for the imperialists to perpetuate their domination of the primarily Eastern subaltern.

It is in The Sign of Four that Watson first explicitly introduces himself as the chronicler of Holmes’s adventures when he quotes Holmes as contemptuously referring to “a small brochure with the somewhat fantastic title of *A Study in Scarlet*” written by him (54). Doyle tries to downplay Holmes’s pride and egotism, so much the characteristic features of the colonisers, displayed in the statement, “I am the last and highest court of appeal in detection” , by making Watson detect only “a *small vanity*” (*italics mine*) underlying the detective’s “quiet and didactic manner” (54-5). Moreover, the detective expresses undisguised satisfaction with the fact that Francois le Villard, a French detective and a representative of another imperial power, has “ardently admired” him: the letter of gratitude that the French detective has sent to him is written as if “he speaks as a pupil to his master” (55). The above observations point out to two aspects of the detective’s demeanour. First, the British coloniser and detective is at the risk of being decried by readers for being insolently proud of himself and his intellectual abilities, and second, the imperial representative is not ready to withstand any challenge

to the supremacy of his nation and himself, and exhibits a determination to perpetually remain at the top of all the other imperial powers and their citizens.

Holmes's confidence about the infallibility of his deductive methodology stems from Doyle's own comfiture with introducing new processes of investigation which his sleuth uses to identify, control and obliterate the predominantly subaltern criminals. Manindra Dutta points out that Doyle invented and employed such physical and forensic examinations as the usage of *plaster of Paris* to preserve evidences of criminals' footprints and fingerprints, scrutiny of the dresses of suspects for dust, analyses of ashes of cigars produced by different tobacco companies, and of the *Science of Deduction*, including the famous Holmesian maxim, "When you have eliminated the impossible, whatever remains, however improbable, must be the truth"(Doyle, *The Complete* 66), with such a degree of accuracy that the Holmes narratives continue to be read as text books at the Egyptian and Chinese police training academies (Dutta vii-viii). When Holmes discusses with Watson his monographs on the types of ashes of "hundred and forty forms of cigar, cigarette and pipe-tobacco", "the uses of plaster of paris as a preserver of impresses", and "the influence of a trade upon the form of the hand", the author actually depicts a detective who is not only the first in his trade, but also unique in his scientific techniques and expertise that make him an efficient representative of the colonisers and a dependable protector of the imperial interests (Doyle, *The Complete* 55).

Through Doyle's gradual unravelling of Holmes's character, the detective is revealed as an anti-feminist. The imperial requirement of constantly focusing on the causes of the Empire requires that a colonial representative should not be distracted by such sources as, according to Holmes, women. The detective guides himself by rationality and displays a stern and unromantic attitude when he chastises Watson for introducing fantastic and distractive elements in his treatise, *A Study in Scarlet*, because "detection...should be treated in the...cold and unemotional manner" (54). It is also the reason why he does not exhibit any sign of sympathy and attraction for Mary Morstan but adopts a "brisk, business-like tone" as she begins narrating details about her predicament even as her physical beauty readily captivates Watson. Even when Morstan falters in describing her father's disappearance, the detective offers no sympathy but queries about the exact date when he went missing (57). Eyles notes that Holmes is "later complimentary towards her, but only as a budding detective" (16). According to Holmes's maxim, "Women are never to be entirely trusted – not the best of them" (Doyle, *The Complete* 76). He treats love as "an emotional thing", and maintains that "whatever is emotional is opposed to that true cold reason which...[he places]...above all things" (92). When Watson decries the detective as "an automaton – a calculating machine" (58), he opines that one should not allow his "judgement to be biased by personal qualities" (58), and asserts that he "should never marry" himself lest he biases his judgement (92). Though the former army surgeon becomes engaged to Morstan towards the end of the novel (92), Holmes avoids women all throughout the canon.

Three unpalatable events that occurred in Doyle's personal life might have instigated him to deny important roles to women characters in the Holmes narratives. First of all, Mary Foley Doyle, on whom the adolescent author was emotionally dependent, had an affair with Dr. Brian Waller, six years Arthur's senior, when he became one of the boarders the time she started taking in paying guests after Charles Altamont Doyle's institutionalisation for alcoholism in 1876. Although Arthur was influenced by the physician, followed him into medicine, and even attended the same university as Waller, he expressed his resentment in Memories and Adventures at his mother's behaviour by stating that her taking boarders "may have eased her in some ways, but was disastrous in others"¹. On the other hand, Doyle was proud of his father in spite of his alcoholism. The 1888-special edition of A Study in Scarlet was brought out with Charles Altamont Doyle's illustrations. In 1891 Arthur Conan Doyle decorated his new office as a full-time writer with his father's paintings, and in 1924 organised an exhibition of his father's works. In his autobiography, Doyle has laments that his father's life "was full of the tragedy of unfulfilled powers and of underdeveloped gifts"². Holmes might therefore have been depicted as a patriarchal figure who resents control or manoeuvring by women. Second, Doyle married Louise Hawkins in 1885 and enjoyed a brief happy period of conjugal bliss until 1893 when his wife was diagnosed with tuberculosis, a disease that continued to torture her physically and her husband mentally until her death in 1906. Finally, Doyle fell in love with Jean Leckie on 15 March 1897, and he could neither marry her nor could make their relationship public for the next nine years, until Hawkins died following which he married her in 1907. The mental torture he

suffered attending an ailing wife and suffering from an unfulfilled love might have also led him to make his detective averse toward women.

According to Mary Morstan's account, Captain Arthur Morstan, an officer of an Indian regiment, disappears from his hotel room on 3 December 1878 and leaves behind "a considerable amount of curiosities from the Andaman Island" (Doyle, *The Complete* 57). Almost from the very beginning of Morstan's narrative, Doyle tries to associate the Orient to mystery and suffering. Captain Morstan and Major Sholto, "in command of the troops of the Andaman Islands" are representatives of the British colonial army that is assigned the task of dominating the natives through the usage of violence and physical force (59).

On their way to Thaddeus Sholto's residence, Holmes and Watson are immediately suspicious of the Hindu servant "clad in a yellow turban, white, loose fitting clothes, and a yellow sash" because he is an Oriental native and because "there...[is]...something incongruous in this oriental figure framed in the commonplace doorway of a third-rate suburban dwelling-house" at the middle of the imperial locus of London (60). Doyle's sentences seem to imply that an Oriental native is *incongruous* in White Britain and can only be employed in a "third-rate" British "dwelling house". The Hindu servant leads them "down a sordid and common passage, ill lit and worse-furnished" (60), and objects and places with Oriental associations have thus been identified with sordidness and mystery. Naturally Sholto's room, decorated in an Oriental

style “look[s] as out-of-place as a diamond of first water in a setting of brass” (60) or as incongruous a miniature Orient would appear in an Occidental macrocosm:

“The richest and glossiest of curtains and tapestries draped the walls, looped back here and there to expose some richly mounted painting or Oriental vase. The carpet was of amber and black, so soft and so thick that the foot sank pleasantly into it, as into a bed of moss. Two great tiger skins thrown athwart it increased the suggestion of Eastern luxury, as did a huge hookah which stood upon a mat in the corner. A lamp in the fashion of a silver dove was hung from an almost invisible golden wire in the centre of the room. As it burned it filled the air with a subtle and aromatic odour” (60).

It is significant that though Homes and Watson are “astonished” at the sight of the microcosmic representation of the Orient, they are not pleased and does not show any emotion at the richness (60). Having had been already possessed by the imperial Crown, the Oriental objects have lost their identity, mystery and the power to attract.

It should be noted that the Hindu servant addresses Thaddeus Sholto as “sahib” and is, in turn, addressed as “khidmutgar” (60). Baring-Gould explains “khidmutgar” as a “Hindu [term] for butler or man servant” (*Annotated I* 624) and this reasserts the author’s latent Orientalism – the concept based on an

unchanging, immutable polarity between East and West, with the West the superior force.

Said defines “latent Orientalism” as,

“...Along with all other peoples variously designated as backward, degenerate, uncivilised, and retarded, the Orientals were viewed in a framework constructed out of biological determinism and moral-political admonishment. The Oriental was linked thus to elements in Western society (delinquents, the insane, women, the poor) having in common an identity best described as lamentably alien. Orientals were rarely seen or looked at; they were seen through, analysed not as citizens, or even people, but as problems to be solved or confined – as the colonial powers openly coveted their territory – taken over” (*Culture* 207).

In The Sign of Four the latent Orientalism of Doyle is expressed through the metonymic function of untranslated words like “sahib”, “khidmutgar”, “nullah” (85), “bhang” (86) “Feringhee” (87), and “chokey” (91). As Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin point out,

“The uses of language as untranslated words do have an important function in inscribing difference. They signify a certain cultural experience, which they cannot hope to reproduce but whose difference is validated by the new situation. In this sense, they are directly metonymic of that cultural difference, which is imported by the linguistic variation. In

fact they are a specific form of metonymic figure: the synecdoche” (*The Empire* 53).

On Doyle’s Orientalism as revealed in his second novel, Nicholas Stewart notes,

“In the context of Doyle’s text, and in the imperially conditioned mind of its contemporary reader, *Khidmutgar* signifies the presence and *alien* status of the Indian figure and culture in relation to British society. Openly and covertly The Sign of Four makes itself acceptable to the imperialist ideology in late Victorian culture and its attendant literary canon”³.

Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin have also identified the use of untranslated words, like those already mentioned as a mean of ‘replacing language’:

“The technique of selective lexical fidelity which leaves some words translated in the text is a more widely used device for conveying the sense of cultural distinctiveness. Such a device not only acts to signify the difference between cultures, but also illustrates the importance of discourse in interpreting cultural concepts” (*The Empire* 64).

With the inversion of this concept Doyle’s usage of untranslated words becomes a process of reaffirming the polarity between the British and Oriental cultures which caters to the imperial ideology of the contemporary European readers.

Thaddeus Sholto, who is addicted to “the balsamic odour of the Eastern tobacco”, is the son of Major John Sholto, a military personality, “once of the Indian Army” (Doyle, *The Complete* 61). On the information that Morstan and Sholto formerly belonged to the “34th Bombay Infantry” (57), a wing of the British colonial army to control the Indian natives, Crighton Stellers opines in her “Doctor Watson and the British Army” that Doyle has created a fictional regiment with an Indian name to put his reprehensible characters (Baring-Gould, *Annotated I* 617). That John Sholto had prospered in India, and had brought back with him a considerable sum of money, a large collection of valuable curiosities, and a staff of native servants to the imperial centre, serves to highlight the issue of the colonies serving as resources to boost and sustain the economy of the imperial centre (Doyle, *The Complete* 61). Like Grimesby Roylott of “The Adventure of the Speckled Band”, John Sholto tries to perpetuate the memories of his association with the Orient by getting “Pondicherry Lodge” built in Upper Norwood (61). Significantly, the south Indian province of Pondicherry had been under the French influence and control since the earliest Western settlement in 1673 until November 1954. Sholto’s naming his residence after the French dominion might be interpreted as expressive of his and, in turn, the entire British colonisers’ desire to possess a region belonging to another imperial power. John Sholto’s Oriental obsession costs him his life after the arrival of a letter from India (61), but before his death he passes the ownership of one of his Oriental possessions and a part of the Agra Treasure – a “chaplet tipped with pearls” (61) – to his sons Bartholomew and Thaddeus, and not to any Oriental to whom the box rightfully belongs. By placing the box of pearls beside a bottle of quinine,

the medicine for the tropical disease of malaria, in his narrative, Doyle strategically balances Oriental treasures against lethal diseases which have traditionally been identified by the Westerners as germinating in the East (61). It is, therefore, unusual that an experienced representative of the colonisers would repose his faith in “old Lal Chowdar” and would trust him with the secret of Arthur Morstan’s death (62).

Doyle’s view of the colonies as being exclusive properties of the imperial Britain is asserted at different sections of The Sign of Four. According to Thaddeus Sholto, the box of Indian treasure brought to Britain by John Sholto is the rightful property of Mary Morstan. Immediately upon hearing of the treasure, and that “the value of the jewels...[is]...not less than half a million sterling”, Watson conceives of it through the filter of British economy (63). Like Sholto, the former military surgeon also ignores the box’s status as being a part of the Indian heritage, and sanctions its ownership Mary Morstan. Without verifying the real ownership of the treasure, he prepares her for transforming herself from “a needy governess to the richest heiress in England” (63). Once the control of the treasure has passed from the natives to the imperialists and deposited at the house of Bartholomew Sholto, the presence of the Orientals is minimised. In spite of having “a great picture in Indian tapestry” at his house, Bartholomew Sholto employs only White individuals – McMurdo and Mrs. Berstone for performing internal errands at his residence (63-4).

Having judged the paper used by Arthur Morstan to write his final letter as one “of Indian manufacture”, Holmes continues to reveal himself as an

Orientalist – the Westerner who utilises European study of the Orient with the result of revealing and outwitting the criminally linked Other – when he uses Western scientific and anthropological writings on the East to identify the thorn on Bartholomew Sholto's scalp as belonging 'not to England but to an Indian islander' (67) and to analyse the sizes of the Hindus' and Muslims' feet (75). Thus he not only justifies Watson's suppression of the Orientals but also validates a biased Orientalist research as a means to understand, control and remain superior to the predominantly Eastern subaltern.

Ania Loomba, in Colonialism/Postcolonialism, informs that the scientific study used by Orientalists like Sherlock Holmes was "far from being an objective, ideologically free domain...[and]...was deeply implicated in the construction of racist ways of thinking about human beings and the differences between them..." (61). Holmes's biased knowledge has resulted in the reduction of Tonga, the Andaman native and Jonathan Small's associate, into a mere stereotype by focussing especially on his primitive and perceptively uncivilised qualities. Loomba defines *stereotype* as "a reduction of images to a simple and manageable form [with the effect of] perpetuat[ing]...an artificial sense of difference between 'self' [that is, the British imperial centre] and 'other' [the Indian native]" (59-60). T.S.Blakeney has questioned the reliability of the 'gazetteer' Holmes consults in the seventy fifth and seventy sixth pages for a distorted depiction of the Andamanese. He denies that the Andaman natives are cannibals and terms their treatment by the British Government in India as "tragic" (6-8). In the July 1904-issue of *Quarterly Review*, Andrew Lang had similarly challenged Doyle's representation of the Andaman islanders. He refuted their cannibalism, their

having heads like mops, their 'below four-foot' height, and even their throwing poisoned darts from blowpipes (Baring-Gould, *Annotated I* 655).

The ex-convict Jonathan Small's claim to the Agra Treasure is taken into consideration by Doyle only because he is a White man. On the other hand, Small's Indian associate, Tonga, is never considered to be a candidate worthy of being offered a share. Importantly, Tonga never expresses his desire for the treasure: the author might have denied him the very sensation of the value of the Agra Treasure. Holmes deduces that Small *is* White, because John Sholto "guards himself against a ... White man...[and] he mistakes a White tradesman for him and fires a pistol at him" (Doyle, *The Complete* 71). In his attempt to assault a representative of the White colonisers Sholto has had committed a crime serious enough in Holmes's perspective to attract a careful investigation for his real motive.

In further exhibitions of Doyle's latent Orientalism, Jonathan Small's long service at India has been referred to have reduced him to the stature of a "brown, monkey-faced chap" (73). Small describes his life in the Eastern country as "twenty long years in...[a]...fever-ridden swamp, all day at work under the mangrove tree, all night chained up in the filthy convict huts, bitten by mosquitoes, racked with ague, bullied by every cursed black-faced policeman who loved to take it out of a White man" (85). The sufferings of the White man in the eastern colony culminate in a crocodile's nipping his right leg "as clean as a surgeon could have done it" while he swims in the Ganges (85). The Ganges, a holy river to the Indians, has also been shown

to harbour malignant elements. Doyle's depiction of Small's attitude towards the East subsumes even a British ex-convict in collective White prejudice against the coloured colonised people.

Almost every White character in The Sign of Four is prejudiced against the Orient. Cecil Forrester likens the situation of crime and the criminals described by Watson to "a romance... an injured lady, half-a-million in treasure, a black cannibal, and a wooden legged ruffian. They take the place of the conventional dragon or wicked earl" (76). Incidentally, dragon is in itself an imaginary, middle-eastern and therefore Oriental creature, and is associated with paganism in Christianity (*Britannica III* 183). Forrester is agreed upon by Mary Morstan who christens the imperial figures of Holmes and Watson dominating the natives as the very European "knights-errant" (Doyle, *The Complete* 76).

It is also in this narrative that Doyle details on the European lifestyle of Holmes to give him a more complete imperial Eurocentric identity. The detective smokes an "old briar-root pipe" (55) and has "oysters[,]...a brace of grouse...and port" for dinner (79), and is well-conversant with the usage of telephone (79), which, as E. Ennalls Berl points out, was very rarely used between 1879 and 1891 (Berl 197-210). Holmes's encyclopaedic knowledge stretches from "miracle plays" to "warships of the future", including medieval pottery, Stradivarius violins, and the Buddhism of Ceylon (79). A. Carson Simpson, in Sherlock Holmes's Wanderjahre , opines that Holmes's tenure in Tibet between 1891 and 1893 had been the period when

he assumed an Orientalist familiarity with the Ceylonese Buddhism (Baring-Gould, *Annotated I* 662).

By referring to the members of the *Baker Street Irregulars* as “street Arabs” Watson once again identifies Orient with disorderliness (Doyle, *The Complete* 75). Significantly, it is through these perceptively chaotic young children that Holmes tracks down *Aurora* (81) and has his first and last physical encounter with Tonga. The eradication of the lethal dart-throwing Oriental islander is so important to Doyle that he has had subtitled the tenth chapter of The Sign of Four as “The End of the Islander”. When Holmes and Watson first see Tonga, he looks like a “dark mass...like a Newfoundland dog” (81). The author’s re-description of Tonga’s hideous physique betrays his disgust with the Oriental natives for their physical ‘deformities’ which he judges against the general physical stature and complexion of the White Western colonisers:

“...A little black man – the smallest I have ever seen – with a great, misshapen head and a shock of tangled, dishevelled hair...this savage distorted creature...was wrapped in some sort of a dark Ulster or blanket, which left only his face exposed; but that face was enough to give a man a sleepless night. Never have I seen features so deeply marked with all bestiality and cruelty. His small eyes glowed and burned with a sombre light, and his thick lips were writhed back from his teeth, which grinned and clattered at us with half-animal fury.” (82).

As soon as Tonga tries to use his blow-dart, a primitive weapon, against the pursuing colonisers, their sophisticated weapons – the revolvers – kill him (82). It is significant that even after killing a human being in the presence of Athelney Jones and two other police inspectors, Holmes and Watson are not booked for homicide because in the White colonial perspective Tonga is a mere savage: a malignant power that has to be annihilated. In the narrative Doyle treats the distinction between the East and the West as an objective fact. In A Study in Scarlet Watson dominates the Orientals away from Britain; in The Sign of Four he eradicates the criminally-linked Oriental Other in his own country.

On being apprehended Small expresses that “it was an evil day” for him when he first “clapped eyes upon the merchant Achmet and had to do with the Agra Treasure...[,]...[a symbol of the Oriental affluence]...[,]...which never brought anything but a curse yet upon the...[White]...man who owned it” (83), thus identifying the East as the place where white Europeans like him and Watson *must* suffer.

Jonathan Small is forced to leave India because he has had “got into a mess over a girl” (85): the sexual assaults on subaltern women being common during colonial domination. Even after losing his right leg to a crocodile, Small is employed by an indigo-planter with a telltale name – *Abel* (or able?) *White* (suggestive of his imperial character) – to “to keep an eye on [the Indian coolies] as they worked, and to

report the idlers” (85). Indigo plantations had become an important section of the British colonial trade in India during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Small’s life in India is disturbed by “the great mutiny” (85) of 1857 the causes of which have been analysed by McLeod Innes in The Sepoy Revolt (1897). Patrick Brantlinger notes that mid to late Victorian English fiction contained an immense amount of writing about the Indian Sepoy Mutiny (205). Doyle intersects with these texts the perceived treacherous nature of the colonised populace in the eighty ninth page when he mentions the Indian mutineer Nana Sahib, who became a widely used paradigm in English fictions of the time.

Brantlinger further observes, “After the Mutiny Indian is portrayed as mired in changeless pattern of superstition and violence which can be dominated but not necessarily altered for the better...” (200). He also links Said’s concept of Orientalism as being comprised of “both the study of the East by the West, and any ideological outlook held and expressed by the West which serves to create and affirm ontological and epistemological distinction between the Orient and the Occident” (*Orientalism* 2-3) with the history of literature because according to him, “Victorian writing about the Mutiny expresses in concentrated form the racist ideology that Edward Said calls Orientalism” (*The Rule* 199).

Small gives a holocaustic description of the Indian Sepoy Mutiny: “There were two hundred thousand black devils let loose and the country

was a perfect hell” (Doyle, *The Complete* 85). He does not spare even the Indian animals and includes them as parties to chaos and the resultant destruction of the European settlers in India when he refers to “Dawson’s wife...half eaten by jackals and native dogs” (85). On the other hand, the British officer Dawson is given a heroic stature because even at his death, with the “empty revolver in his hand”, he has had managed to kill four Indian Sepoys (86). Doyle refers to the Sepoys – the Indians serving as soldiers in the British army – as “black fiends, with their red coats [that is, the uniform of the Indian soldiers of British India] still on their backs” (86).

Doyle expresses his disgust and anger with the mutineers primarily because the colonisers had been far outnumbered by the colonised individuals and because the Sepoys, after acquiring the knowledge of the martial techniques and weapons from the imperialists, had turned the same knowledge against them. Small says, “The cruellest part of... [the Mutiny]...was that these men that we fought against foot, horse, and gunners, were our own picked troops, whom we had taught and trained handling our own weapons and blowing our own bugle-calls” (86).

Doyle maintains a distinction of the East and the West even when he describes the Old Fort of Agra. While the modern part of the fort where the Europeans have had been stationed is described as habitable and “with plenty of room over” (86), the old part has been identified as exclusively housing the Orientals, and therefore “given over to the scorpion and the centipedes” and “full of great, deserted halls, and winding passages, and long corridors twisting in and out” (86).

Having had already suffered from a sense of alienation from the Punjabees, Mahomet Singh and Abdullah Khan, because of the difference in languages, Small is further tortured he is overpowered by them (86-7). Doyle presents the polemic relationship among the Indians to reason why the Sepoy Mutiny failed, and thereby to justify the domination of the natives. Ironically, Abdullah Khan finds it more feasible to repose trust in the European “Feringhee”-s than in the “Hindoos...with all the gods in their false temples” (87), and because “the Sikh knows the Englishman, and the Englishman knows the Sikh” (87). Doyle uses the Indian native to lambaste the Hindu faith from the viewpoint of a Christian believer while simultaneously avoiding being indicted for communalism because he makes an *Indian* to say so. Abdullah Khan’s identification as a collaborating native has also been reinforced. In his depiction of the “rajah in the northern provinces” who, during the Mutiny, “would be friends both with the lion and the tiger – with the Sepoy and with the Company’s Raj” (87), the writer depicts the perceived treacherous nature of the Orientals – their “chameleon-like quality” (Said, *Orientalism* 119). This behavioural trait is once again displayed when Dost Akbar, Achmet’s Sikh guard who is entrusted to protect him, turns against him and kills him (Doyle, *The Complete* 88).

In the concluding chapter of his second Holmes narrative Doyle gives a detailed account of the different Oriental gemstones that Small, an imperialist, has had “read and thought about” when he was “a little lad of Pershore” (89). The box of the Agra Treasure that Small, Singh, Khan and Dost Akbar recover after

murdering Achmet contains one hundred forty three diamonds “of first water”, ninety seven emeralds, one hundred seventy rubies, forty carbuncles, two hundred ten sapphires, sixty one agates, “a great quantity of beryls, onyxes, cats’-eyes, turquoises, and other stones”, and three hundred pearls “twelve of which were set in a gold coronet” (89). Said, in his *Introduction to Orientalism*, has outlined one of the major perspectives in the European conception of the *fabulously rich world of the Orient*: “The Orient...had been since antiquity a place of romance, exotic beings, haunting memories and landscapes, remarkable experience.” (1). Doyle’s description betrays the age-old Occidental fantasy of possessing the Oriental riches.

Even when he has been sent to the Blair Island in the Andamans – a “dreary, fever-stricken place” with wild “cannibal natives” in possession of the primitive “poison darts” – Small finds himself “a sort of privileged person” because of his White complexion (Doyle, *The Complete* 89). When he narrates the details about the Agra Treasure to John Sholto, the army officer immediately identifies the gemstones as legally belonging to “the British government” and excludes its Indian ownership (90).

When Tonga, a little Andaman islander “sick to death” is “picked up by a convict gang in the woods” (91), Small takes him in his possession though he (Tonga) is “as venomous as a young snake” (91). Apart from performing a humanitarian act, Jonathan Small uses the native for satisfying his commercial and personal needs as soon as he is acquainted with him. He escapes from

the island of his captivity with the help of Tonga's canoe (91). Back at the imperial centre, the White fugitive begins to earn his living by "exhibiting poor Tonga at fairs and other such places as the black cannibal" who would "eat raw meat and dance his war-dance" significantly without any resentment on part of the Easterner (92). This conformity on part of the islander might be interpreted as an exhibition of how Small's power of physical domination has left the Andaman-dweller bereft of any strength and courage to protest.

Though Tonga, to Small, is "staunch and true...no man ever had a more faithful mate" (91), Nicholas Stewart notes that "Small is highly distrustful of Tonga, viewing him in the eighty second page through a Christian ethnocentric perspective as a 'hell hound'⁴. The native Indian in Doyle's text is directly subsumed in the English criminality though the writer gives him a status below that of his white owner. In a reference to the common colonial practice, Small has no qualms about welting "the little devil with the slack end of the rope" (82), and he takes the responsibility of having murdered "a vile Pathan [a member of the colonised populace] who had never missed a chance of insulting and injuring" him, upon himself (91) with identifiable pride. Importantly, while Holmes and Watson eradicate the native, they deal with the White criminal, Jonathan Small, with obtrusive kindness and sympathy. Even Small's sentence has not been referred to.

NOTES:

1. "Arthur Conan Doyle: Mother". 1 February 2003.
<http://www.siracd.com/life_mother.shtml>
2. Ibid.
3. Stewart, Nicholas. "A Postcolonial Canonical and Cultural Revision of Conan Doyle's Holmes Narratives". 3 February 2003.
<http://www.qub.ac.uk/english/imperial/india/conan_doyle.htm>
4. Ibid.

CHAPTER 4.C.

“THE ADVENTURE OF THE SPECKLED BAND”:-

“The Adventure of the Speckled Band”, which Nicholas Stewart considers as another of Arthur Conan Doyle’s more imperially compatible narratives, was first published in the February 1892-edition of *The Strand Magazine*¹.

The short story commences with the arrival of Helen Stoner at 221 B, Baker Street, and from the very beginning Doyle builds up the a British society that has a distinct and perceptively superior cultural identity. Stoner’s appearance shocks Sherlock Holmes in context of the Victorian social conventions that forbade the “young...[British]...ladies” against “wander[ing]...about the Metropolis at...[times as early as quarter past seven in]...the morning” (Doyle, *The Complete* 194). Her being “heavily veiled” and gloved also reflect the standard codes for women’s dresses in the patriarchal Victorian Britain (194-5). On the other hand, James Edward Holroyd suggests that the detective’s “masterly modesty” might have prevented him from readily appearing before Stoner because he was “so scantily dressed” (13).

The narrative, however, exposes the predicament of British women under the patriarchal societal norms of contemporary Britain. Confessing her inability to readily pay Holmes his fees for investigating the cause for Julia Stoner’s death, Helen Stoner says, “At present it is out of my power to reward you

for your services, but in a month or six weeks I shall be married, with the control of my own income, and then at least you shall not find me ungrateful” (Doyle, *The Complete* 195). She thus refers to the anti-feminist social custom of disallowing any female member of a family to directly inherit and utilise any wealth that rightfully belonged to her.

In this narrative Watson once again indulges into hero-worship and highlights the powerful investigative faculties of Sherlock Holmes by effacing himself. This reveals Doyle’s attempt to grant supremacy to the principal imperial representative at the exclusion of any other character that might challenge his supremacy or downplay his achievements by declaring himself or herself as being a party to the detective’s exploits. Watson says,

“I had no keener pleasure than in following Holmes in his professional investigations, and in admiring the rapid deduction, as swift as intuitions, and yet always founded on a logical basis, with which he unravelled the problems which were submitted to him” (194).

It is important that though Helen Stoner is mentally tortured by her stepfather, she takes pride in introducing him as “the last survivor of one of the oldest Saxon families in England, the Royslotts of Stoke Moran, on the Western borders of Surrey” (196). Here Doyle asserts his own attraction for British heraldry, and the nation’s imperial heritage, tradition and nobility. Stoner’s narrative about the gradual

destruction of the family of the Roylotts that was “at one time among the richest in England” and whose “estates extended over the borders into Berkshire in the north, and Hampshire in the west” imparts her family with a feudal identity and with a sense of possession of land that might be extended as an indication of its imperial interests (196). Dr. Grimesby Roylott’s attempt to evade the drudgery of a flagging familial economy by obtaining “an advance from a relative, which enable[s] him to take a medical degree, and...[go]... out to Calcutta...[,]...[the imperial capital of British India until 1911]...[,]... where, by his professional skill and his force of character, he establish[es] a large practise” is an instance where the colony has been portrayed as a resource to boost and sustain the economy of the imperial centre (196).

It is significant that Roylott on his return to Britain from India is not publicly humiliated or socially ostracised for homicide because he has beaten “his native butler to death”: a task not openly supported but never vociferously admonished by the White colonisers (196). Moreover, his return to Britain has also been on account of “some robberies which had been perpetrated in the house” perceptively by the Indian natives which somewhat mitigates and acts as an excuse for his “violence of temper” which leads to “a series of disgraceful brawls” and culminates into his hurling “the local blacksmith over a parapet into a stream” (196). While this section testifies to Doyle’s biased attitude towards the Easterners’ perceived “intricate and evil mentality” (Said, *Orientalism* 44), it also confirms Frantz Fanon’s assertion that “the colonising doctor adopts the attitude of his group towards the...[colonised]...people” (*A Dying* 133). According to Fanon, the White doctor’s medical practice, similar to one Roylott sets up

in India, is saturated with racism and profiteering: he not only treats his non-European patients with condescension and contempt, he also overcharges them and concocts fictitious or expensive treatments (Wyrick 90).

Even though he retains a passion for the Orient, Roylott's marrying “Mrs. Stoner, the young widow of Major General Stoner of the Bengal Artillery”, a regiment of the imperial British military force in India used to control and obliterate the natives, might be interpreted as his attempt to return back to the original group of the British imperialists (Doyle, *The Complete* 196). Viewed in the colonial perspective, his problems arise particularly because he fails to maintain an insularity from the Orientals and become subsumed within the Eastern culture. The result of his immersion in an alien culture is madness and chaos, and what Nicholas Stewart refers to as “inverted colonialism within the grounds of the ancestral home of the Stoner family”². When Stoner states that her stepfather's “violence of temper approaching mania” has had been “intensified by his long residence in the tropics”, she implies that no sane individual would leave the rationally ordered imperial centre for the chaos of the Orient while simultaneously exhibiting the typical Orientalist attitude of relating the East to suffering and malignancy (196). Stewart writes, “Roylott's insanity infers that the Orient...is unbalanced and by moving back to England, [he] turns the grounds of his estate into a chaotic inverted colony where the irrational world of the Orient, as perceived by Doyle, commands”³.

Significantly, Roylott’s stint at the East has distorted him physically and morally. Holmes describes him as “a clever and ruthless man...[having]... an Eastern training” (Doyle, *The Complete* 209), who possesses “a large face, seared with a thousand wrinkles, burned yellow with the sun, and marked with every evil passion [,]...deep set... [and]...bile shot eyes [,] and...high thin fleshless nose” (200). Having had failed to avoid the perceptively fatal influence of the Orient, the physician tries to construct a microcosm of the East in his estate and lets animals like cheetah and baboon “wander freely over his grounds (197). Baring-Gould points out that both the cheetah and the black baboon came either from Africa or from Arabia, a part of the Orient (*Annotated I* 247). Roylott’s chaotic house is attached to a “heavily-timbered park” insulated from the rest of the village (Doyle, *The Complete* 201). Disorder being an important part of the Orient in the Orientalist perspective, wings of Roylott’s building are dishevelled and dilapidated (202). He further signifies his Eastern connections by befriending no one else other than “the wandering gypsies” (196), by maintaining and training venomous tropical snakes like the swamp adder (208), and by using Oriental objects like “red heelless Turkish slippers” (207) and “strong Indian cigars” (197) for daily life. Moreover, he exhibits an Oriental barbarism in his treatment of his stepdaughter Helen Stoner (Said, *Orientalism* 59). Holmes’s reaction at “the five little livid spots, the marks of four fingers and a thumb imprinted upon the white wrists” of Helen Stoner indicates Doyle’s implication that lack of chivalry towards women is alien to the Western etiquette (*The Complete* 199). By his attempts to prevent the marriage of Julia Stoner to Percy Armitage, a “half-pay Major of the Marines”, Roylott not only tries to perpetuate his possession of his stepdaughter’s inheritance, but also to intimidate

Britain’s normal societal order perpetuated by the intra-racial marriages of White Westerners (197). Significantly, Helen Stoner, the only other surviving member of the Roylott family after Julia Stoner’s death, does not share Grimesby Roylott’s Oriental obsession. She rather displays her animosity to the Easterners by indicting the “wretched gipsies in the plantation” for rousing Julia from sleep (197).

The existence of a microcosm of the Orient within the territory of imperial Britain starts a chain of events in Roylott’s estate that ultimately culminates in chaos and results firstly in the death of Julia Stoner and thereafter of the physician himself. In his depiction of disorderliness at Stoke Moran, Doyle seems to underscore the Western observation perpetuated particularly by Rudyard Kipling that there can be no congruent harmony between the Occident and the Orient. Stewart detects in the story the author’s “stern fear of the consequences of studying the culture of the colonies from a position which is not anchored to the ideology of the imperial centre”⁴.

At Stoke Moran Sherlock Holmes utilises his scientific and Orientalist knowledge to thwart an attack against a European/British citizen, Helen Stoner, by a “swamp adder...the deadliest snake in India”, a lethal representative of the Orient, by lashing savagely at the reptile (Doyle, *The Complete* 207-8). This requires mention that whips and canes are two implements most commonly used by the colonisers to punish the errant colonised individuals. Wounded, the snake returns back from Helen Stoner’s bedroom to Roylott and bites him, fatally poisoning him in the process (207-8). Stewart comments,

“There can be no greater crime against the imperial centre, in its agents’ estimations, than turning its knowledge against it: by attempting to kill his stepdaughters, Doyle presents Roylott as insanely pursuing the goal of eradicating the English presence within England, while accentuating the authority of Oriental cultures in its place”⁵.

In “The Adventure of the Speckled Band” Holmes displays an inclination for maintaining his self-identity as a “private investigator” and aversion towards the regular police force, similar to what he does in the eighteenth page of A Study in Scarlet, when he says after Roylott’s threatens him, “Fancy his having the insolence to confound me with the official detective force...” (Doyle, *The Complete* 201). Unlike the regular police and detective officials who act only under the instruction of the higher authority, the detective seeks to act independently to control and discipline primarily the colonised populace.

Roylott’s insanity and obsession with the Orient are rendered even more lethal to his British acquaintances and Holmes because he is a physician: one of the privileged intellectuals with an immense scientific knowledge at disposal. Holmes’s asserts, “When a doctor goes wrong he is the first of criminals” (206). In this context, Baring-Gould cites the instances of the errant doctors – William Palmer and Edward William Pritchard, executed respectively in 1856 and 1865 (*The Annotated I* 257). During their encounter with Roylott, the detective and his associate ensures the

correct irradiation of the *Other* because in the Orientalist perspective a sane intermingling of the Western and Eastern cultures is impossibility. It is necessary that a representative or champion of the Orientals and their culture must be distorted and eradicated in the imperially-compatible Holmes canon.

Baring-Gould opines that judged in context of the characteristic features of the adder mentioned in the narrative, the reptile would have to be “a sinister combination of the Mexican Gila Monster...and the speckled or Indian cobra”, and, therefore, cannot be a reality (*The Annotated I* 266). Nicholas Stewart finds in the figure of the ‘swamp adder’ a distorted stereotype used by the author to symbolise the Orient ⁶. On such stereotypic objects as the swamp adder, Said observes, “Some distinctive objects are made by the mind, and...these objects, while appearing to exist objectively, have only a fictional reality” (*Culture* 54). In this Holmes narrative the creature has been used to symbolise the perceived polarity between the Western colonisers and the Eastern colonised individuals which concludes with the ultimate triumph of the Occidentals exhibited in instances like Holmes’s successful trapping of the snake (Doyle, *The Complete* 208). Here Doyle not only expresses his own Orientalist views but also attempts to provide an acceptable text to the imperial British readers. This assumes significance in the context of Said’s observation that it was the unwritten rule for the imperial litterateurs to write texts that would conform to the authority of that culture; and the very authority, according to him, “places emphasis not so much on how to read, but [on] what is read and where is written about and represented” (*Culture* 70).

The scene of Roylott’s death is a symbolic representation of the momentary triumph of the adder, an unpredictable representative of the Orient, over a Westerner who is callously reposes trust in it. In his upright, sitting position Roylott has “the short stock with the long lash”, an implement for controlling, punishing and disciplining members of the Orient, lying uselessly “across his lap”, while the adder encircling his head looks more like a lethal crown that might be compared to the olive crown worn by the Roman emperors (Doyle, *The Complete* 207). Likewise, Roylott might have symbolically become an emperor of an Oriental microcosm, but his failure to precisely comprehend all the intricacies of the Orientals, including the snake, results in his own annihilation. He becomes a symbolic monarch only at the time of his death. The snake’s positioning itself on Roylott’s head denotes the momentary prominence of the Orient and its success in destroying the colonial domination and patronisation:

“Round his brow he had a peculiar yellow band, with brownish speckles, which seemed to be bound tightly round his head...In an instant his strange headgear began to move, and there reared itself from among his hair the squat diamond-shaped head and puffed neck of a loathsome serpent...” (207-8).

Importantly, Holmes, Watson and Helen Stoner feel secured only when the lethal representative of the Orient is “thrust ... back into...[the] den”: after its complete physical domination is accomplished by the colonisers (208).

NOTES:

1. Stewart, Nicholas. “A Postcolonial Canonical and Cultural Revision of Conan Doyle’s Holmes Narratives”. 3 February 2003.
<http://www.qub.ac.uk/english/imperial/india/conan_doyle.htm>
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.

CHAPTER 4.D.

“THE ADVENTURE OF THE THREE STUDENTS”: -

In “The Adventure of the Three Students”, first published in *The Strand Magazine* in June 1904, Arthur Conan Doyle directly deals with an Indian and shifts the locale of Sherlock Holmes’s investigation which is usually the imperial metropolis of London to “one of...[Britain’s]...great university towns”: a centre of the imperial education (*The Complete* 659). T.S.Blakeney’s suggestion that the university referred to is Oxford (14) is agreed upon by Christopher Morley in Sherlock Holmes and Doctor Watson: a Textbook of Friendship .On the other hand, W.S. Bristowe infers that Doyle has written about Cambridge University (75-6). Baring-Gould further confirms that in 1895 Oxford was a city while Cambridge was a town (*Annotated II* 368). Both Oxford and Cambridge assume colonial connotation because knowledge derived from the British system of education was used by the English imperialists to perpetuate their dominance of the primarily Afro-Asian colonised populace. Being either illiterate or poorly educated, and the Orientals were technologically less sophisticated and therefore were rendered vulnerable to the developed science and technology of the Westerners. Understandably, in absence of his “scrap books...[and]...chemicals” symbolising his Orientalist empirical approach, Sherlock Holmes is “an uncomfortable man” (Doyle, *The Complete* 659). Importantly, he does not neglect theoretical education achieved from the different newspaper cuttings pasted in his reference books for the practical one based on his

different biochemical experiments, examples of which can be found in A Study in Scarlet (14-5).

From A Study in Scarlet onwards, Holmes and Watson exhibit an Orientalist prejudice against the Asians and Africans, associating everything Oriental with strangeness, seediness and malignancy. The protagonist of this narrative is “Mr. Hilton Soames, tutor and lecturer at the college of St.Luke’s”, a White Westerner as far as reproductions of Sidney Paget’s illustrations are concerned. Soames is an examiner for Greek – a pagan tongue included under “the Fortesque Scholarship” – and the question paper for the scholarship examination includes “an exercise... [that]... consists of half a chapter of Thucydides” (659). By associating himself with a non-European, pagan language and culture, Soames violates the Orientalist norm for maintaining distance from the Easterners and the non-Christians and suffers in accordance with Doyle’s imperial ideology. Significantly, the trouble “potent enough to ensue a hideous scandal, which will throw a cloud not only on the college, but on the University”, the supreme centre for British education, does not occur with any other traditionally European subjects like English, French, German and Spanish (661).

It is important that when Holmes interrogates Soames, in context of the leakage of question papers, about the visitors who entered his room “after the papers [had] come” to him, the first name that the lecturer utters is of “young Daulat Ras, an Indian student...” (661). Being an Indian and therefore an Oriental, Daulat Ras becomes the primary suspect to Soames, and to Holmes and Watson both of whom are

primarily and instantaneously attracted to the restless movements of the Indian student when the detective goes to cross examine Gilchrist, Ras and Miles McLaren on the intrusion into Soames’s room:

“Three yellow squares of light shone above us in the gathering gloom.

‘Your three birds are all in their nests’, said Holmes, looking up. ‘Halloa! What’s that? One of them seems restless enough.’

It was the Indian, whose dark silhouette appeared suddenly upon his blind. He was pacing swiftly up and down his room” (664).

Even after taking the cue from Soames, Holmes refuses to readily identify the Indian as a criminal not only because he avoids presupposition but also because he does not consider it possible for Ras, a representative of the perceptively unintelligent Eastern subaltern, to possess the sufficient intellect for recognising the rolls of manuscript on Soames’s table as being the proofs. He says to the lecturer, “Then it amounts to this, Mr. Soames, that unless the Indian student recognised the roll as being proofs, the man who tampered with them came upon them accidentally without knowing that they were there” (661). Later, while narrating details of his assumptions about Gilchrist’s misdemeanour, the detective once again dismisses the Indian student as lacking in intellectual prowess: “...The Indian I ...thought nothing of. If the proofs were in roll he could not possibly know what they were...” (668). The statement might be extended to imply that if the visitor were a Westerner, he would have readily recognised the proof.

Significantly, while Soames introduces Gilchrist and McLaren in absentia to Holmes, he openly exhibits an affection and affinity for the two White students and describes them in superlatives but maintains a total silence about the physical and intellectual capabilities of the Indian. Even as he hails from a controversial family, Gilchrist is “a fine scholar and athlete; plays in the Rugby team and the cricket team for the college, and...[have]...got his Blue for the hurdles and the long jump” (663). In spite of his poverty, his imperial tutor attests his industry and expresses a surety about his “do[ing]...well” (663). His White Western identity makes him “a fine, manly fellow” in contrast with Ras who is “quiet, inscrutable...as most of the Indians [according to the Orientalist conception] are” (663). Frederic Dorr Steele’s illustration for the 24 September 1904-edition of *Collier's* shows Gilchrist and McLaren as tall and handsome while Daulat Ras is identifiably short and dull-looking (Baring-Gould, *Annotated II* 374). Ras’s “steady and methodical” approach might as well be applied for describing his capability to undertake antisocial projects. Miles McLaren, once again, is “brilliant...one of the brightest intellects of the University...” (Doyle, *The Complete* 663).

While describing the college building Doyle stresses on its advanced age and Gothic architectural pattern to impart the centre of imperial learning with a traditional and glamorous Eurocentric identity:

“The sitting-room of our client opened by a long, low, latticed window on to the ancient lichen-tinted court of the old college. A Gothic arched door

led to a worn stone staircase. On the ground floor was the tutor's room. Above were three students, one on each story...” (661).

Such architectural patterns had been revived in the late Victorian Age.

When Holmes, Watson and Soames visit the students, they initially come across the “dark silhouette” of Daulat Ras, an Indian (664). It is significant that while one of the two White students, Gilchrist, is encountered in ample light and the other, McLaren, is not met at all, the Indian student's “dark silhouette” might symbolically suggest his perceptively ambiguous and evil nature while simultaneously imparting him with *Otherness* and sublimity because of his being half visible in the silhouetted form (665).

When Holmes and Watson visit the room of the Indian student he does not create a good impression on them. Because of the physical, cultural, economic and political differences existing between the Western and the Eastern nations, Ras is as suspicious about the detective and his friend as the latter are about the former. Doyle's description of Daulat Ras, narrated in context of Holmes's deliberately breaking the tip of Ras's pencil during his investigation, betrays his Orientalist conception of the Indian:

“The same curious accident happened to him in the room of the Indian – a silent, little, hook-nosed fellow, who eyed us askance and was obviously glad when Holmes’s architectural studies had come to an end” (665).

Notably, Gilchrist does not feel problematic about Holmes’ and Watson’s watching the “pieces of mediaeval domestic architecture” kept inside his room because the Gothic pieces of architecture form an integral part of his own Eurocentric tradition (665). On the other hand, Ras, to whom the European mementoes are foreign elements without having any link to his own Oriental heritage, is uncomfortable with the intrusion of European visitors appreciating Gothic art (665).

Doyle’s Orientalist prejudice is further illustrated when Holmes and Watson return from the quadrangle after interrogating the students. An Orientalist as Holmes is – a Westerner who utilises the European study of the Orient with the result of revealing and outwitting the criminally linked Other – he ceases to suspect the Indian because he has completed successfully judging him against the framework of his knowledge about the Orient during which he has found him guiltless (666). On the other hand, Watson, who readily suspects Ras, does not harbour the least suspicion about Bannister because he is a White Westerner:

“ ‘Well, Watson, what do you think of it?’ Holmes asked, as we came out into the main street. ‘Quite a little parlour game – sort of three-card trick,

is it not? There are your three men. It must be one of them. You take your choice. Which is yours?’

‘The foul-mouthed fellow at the top. He is the one with the worst record. And yet that Indian was a sly fellow also. Why should he be pacing his room all the time?’

‘There is nothing in that. Many men do it when they are trying to learn anything by heart.’

‘He looked at us in a queer way.’

‘So would you if a flock of strangers came in on you when you were preparing for an examination next day, and every moment was of value. No, I see nothing in that. Pencils, too, and knife – all was satisfactory. But that fellow *does* puzzle me.’

‘Who?’

‘Why, Bannister, the servant. What’s his game in the matter?’

‘He impressed me as being a perfectly honest man...’ (666).

Even though Gilchrist has taken “the unpardonable liberty of examining” Soames’s question papers (660), Doyle does not predict him as “a callous criminal” (668). Not only does Gilchrist confess and repent for his own sin, he proposes to make penance by accepting the offer of “a commission in the Rhodesian Police” and thereafter, “going out to South Africa at once” to control and discipline the natives of the British colony as a in his capacity as an imperial police official (668-9). Understandably his proposal is applauded to by Holmes, Doyle’s imperial and Orientalist spokesperson, who assures the

student of “a bright future...[awaiting him]...in Rhodes”, thereby implying that the colonisers’ success is directly proportional to their success at dominating the natives (669). While Gilchrist’s copying from Soames’s question paper has been sympathetically described as an instance of his “falling low” (669), his impending imperialistic ventures have been hailed as a mean to “take...him[self]...at a height” in glamour and personality which would ultimately result in his becoming an imperially-compatible British citizen. During Holmes’s final speech with Bannister at the conclusion of the narrative, he says:

“ ‘No, indeed... Well, Soames, I think we have cleared your little problem up, and our breakfast awaits us at home. Come, Watson! As to you, sir, I trust that a bright future awaits you in Rhodesia. For once you have fallen low. Let us see in the future how high you can rise’ ” (669).

CHAPTER 5.

POSTCOLONIAL NARRATIVES: BYOMKESH BAKSHI.

A. “THE INQUISITOR”: -

As far as the conversations between Byomkesh Bakshi and his associate and litterateur Ajit Bandyopadhyay are concerned, “The Inquisitor” (1933), originally published as “Satyanweshi” in Bengali, appears to be the first narrative of the Byomkesh Bakshi canon, through chronologically “*Pather Kanta*”, which Sreejata Guha translates as “The Gramophone Pin Mystery” in Picture Imperfect and Other Byomkesh Bakshi Mysteries, was the first story to be written and published in 1932. “*Pather Kanta*” was followed by “*Shimonto Heera*” (1932) before “*Satyanweshi*” was published.

It is in “The Inquisitor” that Byomkesh Bakshi and Ajit Bandyopadhyay meet for the first time at a Calcutta boarding house in the locality of Chinabazar (Sen 7). This can be compared to the first introduction of Sherlock Holmes and John Watson to one another in A Study in Scarlet. The period of publication of the first Bakshi story is significant because the 1930s was the decade of intense armed nationalist movement in Bengal and Punjab (Chandra, et al., 188). In “The Inquisitor” Saradindu Bandyopadhyay has identifiably incorporated elements of anti-colonial resistance by depicting the detective and the narrator of his adventures as typical Bengali characters who reveal their distinctively Indian identity in their hybridity and in their actions as distinct from the European fictional detectives like Holmes and Hercule Poirot

who are pronouncedly Eurocentric and exhibit imperial ideology in their characterisation. 1925 – the time earmarked as the year in which Ajit Bandyopadhyay first meets Bakshi – denotes a crucial phase in the struggle for independence in southern Bengal in wake of violent inter-racial killings which reached their nadir in Calcutta riots in 1926 (Chandra, et al., 1960).

From ‘The Inquisitor’ until ‘Henyalir Chhando’ written in January 1964 Ajit Bandyopadhyay takes the responsibility of narrating the adventures of Byomkesh Bakshi. In the very first story he introduces himself as a maturing litterateur with a substantial inheritance who is trying to sustain himself by living as a bachelor at a Calcutta boarding house (Bandyopadhyay, *Picture 1*). He remains a static character all throughout the canon and as even in the last incomplete narrative ‘Bishopal Badh’ he has identifiably failed to establish himself or own a separate house. In contrast, Watson is an adventurous imperial figure who has served actively in the Indian subcontinent to dominate the natives, takes part in Holmes’s outdoor investigations, and owns a house and thriving private practice. That Watson never introduces himself as a writer gains significance in the context that no strenuous physical action or adventure can be expected from a usually demure litterateur.

The Byomkesh Bakshi narratives and the Sherlock Holmes stories exhibit several similarities. Like the Holmes narratives in which actions are centred in the imperial metropolis of London, Saradindu Bandyopadhyay sets his detective stories in Calcutta which, in being the metropolis of the colonised Orientals speaking the Eastern language of Bengali symbolically becomes the mirror image of the

imperial capital. Both Holmes and Bakshi possess extraordinary first names – “Sherlock” and “Byomkesh” – while their associates exhibit ordinariness in their names, surnames and actions. Both the detectives start as bachelors at rented houses and become acquainted in that position with their respective friend and narrator who are bachelors and unemployed. It requires mention that Watson starts his private practice from “A Scandal in Bohemia” onwards. In another aspect of similarity both the detectives’ family backgrounds are initially given little focus.

In “The Inquisitor”, Ajit Bandyopadhyay introduces himself as been “fresh out of the university” and is, judging from normal circumstances, between twenty-two and twenty-three years of age. Deducing from Bakshi’s calculation of his own age against Bandyopadhyay’s in Where There is a Will (117), the detective might be identified as being in the early twenties too. In their position as educated Bengali youths, Bakshi and Bandyopadhyay poise a serious threat to the British colonisers in light of the fact that the contemporary nationalist movement was being led by similar educated Indian youths. Significantly, neither Bakshi nor Bandyopadhyay overtly supports or follows the violent path of nationalism. Being a practising lawyer in British courts, Saradindu Bandopadhyay has deftly eschewed advocacy of direct confrontation with the colonisers and follows the path of *literary collusion* to protest against the imperial hegemony.

As revealed in the concluding section of the narrative all the occupants of the detective’s Harrison Road-residence are traditional Bengalis: the

detective himself, Ajit Bandyopadhyay and the domestic help, Puntiram. The detective’s first name, “Byomkesh”, signifies the Hindu god Shiva during his meditation, and therefore assumes an Indian connotation. Sukumar Sen, therefore, writes,

“Unlike Sherlock Holmes, Byomkesh Bakshi is not withdrawn and self-centred. He is not a scientist, violinist or an addict. He is a typical Bengali gentleman of the 1930s – educated, intelligent, shrewd, reserved and sympathetic. Apart from his intellect and sedate serenity, he has got no other quality to distinguish himself from the average Bengali youths. That is why Bakshi as an amateur Bengali detective is most successfully conceived” (7).

The physician Anukul’s boarding house, where Bakshi and Bandyopadhyay are first introduced, is inhabited by practising Bengalis. Ashwini, Ghanashyam and two unnamed “middle aged” single gentlemen exhibit a very Bengali addiction to betel leaves and desire to be “employed in regular jobs” (Bandyopadhyay, *Picture 2-3*). The boarding house, called ‘mess’ in India, is managed by a Bengali gentleman who is a homeopath, a profession common to the educated pre-independence and early post-independence Indian Bengalis (2).

Anukul’s hybridity is exhibited in his penchant for European, particularly German drugs that he imports in cases bearing American stamps (17). Ajit Bandyopadhyay stresses that “the doctor never use[s]...Indian-made drugs.”

(17). Used to gadgets imported to the colonies from England, he fixes the British-made Yale latch locks to different doors of his boarding house (10). In exact opposition to Doyle’s identification of everything Oriental with malignancy and destruction in stories like The Sign of Four and “The Adventure of the Speckled Band”, Saradindu Bandyopadhyay from his very first Byomkesh Bakshi story follows the paradigm of associating the West and individuals exhibiting affinity for the West to evilness and chaos. Understandably, Anukul has been portrayed as a murderer and a peddler in cocaine – a narcotic popularised by the Westerners – symbolically preserved in the bottles of European *Eric and Havell* sugar-of-milk bottles (17, 24). The easy breaking of the British Yale lock “to pieces” when Bakshi pushes the closed door of Ashwini Kumar Chowdhury’s room, other than symbolising breakage of Western bondage by the colonised populace, also underscores the unreliability of the European security systems (10). Anukul himself observes,

“That is the problem with locks from abroad – when they are fine, there is nothing to worry about, but once they start winding up, no one but an engineer can fix them. Our indigenous bolt is better than this...” (21).

Ajit Bandyopadhyay’s description of Byomkesh Bakshi as he enters the boarding house under the pseudonym of Atul Chandra Mitra matches the Watson’s description of Holmes in A Study in Scarlet. Even though the inquisitor’s dress is ‘in dishabille’, he is ‘fair, well-built and handsome, and his face radiate[s] intelligence’ (5). With his uncombed hair, in a dress that looks “frayed” and shoes “[that]

have had taken on a rough hue for lack of polishing” (50), the Indian opposes the general European codes for etiquette and dresses involving combed and shaved face, well-pressed clothes and polished shoes. On the other hand, reminiscent of Holmes who has already achieved reputation for investigative excellences by the time he is first introduced to Watson, Bakshi has gained recognition before the readers are formally acquainted with him. When he questions “Anukulbabu, do you know someone called Byomkesh Bakshi?”, he implies his having established a reputation formidable enough to be heard by the common people (22). His recognition is vindicated when the White commissioner of police personally turns up to secure his release after he is mistakenly detained (27). The prompt arrival of the White commissioner signifies the perceptible indispensability of the intelligent colonised native to the colonisers in apprehending dangerous subaltern criminals.

By referring to Bakshi’s power of “build[ing]...up a camaraderie” in “the little time that he...spen[ds]” in the boarding house, the author stresses the detective’s prowess at maintaining liaisons with the fellow Indian and reflects the general Indian fellow feeling that the imperialists attempted to destroy by partitioning Bengal (7). Significantly, in none of the sixty Sherlock Holmes stories the detective is shown communicating with his neighbours and no neighbour has been mentioned. Exhibiting an affinity for the West, Anukul “do[es] not poke...[his]...nose into anybody’s business” (8). Bakshi’s excellent public relations therefore assume importance as anti-colonial responses.

Like London’s representation as a cosmopolitan city in the Sherlock Holmes narratives, Saradindu Bandyopadhyay depicts the cosmopolitan character of the Oriental metropolis of Calcutta when he refers to the presence of a formidable number of “badly-off non-Bengalis” and “pale-skinned Chinese” (1) and Oriyas (7) in the city. While describing the London streets and alleys in “The Red Headed League” and English weather in “The Adventure of the Cardboard Box”, Doyle expects his readers are acquainted with the details of the English atmosphere and London’s geography. Similarly, Bandyopadhyay imparts a topicality to his Byomkesh Bakshi narratives by depicting a seedy portion of the imperial metropolis that is not known “even [to] those who are *deeply* familiar with Calcutta” (1) (*italics mine*). Through his description of the nefarious activities that run every night at the “delta” in central Calcutta, the author indicts the contemporary British administrative officials for their failure to maintain law and order in the eastern regional headquarters of the British imperialists.

It is important that while Doyle precisely indicates 221B Baker Street as being the address of Sherlock Holmes, Bandyopadhyay never straightforwardly singles out the precise location of Anukul’s mess or the number of Bakshi’s residence on Harrison Road (24). Even Sheikh Abdul Gaffoor’s address has been mentioned as “thirty six, ____ Street” (4). The author avoids direct references to locations in British-dominated Calcutta which were being altered at will by the imperialists. Rather he presents Bakshi as a resident of Calcutta only to assert his Indian/Bengali identity.

Saradindu Bandyopadhyay exhibits his provincialism when on being asked by Bakshi how he manages to live in a corrupt and seedy locality, Anukul is depicted as saying, “Then you would rather have gone to the Oriya neighbourhood...” (7). By linking the inhabitants of a separate province of India to different crimes including drug peddling, Bandyopadhyay once again asserts the Bengali identity of his detective narratives. This is further exhibited in Ashwini’s searching for “some beedis”, “beedis” being the Indian equivalent of cigarettes, and Bakshi’s taking position on the floor at night – a common practice among the residents of Calcutta during the summer (8). On the other hand, being a post graduate trained in British-initiated system of education, Ajit Bandyopadhyay exhibits his hybridity in his smoking the European cheroot after having a meal “as always” (8).

Through his characterisation of Ashwini Chowdhury, Saradindu Bandyopadhyay meticulously describes the general characteristic and behavioural features of ordinary Bengalis: Chowdhury, a resident of the village of Harirampur in Burdwan, is an employee of a mercantile firm, and is “an amicable person...[has] had no friends other than those at the office and the mess (11). He has been visiting his Harirampur-residence every Saturday “for the last ten or twelve years [,...]suffer[s] from diabetes...[,...]and...dr[aws]...a salary of approximately one hundred and twenty rupees” per month (12). Chowdhury’s portrayal is in sharp contrast to the European characters readers normally encounter in the Sherlock Holmes stories where a common British citizen is portrayed as conforming and unexceptional. The

picture of the a typical Indian middle-class society is realistically exhibited when Ajit Bandyopadhyay writes, “Ashwinibabu’s family had been informed of the tragedy by telegram” (15), thereby implying that telegram is used by common Indians only to send emergency news over long distances, in opposition to Holmes’s frequent usage of intra-London telegrams to send directions to Watson.

In light of the police investigation into Chowdhury’s death, the author depicts the intelligence of the Bengali detective and symbolically makes him dominate the imperial forces when he precisely and confidently points out that the window of Chowdhury’s room is “the cause for...[Chowdhury’s]...murder” (13). By waging a conversation with the police inspector during which he vindicates his own observations and logic as being infallible, Bakshi asserts his superiority to the colonial forces while the inspector is compelled to state, “I see you are an intelligent man...” (13-4). It is significant that the inquisitor avoids answering to or reacting at the inspector’s invitation to join the imperial police forces, thus expressing his subaltern resentment at the imperial domination of India (14). Contrarily, Ramdhani Singh, who handcuffs Bakshi, embodies the author’s satiric portrayal of the Indians that collaborated with the imperial forces (18).

“The Inquisitor” presents the Indian executive and judiciary which had changed themselves in accordance with the conventions of the British colonisers. Ajit Bandyopadhyay’s reference to “C.I.D” or *Criminal Investigation Department* indicates a branch of Calcutta Police that was founded in 1868 primarily to

suppress the Indian armed nationalists rather than apprehending general criminals (17). The police inspector’s procedure of interrogating the residents of Anukul’s boarding house (11-4) and his manner of asking them to identify Bakshi as “Atul Chandra Mitra” before arresting him on the charge of murdering Chowdhury (18), indicate the conventions for interrogation and arrest promulgated by the British colonisers in India. The author satirises the colonial executive and judiciary in India by demonstrating fallibility of such conventions when the police inspector erroneously arrests Bakshi (27). On the other hand, Ajit Bandyopadhyay’s observation that locating a lawyer in Calcutta is not difficult might be interpreted as his reference to the arbitrariness of the British administration and judiciary that forced Indians in British India to frequently consult advocates to avoid detention and harassment (19).

When, after returning from the police station, Byomkesh Bakshi says, “The English have a saying about a ‘bad penny’ – my situation is something similar; even the police tossed me right back” (20), he is not only being ironical about the erratic functioning of colonial police forces but also exhibits his acquaintance with the imperial customs and conventions, thus demonstrating his Occidental knowledge and, in extension, his hybridity. His hybridity is further depicted when he checks the “phosphorescent dial of his [identifiably European-make] watch” after narrating details of his original identity to Ajit Bandyopadhyay (22), and smokes a cheroot after apprehending Anukul (24). The homeopath’s post-detention statement, “There is a legal system in the country and I have plenty of money too” (23) is also a part

of Saradindu Bandyopadhyay’s depiction of the corruption and partiality of the British judicial system in India (23).

In “The Inquisitor” Bakshi is shown as possessing a revolver when he apprehends Anukul in action (23). In opposition to Holmes and Watson’s customary carrying of their own revolvers during adventures, Bakshi owns a gun which does not belong to him but to the police inspector, Sukhomoy Samanta. In “Amriter Mrityu” the inquisitor expresses his discomfiture with handguns (Bandyopadhyay, *Byomkesh* 633). This signifies the polarity between the laws of the British colonisers and those applied to the Indian colonised individuals. On the other hand, that Bakshi possesses a firearm in 1925, a time when possessing firearms by average Indians had been banned following intermittent attacks on the British administrative officials by the Bengali and Punjabi nationalists, suggests his acquaintance with and influence on the senior British administrative officials. It requires mention that Bakshi follows the path of cultural *collusion* and hybridity while asserting his anti colonial resistance and his rapport with the British administrators is not an instance of debilitating anti-Indian liaison but a process of initial collaboration with the imperialists to dominate them thereafter.

A major difference between the Sherlock Holmes stories and the Byomkesh Bakshi narratives involves the position that Arthur Conan Doyle and Saradindu Bandyopadhyay assign to the respective associates of Holmes and Bakshi. While Watson shares the 221B Baker Street-flat with Holmes and identifiably

pays the rent, Ajit Bandyopadhyay is granted refuge by Bakshi at his Harrison Road residence which he immediately accepts and moves in not as a paying guest but as a friend all throughout the canon (Bandyopadhyay, *Picture* 27-8). Bakshi and Bandyopadhyay shift to the Keyatala residence in “Beni Sanghar”. It might also be pointed out that while Watson does not remain consciously subservient to Holmes and or care for the latter’s monetary patronage, Ajit Bandyopadhyay remains overtly dependent on the Bengali detective and thus defaces his own character and distinct identity.

It is in the first story of the Byomkesh Bakshi series that Saradindu Bandyopadhyay distinguishes the Bengali inquisitor from the professional *detectives* of Eurocentric literature. When Ajit Bandyopadhyay asks him to explain the significance of “Byomkesh Bakshi: Inquisitor” inscribed on the brass nameplate before to his residence, Bakshi says,

“That is my identity. I don’t like the sound of the word ‘detective’; ‘investigator’ is even worse. So I call myself an Inquisitor, a Seeker of Truth...” (24)

This assumes significance as an anti-colonial reference on part of the Indian author in the context of the fact that Doyle’s imperially-compatible Sherlock Holmes takes pride in his being the “a consulting detective, the only one in the world” in *A Study in Scarlet* (*The Complete* 18).

CHAPTER 5.B.

“THE GRAMOPHONE PHONE MYSTERY”: -

“The Gramophone Pin Mystery”, originally titled “*Pather Kanta*” in Bengali, was chronologically the first Byomkesh Bakshi story to be published in 1932. In his maiden Bakshi narrative Saradindu Bandyopadhyay has registered an anti-colonial reaction that is unmatched by any other story of the canon.

The main action in “The Gramophone Phone Mystery” occurs in the locality adjoining to Byomkesh Bakshi’s residence on Harrison Road in Calcutta, the imperial metropolis of British India. The name of the street itself indicates the contemporary colonial atmosphere because a number of important British administrative offices were situated on Harrison Road, later renamed Mahatma Gandhi Road in post-independence Calcutta. The narrative was written in June 1932 – a period when activities of the armed Bengali nationalists like Surya Sen, Bina Das, Preetilata Wededar and Kalpana Dutta had reached their climax particularly in Calcutta, Midnapore and Chittagong (Chandra, et al., 188). Significantly, the author supplements the contemporary atmosphere of political turbulence with the description of “a fogless February morning...sparrows...flying about, filling the air with their uncalled-for chirps...” (*Picture 29*). The narrative having had been written and published in colonised India, Bandyopadhyay refrained from providing vivid description of the Indian freedom struggle although he displays his anti-colonial reaction by strenuously avoiding descriptions of the colonisers and depicting the Bengali protagonists as attempting to

create an exclusively Oriental world of their own. These characters’ hybridity acts as a deterrent against the perceived literary and cultural hegemony of the imperialists.

In the introductory section of the narrative *Saradindu* Bandyopadhyay depicts Byomkesh Bakshi as an exceptional personality thus granting the detective a mystery and Otherness which the Orientalists generally associate with the Orientals (Said, *Orientalism* 72). Ajit Bandyopadhyay writes,

“Byomkesh was a strange man...On the surface, from his looks or even his conversation, one wouldn’t judge him to be extraordinary in any way. But if he was confronted or taunted into a state of agitation, his real self emerged from within its shell. In general he was a reserved person. But once he was jeered or ridiculed and lost his cool, his inherent razor-sharp intelligence ripped apart all modicum of uncertainty or restraint and then his conversation was something worth listening to” (Bandyopadhyay, *Picture* 30).

In context of the fact that Bakshi, an identifiably Bengali character, is *Saradindu* Bandyopadhyay’s mouthpiece for registering his postcolonial resistance, the author’s detailed description of the different behavioural traits of the inquisitor might be interpreted as his attempt to present the Indians as being opposite to the erroneous imperial perception of them as unintelligent and hideous subaltern individuals. While Watson never refers to Sherlock Holmes as being “strange”, Ajit Bandyopadhyay stresses

Bakshi’s strangeness as being a cover for his intellectual excellence. Also, in opposition to Holmes’s perception of himself being the only practising detective of the world who rightly deserves attention, the Bengali detective’s uniqueness is in his extraordinarily ordinary demeanour and his power to avoid attention even as he continues his investigation.

While Holmes minutely follows newspapers reports and make *scrap books* with different newspaper cuttings, Bakshi gives primary importance to the newspaper advertisements for ‘genuine, relevant news’ while simultaneously expressing his encyclopaedic knowledge. He projects himself to be in direct opposition to Holmes when he satirises the very act of reading news items and the quality of the news in British-controlled Indian newspapers:

“Byomkesh turned away from the window and said, ‘Have you noticed that a strange advertisement has been appearing in the newspaper for the last few days?’

I said, ‘No. I do not read advertisements’.

Raising an incredulous eyebrow, Byomkesh said, ‘You don’t read advertisements? Then what *do* you read?’

‘Just what everybody reads in a newspaper – news.’

‘In other words, stories about someone in Manchuria who has a bleeding finger, or somebody who has had triplets in Brazil – that’s what you read!’

What’s the point of reading that? If you are looking for genuine, relevant news, look to the advertisements” (29).

In expressing his liking for the ‘real *meaty* news... in the *personals*’ (30) (*italics mine*), Bakshi might seem to assert the perceived Oriental sensuousness (Said, *Orientalism* 72), thus opposing the British imperial detective who never expresses any such affinity. He also underscores the excellence of the Indian news revealed through the advertisements and refers to them as being superior to the British ‘Reuter’s telegrams’ (Bandyopadhyay, *Picture* 30). On the other hand, he displays his methodical approach to investigation when he mentions that he has been watching the *Thorn-in-the-Flesh* advertisement appear “every Friday without fail for the last three months” (31). His psychoanalytic approach, unlike the Holmesian empirical deduction from physical evidences, is displayed when he tries to analyse the psychology of the advertiser in his position as an Indian without having visited the scheduled place – “the south-western corner of Whiteway Laidlaw” – beforehand (30-1).

While in stories like The Sign of Four and “The Red-Headed League”, Doyle describes different regions of London and reflects on the busy life of the imperial locus, Saradindu Bandyopadhyay meticulously depicts “the kind of crowd that gathers [at Whiteway Laidlaw] on a Saturday evening...There is Whiteway Laidlaw on one side and New Market on the other and several cinema halls all around the place”, thus painting the weekend life of Bengalis influenced by the British customs and infusing his narratives with a subaltern topicality (31-2). The gas-lamp posts referred to

by Bakshi during his conversation also serve to portray the atmosphere of colonial Calcutta.

In “The Gramophone Pin Mystery” Saradindu Bandyopadhyay contrasts the Bengali detective’s psychoanalytic approach to investigation with Holmes’s theory of elimination based on forensic examination of physical evidences and physical outdoor adventures. Bakshi proves that “a correct assumption is the best proof” and excludes the necessity of Sherlockian empirical evidences from his “sequence of assumptions” based on the movements of a sparrow (32). According to his ideology, empirical evidences are erroneous and concern of the novices whereas psychoanalysis is infallible:

“...Byomkesh stopped pacing and, pointing to the bird, asked, ‘Can you tell me what that bird is trying to do?’

Startled, I replied, ‘What is it trying to do – oh, I suppose it’s looking for a place to build its nest.’

‘Do you know that for sure? Beyond a doubt?’

‘Yes, I think so – beyond a doubt.’

Byomkesh crossed his arms behind himself and said, smiling gently, ‘How did you figure that out? What is the proof?’

‘Proof... well, the straw in its mouth-’

‘Does a straw in its mouth necessarily indicate that it is trying to build a nest?’

I realised that I had fallen into the trap of Byomkesh’s logic. I said, ‘No-but-’

‘Assumption. Now you are talking. Why were you vacillating for so long then?’

‘Not vacillating, really. You mean to say that the assumption that works for a sparrow would work for a human being, too?’

‘Why not?’

‘If you were to perch on someone’s ledge with a straw in your mouth, would it prove that you wish to build a nest?’

‘No. It would prove that I am a raving lunatic.’

‘Does that need any proving?’

Byomkesh began to laugh. He said, ‘You shall not exasperate me. Come on, you’ll have to accept this – empirical proof may be fallible, but a logical assumption is failproof. It can’t go wrong.’

I too was adamant, and said, ‘But I am not able to believe in all those wild conjectures which you just made about that insertion.’

Byomkesh said, ‘That only shows how weak your mind is – even faith needs a strong will. Anyway, for people like you, empirical evidence is the best way...’” (33).

Through Bakshi linking Ajit Bandyopadhyay to reliance on empirical evidences, Saradindu Bandyopadhyay refutes Sherlock Holmes’s claim to the indispensability of

empirical proofs in investigation and projects him as someone of inferior intellect like Bakshi’s associate.

While most of the characters in “The Gramophone Pin Mystery” are identifiably Bengali like those in “The Inquisitor”, they exhibit a Bhabhian hybridity in dresses and daily life. Ashutosh Mitra, whose possible physical features, as he ascends the stairs, are deduced by Bakshi in a style reminiscent of Holmes’s assumptions regarding Stanley Hopkins in “The Adventure of the Golden Pince-Nez” (Doyle, *The Complete* 671), displays hybridity through his Malaccan bamboo walking-stick with a silver knob which is perceptively built in the European style, and his gear of buttoned-up black coat made of alpaca wool and well-pleated dhoti (Bandyopadhyay, *Picture* 34). Significantly, the people attacked by the professional murderer whose pseudonym is Prafulla Roy – Jayhari Sanyal, Kailash Chandra Moulick, Krishnadayal Laha and Ashutosh Mitra – are Bengali businessmen who have had identifiably gained affluence in the colonial era by collaborating with the British colonisers. Roy’s assaults of these businessmen achieve an anti-colonial connotation.

Byomkesh Bakshi exhibits his acquaintance with the European standards of living when he switches on the electric fan after Mitra arrives (34). In context of the fact that the electric fan was not in wide usage in Calcutta of the 1930s, Bakshi’s exhibits an adaptation of the Western standards of daily life in a degree more than the common Indians even as he retains his Bengali identity. Ajit Bandyopadhyay’s exuberance at Bakshi’s capability to relate the arrival of Ashutosh Mitra to the

gramophone pin murders (34) and Mitra’s praise of his “incredible skill” (38) show the author’s attempt to underscore the intellectual excellence of the Bengali detective just like what Watson does in every Sherlock Holmes story. The Bengali inquisitor’s description of how he managed to relate Mitra’s arrival to the gramophone pin murders (34-5) could be compared to Holmes’s discussion about how he could infer that Watson has had been to Afghanistan in A Study in Scarlet (Doyle, *The Complete* 18).

In the narrative Bandyopadhyay depicts Byomkesh Bakshi as “an inquisitor, a Seeker of Truth” who does not “like the word *detective*” (Picture 34) and projects him against Holmes who, in A Study in Scarlet, boasts of being the ‘only consulting detective’ in the world (Doyle, *The Complete* 18), thus demonstrating how, in spite of his excellence and efficiencies, the Indian eschews any pride. Ajit Bandyopadhyay writes,

“...Byomkesh was deeply drawn to this mystery. Catching wrong-doers was his profession and had gained some renown in the field as well. Much as he hated the term ‘detective’, he was well aware that for all intents and purposes he was nothing but a private investigator...” (Picture 38).

Both Sherlock Holmes and Byomkesh Bakshi try to keep the official law enforcement personnel away from the purview of their investigations. However, whereas Holmes avoids interaction with the police forces to nullify any challenge to his perceived uniqueness in the field of detection, Bakshi, being

an Indian and an amateur inquisitor, maintains distance from imperial forces. It requires mention, in context of Binod’s arrest, that while ‘public misconduct’ and ‘getting into a fracas with the police’ are punished by the imperial judiciary with a mere two-month imprisonment, any remote association with the nationalist movement in contemporary India was reprimanded by the same court with long term imprisonment and execution (39). Bandyopadhyay’s reference to Binod’s punishment might be interpreted as an instance of his criticism of British India’s executive and judiciary in British India for their partiality and arbitrariness.

In narratives like The Sign of Four and “The Adventure of the Speckled Band” Doyle identifies the Orient with wickedness, chaos and destruction. A reversal of this Orientalist ideology is incorporated in the Byomkesh Bakshi canon. During the time when they are attacked by Prafulla Roy, Kailash Chandra Moulick is travelling in a European car driven by a chauffeur in the Western convention (36) while Ashutosh Mitra is carrying a European pocket watch (40). That the same watch protects Mitra symbolically implies his having had gained affluence under the protection and the patronage of the Western colonisers (40). The Occidental connection to annihilation and chaos is further demonstrated when the gramophone pin is identified as one “of an ordinary Edison brand” (46) and when Prafulla Roy asks Ajit Bandyopadhyay to meet him at Kidderpore racecourse, an imperial construction, for murdering him (51). Incidentally, the custom of organising commercial horse races was initiated in India by the British colonisers.

While in the Sherlock Holmes stories like “The Final Problem” and “The Adventure of the Empty House” the air-gun is presented as a formidable and lethal weapon favoured by the members of James Moriarty’s gang to commit murders, Bakshi satirises Ajit Bandyopadhyay’s suspicion about its usage and refutes it as being “a novelty” (43). Thus Saradindu Bandyopadhyay projects his Bakshi narratives as being directly in opposition to conventions of Doyle’s detective stories and decries the White author’s conception of criminals as being unrealistic.

Bandyopadhyay reasserts the Indian identity of his detective stories and pits them against the Eurocentric narratives of Doyle, Agatha Christie and G.K.Chesterton when Bakshi relates the excellence of the gramophone pin murderer to Arjuna’s shooting a fish in the eye by watching its reflection in water to wed Draupadi as narrated in The Mahabharata (44). While analysing the psychological traits of the professional killer, the inquisitor places himself in the position of an Indian and precisely judges the mentality of another Indian subaltern against the backdrop of an Indian epic initially without visiting the scene of crime.

Though Bakshi does not attach importance to the Holmesian empirical evidences, his scientific knowledge is underscored when Ajit Bandyopadhyay refers the “room next to the drawing room...[which serves as]...his library, laboratory, museum and dressing room” (44). However, whereas Holmes frequently conducts experiments in his laboratory or consults his scrap books in stories like A Study in Scarlet and “The Adventure of the Empty House”, the Indian inquisitor

has never been shown as conducting chemical tests or referring to any such book. Bakshi’s possessing the library-cum-laboratory is more a sign of his hybridity than its serving any real purpose.

In “The Gramophone Pin Mystery”, Bandyopadhyay depicts an overwhelmingly Indian society by referring to such characters as the woman musician whom Ashutosh Mitra visits for musical soiree (45). Other than exposing the custom of women musicians doubling as prostitutes in pre-independence and early post-independence India, the author is in danger of complying with the Orientalist conception of the Eastern sexuality (Said, *Orientalism* 72) while he sensuously describes Mitra’s mistress (*Picture* 45). On the other hand, the conservative Indian societal conventions and prejudices are cited when Ashutosh Mitra expresses his inability to marry his mistress because of her courtesan heritage (53).

Cultural hybridity in Bakshi is reasserted when he smokes a European cheroot (45) and exhibits an attraction for silk stockings while Ajit Bandyopadhyay waits for the assailant at Whiteway Laidlaw (50). On the other hand, Doyle’s influence on Saradindu Bandyopadhyay is evinced by the facts that Bakshi maintains a complete aloofness while thinking over the details of his case (47) and Ajit Bandyopadhyay, like Watson, remains a besotted associate to the inquisitor praising him at every chance. Bakshi and Ajit Bandyopadhyay, like Holmes and Watson in “The Adventure of Charles Augustus Milverton”, disguise themselves before meeting the advertiser (48). Significantly, both the inquisitor and his associate disguise themselves as

Europeans (48, 50). It is also because of his European guise that Ajit Bandyopadhyay is able to avoid being interrogated by the police sergeant while loitering at Whiteway Laidlaw (49). Cultural hybridity is simultaneously demonstrated when even after dressing up as a European, Ajit Bandyopadhyay asks for a betel leaf (48) , the chewing of betel leaves being an Indian custom, and Bakshi impersonating as an Englishman speaks in “flawless Bangla” (50).

Through his characterisation of the corrupt lawyer Bilash Mullick the author satirises those Indians who had amassed money through fraudulent ways by collaborating with and under the protection of the British colonisers. Mullick has been depicted as a villain precisely because he has collaborated with the British imperialists and has exploited the imperial laws for his personal beneficence. Bakshi’s irony against the efficiency and impartiality of the imperial law is prominent in his observation that Mullick’s “rightful penalty would be death, [which] [,]...of course [,]...is not possible under...the[se]...circumstances” (55). Mullick establishing a liaison with Mitra’s mistress at Jorashanko is also important because Jorashanko housed the residence of the Tagores whose heritage included a commercial and cultural collaboration with the imperialists (52).

Even Prafulla Roy is a hybrid character. While launching an attack on Ajit Bandyopadhyay he wears goggles and a black suit both of which were the colonial introductions (62). He not only uses a European bicycle and murders with a European Edison-brand gramophone pin, but also introduces himself as an “insurance

agent” when he goes to meet Bakshi at his house : insurance having been initiated and popularised in India by the British colonisers (55). Later he compares the situation of his standing under a specific lamppost waiting for the *thorn-in-the-flesh* advertiser to that of “a Santa under a Christmas tree” (57). On the other hand, like ordinary Indians he is addicted to betel-leaves (55), and symbolically uses the very Indian addiction as the mean to avoid his arrest at the hands of the imperial forces by committing suicide with a poisoned betel leaf (64-5).

Bakshi’s affected insistence on Prafulla Roy’s not consulting the police indicates his intended seclusion from the British police and his attempt to maintain his distinction as a private investigator (59). The Bengali detective “[has] not worked with the police ever, and do[es] not intend to start now” (59) in order to avoid being identified as a collaborator of the imperial forces that tortured the Indian revolutionaries. Bakshi’s hybridised identity is re-demonstrated in his possessing a telephone – the Western gadget being rare in pre-independence India, his using “English phrases” to speak to the White police commissioner, and in his wearing black suit and rubber-soled shoes before apprehending Prafulla Roy (59-60). He even disguises Ajit Bandyopadhyay identifiably as an Anglo-Indian with “old moustache and French-cut beard” (60).

When he is captured, Prafulla Roy’s admires Bakshi as “an artist of a far greater calibre” (64). This might be compared to Baron Dawson’s praise of Holmes’s acing prowess on the night before his execution as mentioned in “The

Adventure of the Mazarin Stone” (963). It also projects the influence of Doyle’s Eurocentric sleuth narratives on Bandyopadhyay who confessedly adopts plots and conventions from such stories and reproduces them in an Oriental perspective, thereby asserting the polarity between the Indian and the English detective fiction (*Saradindu II* 648).

It is important that only in “The Gramophone Pin Mystery” among the thirty-three stories of the canon *Saradindu* Bandyopadhyay has introduced a White character – the British commissioner of Calcutta Police who converses with the inquisitor in English (Bandyopadhyay, *Saradindu I* 58). Approaching Roy with a handcuff even though he is dead, the commissioner exemplifies the amount of suspicion the British colonisers had had of the Indian populace (*Picture* 65).

While Sherlock Holmes never receives any official award from the British government, “The Gramophone Pin Mystery” concludes with references to Bakshi’s receipt of an award from the imperial administrators for his success at the gramophone-pin-murder case. Even as he continues to oppose the Eurocentric conventions of detective fiction in his demeanour and dress, Bakshi insists on receiving the award apparently as a protector of the imperial interests which might be interpreted as a necessary prelude to resistance through cultural *collusion*. It also suggests his growing acquaintance with the British administrators as a step to achieve recognition of Holmes’s magnitude. On the other hand, while reflecting on the British government’s position vis-à-vis Roy, Bakshi poignantly refers to the imperial custom of hanging the Indians.

Answering Ajit Bandyopadhyay’s query about the outcome of his meeting with the White police commissioner, Bakshi says,

“To start with, he has thanked me on behalf of the police and the government; then, he has expressed his grief at Prafulla Roy’s suicide – although this should have made him happy because it has saved the government a great deal of expense and labour. They would have had to prosecute and hang him, you know. Anyway, I shall no doubt receive the award from the government very soon; the Commissioner has informed me that he has arranged for my petition to be cleared as soon as I file it...” (68-9).

The British government’s insistence upon acquiring Prafulla Roy’s bicycle bell might be interpreted as the imperial consideration of any object belonging to the colony as the rightful property of the colonisers (69).

CHAPTER 5.C.

“WHERE THERE’S A WILL”: -

“Arthamanartham”, translated by Sreejata Guha as “Where There’s a Will”, was first published in 1934, and it is another of the four Byomkesh Bakshi narratives that contain traces of Saradindu Bandyopadhyay’s anti-colonial ideology the most. The issue of the influence of the English novelists and detective story writers on the author is referred to when Bandyopadhyay mentions the name of a Eurocentric narrative, The Bride of Lammermoor, in course of story (Bandyopadhyay, *Picture* 93). On the other hand, he challenges the hegemony of the imperial sleuth-story writers by setting his own narrative in an exclusively Oriental locale and depicts his characters as belonging to Bengal and conforming to the Bengali societal norms.

The story, written during a period when the armed Indian struggle against the British colonisers had peaked in Bengal and Punjab, starts with Byomkesh Bakshi and Ajit Bandyopadhyay being summoned by Bidhubabu, the deputy police commissioner of Calcutta Police, to investigate the cause for Karali Charan Basu’s murder (89). The police official represents that section of colonised Indians which had been collaborating with the imperial forces and helping them to apprehend people with nationalistic sentiments. Bandyopadhyay simultaneously depicts the policeman’s subjugated state when Bakshi observes, “It was very apparent from his tone that he hasn’t called me out of his own choice. Orders from...[the British superiors]...is more like it”

(88). Apart from indicating the subservience of the Indian law enforcement personnel to the White British administrators, the statement also depicts Bakshi’s growing influence on the colonial police forces.

Saradindu Bandyopadhyay’s portrait of Bidhubabu is understandably a mixture of satire and pathos. He himself states that he has rung Bakshi up because “the [White] chief ordered that ...[he]...be called in” and that as an Indian he could not “question why” his White superior has done so (90). Moreover, he is identifiably inferior to the Indian private investigator intellectually and in expertise but is forced to behave as being just the opposite. He is ostentatious and bombastic, and “in the course of charting out his own sterling qualities” he “let slip a lot of secret information from the police files” (89). In short, Bandyopadhyay paints the deputy police commissioner as a zombie-like figure under the procedural clauses of the British administration. Ajit Bandyopadhyay elucidates,

“Bidhubabu had probably not been particularly dull in his younger days. The commitment and enthusiasm he still...[has is]... remarkable for a man of his age. But trapped in the monotony of routine police work, his brain...[has]...been rendered incapable of anything other than mechanical functioning. In his absence his colleagues referred to him as *Budhhubabu* – Mr. Stupid” (90).

Apart from underscoring the tactlessness and lack of efficiency of the colonial forces, Ajit Bandyopadhyay’s above-quoted observation in extension grants Bakshi an insularity from the British-Indian policemen and from the contemporary conventions of European detectives (Bandyopadhyay, *Saradindu II* 647). While Bidhubabu helps the colonisers to perpetuate their domination of India by intimidating the nationalists, the inquisitor helps the police forces only to maintain law and order in colonised Calcutta against the subversive activities of the anti-socials. Importantly, it is because of his distinction from the White imperialists that he is harassed by the deputy police commissioner during his investigations (*Picture* 100-1).

In “Where There’s a Will”, Bakshi deals with the upper middle class Bengali family of Karali Charan Basu and his family members in contrast with Holmes whose clients usually belong to the aristocracy. Also, unlike Holmes’s movements in privately-hired hansom cabs, the detective and his associate travel to a “prosperous place in north Calcutta” by public bus (90). On the other hand, the internal decorations of Basu’s house indicate the residents’ hybridity revealed in the combination of Indian decorative palms in clay pots and a European aquarium containing goldfishes. Ajit Bandyopadhyay describes,

“From outside the two-storeyed house had appeared small, but inside it was quite spacious and well furnished, indicating that the owner was well-to-do. Large decorative palms stood in clay pots, gracing the hallway.

Some goldfish were frolicking in a giant aquarium. The hallway led on three sides to rooms attached with balconies.” (90).

Bidhubabu’s method of conducting investigation by initially interrogating the domestic helps and other economically-underprivileged people, and the nature of the questions he asks the cook exhibit his conformity to the European formulae for investigation and interrogation (91-2). Trained by the colonisers to be incredulous and suspicious about the Indians, the deputy police commissioner orders all his colleagues to vacate the room before he could narrate the details of Basu’s murder to Bakshi and Ajit Bandyopadhyay (92). Through such instances the author also paints realistic pictures of colonised India.

Bakshi’s encyclopaedic knowledge about the human physiology as well as literature, reminiscent of Holmes’s formidable scientific and Orientalist education, is revealed when he exhibits acquaintance with the process of murdering people by sticking needles at the meeting point of the medulla oblongata and the first cervical vertebra, and refers to Walter Scott’s The Bride of Lammermoor (1819) to cite instances of murder for revenge (93). He is also drawn to the evidence and effects of chloroform on human body (96). Significantly, while Holmes’s supplements his medical knowledge by conducting practical experiments in his laboratory, Bakshi’s knowledge is principally accumulated from texts identifiably written by White Westerners. Bakshi’s education imbued with Orientalist prejudices is, therefore,

defective in comparison to Holmes’s and nowhere else does he demonstrate his medical knowledge.

The bedroom of Karali Charan Basu decorated in the Oriental style is depicted as being in contrast to the drawing room with the European aquarium and goldfishes:

“It was a medium-sized room, sparsely but neatly furnished. A Mirzapuri carpet covered the floor. In the centre of the room there was a teapoy covered with an embroidered tablecloth; in one corner there was a clothes-horse – a folded dhoti and kurta hung on it and polished shoes were arranged in a row below it” (95).

The dhoti and kurta asserts the Bengali identity of the murdered occupant of the room. On the other hand, that Basu had been “quite a prosperous gentleman [,]...[owned]...four or five houses in Calcutta, and...[had]...several lakhs in the bank” suggests his previous collaboration with the colonisers to secure his own prosperity (93). Phonibhusan Kar describes that Basu had “very testy disposition” and “did not “wear his heart on his sleeve” (104). These behavioural traits seem to attest the European conception about the Oriental cunningness and excesses (Said, *Orientalism* 38, 57). On the other hand, he followed the European convention of making wills and deciding his beneficiary by “go[ing]...tap-tap on the typewriter”, typewriter being a West-invented gadget (Bandyopadhyay, *Picture* 104). Thus Basu is perceptively a hybrid character who serves

to accentuate Saradindu Bandyopadhyay’s anti-colonial resistance by *resisting* through his cultural ambiguity.

Just as Holmes cautiously examines Enoch J. Drebbler’s corpse in A Study in Scarlet, the Bengali inquisitor meticulously studies the dead body of Karali Charan Basu (96). But while Holmes’s assumptions are based on his analysis of the post-mortem conditions of the body, its position, and an examination of the adjacent areas of the crime for evidences like cigar’s ash and footprints left behind by criminals, Bakshi’s approach to investigation is psychological. Perceptively exhibiting the Indian fear of and prejudice against corpses, Bakshi moves away from the dead body quickly – an instance that fortifies the Bengali identity of the story (96-7).

The effect of the British system of education on subaltern populace has been exemplified in Sukumar’s medical studies and his sister Satyabati’s college education (94). The system of education that forces Sukumar to consult books like Gray’s Anatomy and others written by White imperial authors was actually directed to make him a *conforming* colonised individual bereft of the powers of objectively understanding his dominated predicament and resisting (98). Naturally, Saradindu Bandyopadhyay has portrayed him as a weak character and in the Byomkesh Bakshi narratives that follow Sukumar never appears as harbouring nationalistic sentiments, thereby never posing any danger for the British colonisers. On the other hand, Satyabati’s colonial education identifiably helps her to comprehend instance of her *Otherness* in her being a dominated Oriental woman incorporates. She is, therefore, a strong character who

is a lethal source of danger for the British colonisers characteristically without proper knowledge of the Indian female psychology.

Significantly, Arthur Conan Doyle never provides vivid physical descriptions of women in the Sherlock Holmes stories. Even the perceptively voluptuous Irene Adler has been depicted with dignified restraint in “A Scandal in Bohemia”. In contrast, Bandyopadhyay minutely paints the physicality of his female protagonists. In his description of Satyabati in “Where There’s a Will”, Shakuntala Singh in “Bonhi Patango” and Mohini Das in “Kahen Kabi Kalidas”, the writer appears to demonstrate a sensuousness characteristically linked by the Orientalists to the Easterners (Said, *Orientalism* 72). Doyle’s conformed to the codes of *Victorian prudery* and insisted on the maintenance of Eurocentric etiquettes, and these might have prevented him from indulging in sensual descriptions of major women characters. No under the obligation of maintain such restraints, Saradindu Bandyopadhyay describes Satyabati in nine sentences that impart her beauty with a strangeness that the White colonisers characteristically associate with the Orient (*Orientalism* 72). Ajit Bandyopadhyay writes,

“About half a minute later a seventeen or eighteen-year-old girl opened the door and on seeing us, moved aside. With hesitant steps we walked in. Sukumar, who had followed us, went and collapsed on the bed wearily. I had taken a look at the girl when we entered. She was slender, dark and tall. Incessant weeping had turned her eyes red and her face slightly puffy. Hence it was impossible to tell whether she was pretty or not. Her hair was

tangled and unkempt. While I felt annoyed with Byomkesh for being cruel enough to cross-examine this grief-stricken girl, it was clear that there was a deliberate design lurking behind the somewhat hesitant manner he had decided to put on” (Bandyopadhyay, *Picture* 100).

When Satyabati visits Bakshi’s house, her beauty is more elaborately described and her power of resilience underscored:

“I had seen Satyabati only once; she had not seemed different in any way from the average educated Bengali girl. Hence, it was remarkable, even unthinkable, that in a time of crisis she would shake off all inhibitions and come to us so directly. When calamity strikes, the greater percentage of Bengali girls turn into wooden dolls. This lanky, dusky girl suddenly acquired a wondrous halo in my eyes. From the tip of her old, dusty, gold-threaded slippers to the ends of her tangled, carelessly-wound plait, everything about her seemed to glow with an unearthly light” (112).

The urgency of this description imparts to Satyabati a certain power and prepares her to become a befitting companion to the anti-colonial inquisitor.

In the Byomkesh Bakshi stories written after 1936, women have been more vividly described and given more pro-active roles, though Satyabati is always shown as a compassionate companion in whom Bakshi finds comfort

and source of sustenance. The writer’s association with the Hindi celluloid world as a Bombay-based scriptwriter between 1938 and 1952 led him to employ the female characters with increased vividness in order to add elements of sex-interest, suspense and melodrama to his narratives at an increased level.

Saradindu Bandyopadhyay’s depiction of Satyabati in “Where There’s a Will” also exemplifies the domination of women in the patriarchal Indian society of the 1930s. Her guardianship is passed from Karali Charan Basu to Sukumar (104), and thereafter to her lover Byomkesh Bakshi (128). Though she has been presented in various roles – that of a beloved in “Where There’s a Will”, a wife in “Picture Imperfect”, or a mother in “Durgo Rahoshyo” – but in all these narratives she is present more physically than intellectually. Bakshi does not consult minutes of investigation with her, and she never goes out unaccompanied except out of sheer despair in “Where There’s a Will” (111-6). She travels alone in “Bishupal Badh”, but then she has reached an advanced age (Bandyopadhyay, *Byomkesh* 981). She also does not share any outdoor adventure with Bakshi and Ajit Bandyopadhyay. Satyabati’s presence in the Byomkesh Bakshi stories is intermittently asserted through speeches that do not possess any link to the main investigative process. Thus she demonstrates domination and patronisation of women in Oriental societies, which could be compared with Doyle’s denial of any important part to the female characters of in his Sherlock Holmes stories. Dalim, the only other woman in “Where There’s a Will”, is a prostitute whom Motilal Kar sleeps with, and has been denied physical presence as well as speeches (Bandyopadhyay, *Picture* 105).

While Bidhubabu warns Bakshi against “discredit[ing] the police” because he is “not [a] part of the force”, the inquisitor reprimands the deputy commissioner for interfering with his investigation, thus demonstrating the disadvantage of *his* being a part of the imperial forces (100). Importantly, the Bengali investigator came to be recognised as an indispensable associate of the official law enforcement department in stories written after the Indian independence in 1947, for example, in “Achin Pakhi” (Bandyopadhyay, *Byomkesh* 660). Although in “Where There’s a Will” he maintains an insularity from the imperial forces, he perceptively enjoys a rapport with the White police commissioner and exhibits how, in spite of being a colonised individual, he achieved recognition from the imperialists. While expressing his displeasure with Bidhubabu, he shows acquaintance with the functioning of different departments of the imperial forces and his anger identifiably emanates from his awareness of the subaltern official’s helplessness under the British administration. Ajit Bandyopadhyay reports,

“At this point the mask of politeness slipped from Byomkesh’s face. Like a wounded tiger he whirled on Bidhubabu and in a murderous but low tone, said, ‘If you continue to hinder me I shall be compelled to inform the Commissioner that you are interfering with my investigation. Are you aware that such cases do not fall under the domain of the general police – it comes under the C.I.D?’” (Bandyopadhyay, *Picture* 101).

The hostile relationship between Bakshi and Bidhubabu is reminiscent of that between Sherlock Holmes and Lestrade of the Scotland Yard.

In his capacity as an Indian subaltern, a group to which Satyabati herself belongs, Bakshi precisely judges her character and refutes Ajit Bandyopadhyay’s keeping her out of the purview of committing murders. He opines, “When a[n]...[Indian]...woman loves somebody, there is nothing she would stop at for him...Satyabati is certainly no ordinary person” (107). On the other hand, Bandyopadhyay realistically depicts Satyabati as a vulnerable Bengali woman in her making no effort to conceal her tears whereas no woman in the Sherlock Holmes stories ever cries (112). Her passionate defence of her brother is based more on intuition and assumptions than on logical reasoning (112-3). With the amalgamation of average appearance and latent sexuality, and conscious defiance and careless beauty in her character and appearance, Satyabati remains the most flawlessly drawn Indian woman in Bandyopadhyay’s detective narratives and presents an ideal contrast to White women in Doyle, Christie and Chesterton. The romance between the inquisitor and Satyabati, commencing with her visiting Bakshi’s house (111-6) and culminating in their daily courtship (127-8), is unique to Bandyopadhyay’s among all the contemporary Indian detective fiction. In an unmatched instance, Bakshi even describes the beauty of her eyes through lines of poetry (117). While stories like “Where There’s a Will”, “Bonhi Patango” and “Shanjarur Kanta” could be simultaneously read for their love interests, the Sherlock Holmes’s stories remain principally focussed on the monothematic investigation.

While Sherlock Holmes follows the Eurocentric custom of visiting theatre-houses and concerts to relax, Ajit Bandyopadhyay asserts that Byomkesh Bakshi likes neither films nor plays and the orchestra remains an overwhelmingly Western form of entertainment (118). The inquisitor also identifies himself as an Indian middle-class believer when he refers to his faith in the lunar ascendancy and in the horoscope prepared by Bhattacharyya, a Bengali astrologer (118). Importantly, Holmes’s scientific approach prevents him from consulting horoscopes in any story of the canon. Bakshi displays a trust in the Bengali proverb that people with large ears are perceptively straightforward to the point of foolishness, when he “look[s] attentively at Bidhubabu’s large ears, as if he...expect[s]...these to perform some new trick at any moment”, thereby also implying that the deputy police commissioner’s arrests, interrogations and lectures have been arbitrary and foolish (119).

The will that Karali Charan Basu prepares in favour of Phonibhusan Kar follows the European format and standards for property-transfer promulgated in India by the British colonisers (119-20). Understandably, the date has been mentioned according to the Christian calendar: “...this Twenty-second day of September, Nineteen Thirty-three (by the Christian calendar)...” (119). When the detective points out the invalidity of the will because of the lack of witnesses’ signatures, he demonstrates an acquaintance with the proprietorship laws in British India and uses them to prevent mischief being done to the Indians (123).

The Bengali identity of “Where There’s a Will” and the other Byomkesh Bakshi narratives is asserted in the male protagonists’ addressing each other with the Bengali salutation, “babu” – customarily applied to denote a gentleman. It is also important a distinction that while Holmes in stories such as A Study in Scarlet, The Sign of Four, “The Adventure of the Empty House” and “The Adventure of the Three Garridebs” uses physical force to overpower the criminals, the Bengali detective gives half an hour to Phonibhusan Kar to spend alone in his room while preparing himself mentally to court arrest (123).

Bakshi satirises the contemporary British judicial system for providing channels to the *real* criminals to get away even as it punishes the Indian revolutionaries: “And that is our only hope because his crime will be very difficult to prove in court. You know what juries are like – they are only too eager to give a verdict of ‘not guilty’!” (124). Importantly, Phonibhusan Kar exhibits a vulnerability characteristically associated to the Indians by the Orientalists when he commits suicide by slashing his wrist but not by shooting or drugging or hanging himself, which would have normally occurred in Eurocentric detective fiction.

At the conclusion of the story, Bakshi re-identifies himself as an Indian gentleman by dressing himself in silk *kurta*-s and carrying perfumed handkerchiefs (127-8). He plays with Satyabati’s name in a Bengali perspective by likening his courtship with her to his quest for “satya”, the Bengali equivalent for truth (128).

CHAPTER 5.D.

“PICTURE IMPERFECT”:-

The action of “Picture Imperfect”, originally published as “Chitrochor” in 1952, occurs in an India that is still under the British colonial control. Actually, “Aadim Ripu” (1955) was the first Byomkesh Bakshi narrative to be presented in context of post-independence India. In this narrative too, like the three others dealt with before, Saradindu Bandyopadhyay has registered his anti-imperial ideology by presenting various aspects that focus on the colonial exploitation of his country and refute the conventions of the Eurocentric detective stories of the West.

The story starts with the author’s reference to the European punctuality of Satyabati Bakshi that exhibited in her bringing cups of pomegranate juice to an ailing Byomkesh Bakshi. Ajit Bandyopadhyay observes,

“I glanced at the clock; it was exactly four o’ clock. The clock could be set by Satyabati and her ministrations” (Bandyopadhyay, *Picture* 195).

It should be mentioned that the first chapter of Dracula (1897) contains the famous Orientalist observation on the lack of punctuality in the East. After rushing to catch the train to Transylvania from Klausenburgh, Jonathan Harker, Bram Stoker’s imperial

spokesman, comments, “It seems to me that the further east you go the more unpunctual are the trains. What ought they to be in China?” (Stoker 3).

The easy chair used by Bakshi during his illness is a European-designed furniture (Bandyopadhyay, *Picture* 195). Similarly, when Satyabati implores him to drink the pomegranate juice because “it’ll increase...[his]...blood count”, she reasserts her education under the British system as already mentioned in “Where There’s a Will” (102) and the role of colonial education in updating Indians with the latest inventions in medical sciences and health care (195). Bakshi’s menu comprises of chicken broth and toast, which again conforms to the European standards of diet for the sick (195).

It is important that in spite of her European education and enlightened state, Satyabati does not give primacy to her personal works at the cost of her attention for her husband. She rather exhibits a typical Indian feminine mentality in neglecting her own health to nurse Bakshi (195). Her concern is further demonstrated when on the way to Mahidhar Choudhury’s house, she “tenderly wrap[s] a shawl snugly around...[Bakshi]...[,],...so that he wouldn’t catch a chill” (198). Through the combination of her colonial education and her conformity to the Indian societal norms, Satyabati Bakshi exhibits her cultural hybridity.

During the period of temporarily lodging in the Santhal Parganas, Byomkesh Bakshi, Ajit Bandyopadhyay, Satyabati Bakshi and the other

Bengali residents of the province form a symbolic Diaspora. Significantly, the inquisitor and his family members seek acquaintance especially with people like Professor Adinath Shome and Dr. Ashwini Ghatak, who traditionally belong to the class of intelligentsia (196). This could be interpreted as the educated subalterns’ process of intimidating colonial encroachments through post-union intellectual, literary and societal resistances. The ambivalence of such a society is simultaneously reflected in the story. While Mahidhar Choudhury follows the European custom of organising tea parties and the rickshaw pullers exhibits their European punctuality by arriving “exactly at four thirty” to carry Bakshi and his family to Choudhury’s mansion, it is important that the characters use the very Indian “rickshaw” itself (197). It is, therefore, in stark contrast with the Sherlock Holmes narratives where the detective and his associate customarily use hansom cabs and phaetons.

In course of his description of the contemporary Santhal Parganas, the author expresses his satisfaction with a class of Bengalis that had occasionally and sparingly collaborated with the British colonisers for accumulating wealth through trade while simultaneously resisting the imperialists economically, intellectually and culturally. Bandyopadhyay’s writes, “...Nearly all the prosperous families in the area were Bengalis” (198). Having referred to “the presence of...mica mines”, he relates them to the Bengali settlers’ affluence to indicate how through trade and commerce the Bengali settlers in Bihar had gradually transformed themselves into a formidable economic force for the British imperialists to reckon with (198).

While describing the Santhal Parganas, Bandyopadhyay presents a placid atmosphere and deceptively conceals the Anglophobic agitations and violence prevalent in late pre-independence India. The Indian author exhibits a tendency to eschew any violent anti-colonial approach and advocates literary and cultural *collusion* – indiscreet resistance through the presentation of an exclusively subaltern culture and literature that all together banishes the colonisers from their purviews even in the pre-independence milieu.

Mahidhar Choudhury’s mansion, with the gymnasium, tennis court and garages, identifiably follows the European architectural pattern (198). His landlordship in pre-1947 India has been realistically depicted as overtly dependent on the British colonisers. Prior to independence, such landlordships as Choudhury’s were actually British protectorates. The British administrators who benefited from such arrangements have been satirically referred to as “nabobs” by George Macaulay Trevelyan. He writes,

“Th[is]...nickname was given to those...who had exploited the...[colonial]...conquests...with an unscrupulous greed...The ‘nabobs’ raised the price of Parliamentary seats and made themselves otherwise objectionable to the old-established aristocratic society into which they intruded with their outlandish ways.” (391).

The guests Choudhury invites to his tea party – Ushanath Ghosh, the local treasurer, Purandar Pandey, the district superintendent of police, and Amaresh Raha, the manager of the local bank – are people whose professions allowed them to exert influence upon the British administrators and thus could have become potential sources for sustaining an Indian resistance through cultural *collusion*.

In his description of Ushanath Ghosh, an Indian administrative employee of the British government, Saradindu Bandyopadhyay perceptively evokes a strangeness that the Orientalists characteristically associate with the Orientals (Said, *Orientalism* 72). His dark complexion, dark spectacles, muffled voice and grim smile make his appearance mysterious (Bandyopadhyay, *Picture* 199). Importantly, Bandyopadhyay has assigned a Bengali identity to all the characters of the narrative. While Mahidhar Choudhury, Amaresh Raha, Ashwini Ghatak and Phalguni Paul are identifiably Bengali in name and behaviour, Purandar Pandey speaks the Bengali language fluently and prefers the company of the Bengalis (200). Thus the police official is subsumed into the subaltern culture and exhibits hybridity in context of the Indian social, regional and lingual divisions. Malati Shome typifies an ordinary Bengali lady in her blazing scarlet South Indian silk saree, diamond and gold jewellery and her continuous suspicion of her husband for extra-marital affairs (202). On the other hand, when Raha mentions that the arrival of Christmas and New Year leads to the increase in work pressure at the bank he manages, he actually points out the colonial influence upon the culture of the educated Indians who have been subsumed into the traditionally Western celebrations (201).

It is significant that immediately upon learning about the theft of Choudhury’s group photograph Pandey indicts the Santhals for stealing it (203). While doing so, the deputy superintendent of police is guided by his perception of the usual lack of awareness, education and etiquette among such tribal people. More importantly, he betrays a prejudice against the dark complexion of the Santhals. Because the police officer is “handsome” according to the Indian standards, he must have been fair-complexioned (200). In his practising discrimination against the dark Santhals, Pandey only re-enacts and exemplifies the characteristic aversion of the White Westerners towards to the dark Orientals and acts as the author’s spokesperson for vindicating the real attitude of the British colonisers towards the common Indians.

With his dress of “a scruffy dhoti and cotton shirt” Phalguni Paul typifies an impoverished Indian (204). However, Bandyopadhyay’s irony against the Indian collaborators of the colonisers is revealed when he makes the Bengali artist superior in intellectual faculties to Choudhury, Ghosh and Pandey. Choudhury’s offering Paul a ten-rupee note for his artistic excellence indicates the progressive devaluation of the art and the artist in late pre-independence India (205).

In “Picture Imperfect” Byomkesh Bakshi re-demonstrates his preference for psychoanalysis to analysis of empirical evidences for identifying criminals. His deduction that Phalguni Paul is an alcoholic by choice and not by avarice

is based on his two such observations: the inexplicable slackness of the artist’s lips and his avoidance of looking at food at the tea party. Bakshi explains,

“First of all...[,]...[I deduced that he is an alcoholic]...from his lips. If you notice an alcoholic’s lips, you’ll find that they are distinctive: a trifle moist, a little slack – I can’t quite describe them but I can identify them when I see them. Second, if Phalguni were famished, he would have looked at the food on the table yearningly; there was still quite a spread upon the table, you remember. But Phalguni did not even spare the food a second glance.” (206).

Such a deductive analysis is exactly in opposition to Holmes’s approach to detection. The British investigator does not try deciphering the character of a newly-introduced person without first minutely examining the physical details of his or her possessions. For example, he analyses the character of Henry Baker in “The Adventure of the Blue Carbuncle” and that of James Mortimer in The Hound of the Baskervilles by carefully examining the felt hat and a Penang walking stick, respectively (Doyle, *The Complete* 183, 430). Bakshi also applies psychoanalysis to explain sexual jealousy among human beings – a subject that Doyle never deals with in his Sherlock Holmes narratives. Referring to the story of an over-protective male ape in a zoo, the Bengali inquisitor goes on to prove that his wife would abhor the physical proximity between him and Rajani Choudhury because of sexual jealousy, while simultaneously mentioning like a conservative Bengali middle-class individual that the jealousy shows up whenever there

is a free interaction between men and women. Commenting on the primate’s aggressive behaviour, he explains to Satyabati,

“This isn’t smartness, it’s emotion; in simpler terms, it’s sexual jealousy. And I hope you will not deny that this is a streak that runs in humans as well. It is certainly present in men, but perhaps even more so in women. If I were to get too close to Mahidharbabu’s daughter, Rajani, you wouldn’t like it, would you?” (Bandyopadhyay, *Picture* 207).

While saying so, Bakshi exhibits his acquaintance with the precise psychology of the Indian women in his position of as an Indian male. The issue of sexual jealousy is further exemplified in Bandyopadhyay’s portrayal of the suspicious nature of Malati Shome displayed in her open animosity to Rajani Choudhury (208) and later, to Satyabati Bakshi (223).

As an Indian, the author provides substantial details of the Hindu customs that including the issue of the characteristic aversion of the Hindu males to remarrying widows, and a belief that as an Indian widow is expected to demonstrate her widowhood by wearing white sarees, cropping her hair short and avoiding non-vegetarian food items (208-9). On the other hand, being a Bengali himself, he depicts how ordinary Bengali women occasionally indulge in slandering others. While Malati Shome vituperatively decries Rajani for dressing up gaudily in spite of her widowhood “to trap...men” (209), Satyabati Bakshi curses Shome to “rot in hell forever”

when the latter suspects her of adulterous ventures (223). In presenting an Indian society with all the societal customs, formalities and prejudices prominently depicted in stark contrast with the conventions of the European society of the Sherlock Holmes narratives, and in his total exclusion of the White colonisers from a narrative set in pre-independence India, Bandyopadhyay posits a subaltern *resistance text* against the Eurocentric detective stories produced by Doyle, Christie and Chesterton. Even Ushanath Ghosh’s White superiors are never physically introduced to readers.

Adinath Shome’s narrative about Rajani Choudhury’s briefly-married husband exemplifies the early-twentieth century Oriental dream of being subsumed in the rich Occidental society that, ironically, has had gained affluence through commercial exploitation of the Oriental resources (209). For the Easterners the European imperial centre remains a utopia, and by sponsoring his son in law’s tour to Britain Mahidhar Choudhury behaves as a collaborating Indian who has gained prominence and ostentation under the patronage of the colonisers and shares an affinity for the West (209). Adinath Shome is himself an Indian with an imperial British training (209). Significantly, both these Indians have been shown as suffering. While Rajani’s husband dies in an air-crash en route to England, Shome is being constantly harassed by his domineering wife.

“Picture Imperfect”, like other Byomkesh Bakshi narratives, is replete with references to the psychological traits typical to the common Indians. Malati Shome, for example, tears off her husband’s group photograph in which he stood beside Rajani Choudhury (210). Rajani’s secret courtship with Ashwini Ghatak

through instances like slipping folded notes in his pocket (210) and conversing with him in whisper in her garden (220-1) is a realistically-depicted picture of improbable lovers in the conservative Indian society. While Doyle, with the exception of the Jefferson Hope-Lucy Ferrier courtship in *A Study in Scarlet* (Doyle, *The Complete* 39), does not describe details of love-relationship, Bandyopadhyay vividly paints conversations of lovers as well as married couples in stories like "Picture Imperfect" (Rajani Choudhury-Ashwini Ghatak), "Bonhi Patango" (Shakuntala Singh-Ratikanta Choudhury), Deepa Mukherjee-Probal Gupta and Deepa Mukherjee-Debashish Bhatta ("Shanjarur Kanta"), and imparts to his narratives a distinction from Doyle's detective stories.

In course of his description of Ushanath Ghosh's reticence at getting photographed with Shome, Rajani Choudhury and Amaresh Raha, Adinath Shome explains that Ghosh "is especially in awe of his superiors in the [contemporary British] government" and that the colonial "government wouldn't like it if a civil servant associated too freely with commoners" (Bandyopadhyay, *Picture* 211). He thus underscores the British government's insistence on the maintenance of its employees' insularity from the general Indians lest they come to harbour nationalistic sentiments and disclose details of the colonial administration to the revolting Indians. In a footnote to the original version of the narrative, the writer himself explains Ghosh's anti-Indian mentality through a poignant statement, "The British colonisers were still ruling India during that time" (Bandyopadhyay, *Byomkesh* 257). Such rigorous concealment of the basic aspects of colonial governance helped the imperialists to perpetuate their domination of the Indian natives. Similarly, Pandey's free association with the Indian

intelligentsia even after his being a government official might be explained as the colonial strategy of keeping the colonised individuals under surveillance through regular interaction to detect signs of nationalistic sentiments that characteristically emanated from the educated subaltern populace.

Saradindu Bandyopadhyay’s depiction of conjugal strife between Adinath and Malati Shome, and between Bakshi and Satyabati is a realistic portrayal of the domestic situations of average Indian families (Bandyopadhyay, *Picture* 214-5). Bakshi exhibits his adherence to patriarchal norms when he blames the Bengali women for domestic discords, even as he exposes the insecurity of such women:

“And your sympathies are always with the woman. Failing to win their husbands’ love, women are torn by jealousy, and yet they have no sense of how they can make their husbands love them...” (214).

On the other hand, Ajit Bandyopadhyay’s observations regarding his celibacy pit the Byomkesh Bakshi narratives in direct opposition to the Sherlock Holmes stories (232). In the latter canon, Holmes himself remains a celibate while Watson marries Mary Morstan. Bound by the norms of European etiquette, the British investigator never reflects upon his own avoidance of marriage while Ajit Bandyopadhyay easily gives vent to his personal feelings.

Similar to “Where There’s a Will”, Byomkesh Bakshi, in “Picture Imperfect”, exhibits cultural hybridity in his dress. He combines dhoti and punjabee with a pair of European socks when he and Ajit Bandyopadhyay visit Ushanath Ghosh’s residence in the civil servants’ colony that is symbolically segregated from the locality of ordinary Indians through a compound wall (215-6). But in exception to “the little figurine of a fairy, gilded with silver [that] the magistrate’s wife had presented” him, Ghosh’s house is without any decorative European furniture and thus stands in stark contrast with the elaborately furnished rooms of the Sherlock Holmes narratives (217). The civil servant’s fear of losing his job because of his physical deformity stresses the characteristic ruthlessness of the colonial government in treating its subaltern employees even in cases of handicaps (218).

While spying on the nocturnal activities of Adinath and Malati Shome, Ajit Bandyopadhyay symbolically approaches Watson’s role in providing efficient assistance to the detective (223-4). By presenting a collage of mysterious characters in darkness, Bandyopadhyay approaches Doyle’s narrative technique in The Hound of the Baskervilles. But while Watson actually embarks upon physical adventures involving strenuous movements, actions and dangers, Ajit Bandyopadhyay remains a distant spectator and, significantly, does not move or act readily.

Amaresh Raha’s process of murdering Phalguni Paul also gives an Indian context to the narrative and distinguishes it from the general European crime stories. While Raha first opiates Paul and thereafter disposes him in a

well (247), European criminals in the Sherlock Holmes or Hercule Poirot stories use guns, knives, poison or lassos to readily dispatch their victims.

It is important that troubles occur only when the principal characters of “Picture Imperfect” intend to leave for the imperial metropolis of Calcutta at the climax of the story (242-3). This might be interpreted as the author’s postcolonial response against the affinity of the general colonised populace for the imperial metropolis. With the exception of Pandey, Bandyopadhyay presents characters associated with the colonisers as defective or evil. While the French cut beard-sporting Amaresh Raha, employed as a manager in a British-controlled bank, is a murderous villain (228), Ushanath Ghosh has been portrayed as cowardly and lacking in self-respect (199-200). Mahidhar Choudhury’s estate is a British protectorate; he owns an eight cylinder European car, and exhibits an Occidental punctuality while sending it Bakshi’s lodging “at nine o’ clock sharp” (241). Thus linked to the colonisers, he exhibits a hypocritical prejudice against widow-remarriage even though the concerned widow is his own daughter (244). Ironically, he had married Rajani Choudhury off at fourteen, and after she becomes a widow, keeps her dressed up as an unmarried lady (208-9).

In spite of being a private investigator without any compulsion to disclose his deductions, Byomkesh Bakshi does not reveal the name of Phalguni Paul’s murderer until the end of the narrative. This is an instance of Bandyopadhyay’s adherence to the norms of the European detective stories where a communication gap is sustained between the intelligent detective and his comparatively

unintelligent foil until the climax. Bakshi’s action might be reviewed in perspective of the European-initiated custom of maintaining investigative secrecy by the investigating officials. The inquisitor strategically reposes his trust in the power of the imperial police to coax Mahidhar Choudhury into lending him his eight-cylinder car during his final departure to capture Raha (238). On the other hand, the writer denies a pro-active role to the British policemen when Bakshi single-handedly approaches the bank manager at the railway station to apprehend him (243). By committing suicide Raha not only avoids detention by the colonisers and but also negates the role of the colonial judiciary in judging a member of the subaltern. Raha’s possession of an arms licence underscores the system in British-India of issuing licensed firearms to bank and treasury officials to enable them protecting themselves from the Indian nationalists who frequently raided banks and post offices to collect funds for sustaining their freedom movements (243).

Byomkesh Bakshi’s description of the deductive steps he followed to identify Amaresh Raha as the criminal at the end of the narrative (244-8) closely resembles the Sherlockian process of elimination – “When you have eliminated the impossible, whatever remains, *however improbable*, must be the truth” expressed in The Sign of Four (Doyle, *The Complete* 66). However, while Sherlock Holmes vindicates his deductions through rigorous outdoor adventures, Bakshi relies only upon psychological analyses to arrive at infallible conclusions.

CHAPTER 6.

RE-READING SELECT SHERLOCK HOLMES AND BYOMKESH BAKSHI STORIES: -

Several Sherlock Holmes narratives other than A Study in Scarlet, The Sign of Four, “The Adventure of the Speckled Band” and “The Adventure of the Three Students”, are also replete with Arthur Conan Doyle’s anti-subaltern and Orientalist ideologies. Likewise, with the exception of “The Inquisitor”, “The Gramophone Pin Mystery”, “Where There’s a Will” and “Picture Imperfect”, several other Byomkesh Bakshi narratives assert their author’s anti-imperial stance and exemplify specific areas in which the Bengali inquisitor challenges the hegemony of the Eurocentric detective stories, particularly the Sherlock Holmes canon. Kshetra Gupta observes, “Like Saradindu, his detective...[and detective stories are]...overwhelmingly Bengali though belonging to a later generation” (Gupta, *Satyajit* 8). As demonstrated before, the Byomkesh Bakshi stories written before 1947 banish the colonisers from the Indian colony they themselves have so strenuously developed and modernised, and the remaining twenty three written after the Indian independence develop the former colony as an independent nation with an independent Bengali literature that has, even after being permeated by the colonial conventions, retained an Indianness and has developed itself as an alternative power against the British detective stories like those written by Doyle, Agatha Christie and G.K.Chesterton.

Doyle's support of the British colonial expansion and his advocacy of the domination of the Orientals are also present in "A Scandal in Bohemia", the third story of the Sherlock Holmes canon to be first published in the July 1891-edition of *The Strand Magazine*. By the time the story opens, the detective has had recently "clear[ed]...up...the singular tragedy of the Atkinson Brothers at Trincomalee" (Doyle, *The Complete* 97). This indicates Holmes's attention to troubles fermented by the Orient, Trincomalee being an important British naval base in contemporary Ceylon or Sri Lanka. George W. Welch has theorised that Holmes went to Ceylon by the way of Bokhara and Samarkand, which, in extension, portrays the colonial adventures to the East (Welch 35-9).

"A Scandal in Bohemia" is centred on the German king Count Wilhelm Gottsreich Sigismond Von Ormstein of Egria, a "German-speaking province in Bohemia", and his tempestuous love affair with Irene Adler, "prima donna Imperial Opera of Warsaw" (Doyle, *The Complete* 102). The very presence of Ormstein, a representative of a major colonial power, assumes an imperial connotation. John Wolf, in "Another Incubus in the Saddle", has identified the Count as Crown Prince Wilhelm von Hohenzollern of Prussia, the later Wilhelm II of the German Empire (Baring-Gould, *The Annotated I* 353). The imperial representative announces his arrival with "a loud and authoritative tap" and has been presented as physically superior, the requirement of every imperialist, with a height of "hardly...less than six feet six inches... with the chest and limbs of a Hercules"(Doyle, *The Complete* 100). Rich dresses and gemstones like those worn by Von Ormstein might be interpreted as suggestive of the

colonisers' securing wealth from the colonies. Significantly, to Doyle, the German's dress indicates "barbaric opulence" (100) whereas the perceptively gorgeous dress and appearance of Robert Saint Simon, the British protagonist of "The Adventure of the Noble Bachelor" is indicative of his culture and aristocracy (226). Thus he projects Britain as being culturally superior to its imperial rivals like Germany.

The king identifiably patronises Irene Adler and is not ready to marry her because of their status differences. Apart from demonstrating the marginalisation of women as the *Other* in the patriarchal European society, this refusal also underscores the difference between the ruler and the ruled, the basic coloniser-colonised relationship. It is important that Ormstein chooses to marry Clotilde Lothman von Saxe-Meningen, daughter of the Scandinavian monarch, who is also an imperialist (102). Wolf opines that she is actually Auguste-Victoria zu Schleswig-Holstein, Schleswig-Holstein being the Danish duchies of the second German Reich (Baring-Gould, *The Annotated I* 354). Svend Petersen, on the other hand, has identified Oscar II (1829-1907) as the Scandinavian monarch who is being referred to (Baring-Gould, *Annotated I* 287). The domination of women is once again exemplified in the king's passing of the blame for social inferiority to Adler (Doyle, *The Complete* 109). She is further effaced when she accepts her predicament of being "wronged" by the king without any vociferous protest in her final letter to the investigator (110).

Ormstein perceptively tries to assert his economic superiority to Holmes by offering him "three hundred pounds in gold...and seven

hundred in notes" (102), which the detective accepts as his fees but he rebuffs patronisation from another imperial power by refusing to accept Ormstein's emerald snake ring and by not shaking his hand at the conclusion of the case (111). Holmes carelessly uses the other coloniser's money by offering half a sovereign to the cab driver who takes him to the Church of Saint Monica (104).

The British investigator's Western food habit is alluded to when he orders for "some cold beef and a glass of beer" after returning from the marriage ceremony of Irene Adler and Godfrey Norton (105). On the other hand, Watson depicts a British societal surrounding when he describes about "a group of shabbily-dressed men smoking and laughing in a corner...and several well-dressed young men...lounging up and down with cigars in their mouth" at Serpentine Avenue (106). Such descriptions define the European identity of Doyle's detective stories.

Jabez Wilson of "The Adventure of the Red-headed League", first published in the August 1891-edition of *The Strand Magazine*, is identifiably a European with "fiery red hair" and dress (112). While describing Wilson, Watson meticulously depicts an average British citizen:

"[Jabez Wilson]... bore every mark of being an average commonplace British tradesman, obese, pompous, and slow. He wore rather baggy grey shepherd's check trousers, a not overclean black frockcoat, unbuttoned in

the front, and a drab waistcoat with a heavy brassy Albert chain, and a square pierced bit of metal dangling down as an ornament. A frayed top hat and a faded brown overcoat with a wrinkled velvet collar lay upon a chair beside him..." (113).

Wilson exhibits an affinity for the Orient by visiting China, getting a fish tattoo painted on his right wrist during his Oriental tour, and wearing a Chinese coin from his watch chain (113). Nicholas Stewart notes that in Doyle the Occident and the Orient share a polemic relationship and the Westerner's association with the Orient and other England's former and contemporary colonies causes chaos in the imperial realm and makes him suffer¹. Wilson naturally suffers. Vincent Spaulding or John Clay and Duncan Ross or Archie ironically use his very mark of being a European – the flaming red hair – to dupe him by creating a fictitious American-financed League. Thus the former colony is also identified as having a debilitating effect on Britain.

In the narrative Holmes projects himself as a European by smoking clay pipes (119) and by showing a cosmopolitan preference for German music at London's Saint James's Hall (121). Doyle depicts the imperial metropolis of London by describing Holmes and Watson's tour at Aldersgate and Saxe-Coburg-square, the "traffic of the City", "immense stream of commerce" and pedestrians (120). He also alludes to the rapidly developing European science and technology when the detective and his associate travel by the Underground railway that stated functioning in London in 1863 (120).

John Clay and Archie's plan to steal thirty thousand French napoleons borrowed by the Coburg-branch of the *City and Suburban Bank* from the Bank of France might be interpreted as one imperial power's attempt to seize the monetary reserves of another, here France (123). It is significant that Doyle focuses on John Clay's education at Eton and Oxford, thus indicating the traditional British insistence on knowledge and education. The intelligent criminal's nobility is indicated by his grandfather's having had been a Royal Duke (122). Clay, a representative of the British colonisers, practises class distinction and exhibits his etiquette by bowing to Holmes and Watson even when he is arrested (124).

"A Case of Identity" published in the September 1891-issue *The Strand Magazine* begins with Holmes holding out to Watson a "snuff box of old gold, with a great amethyst in the centre of the lid" (127). In "The History of Tobacco Part I", Gene Borio notes that tobacco and the custom of its nasal inhalation originated in America². On the other hand, amethyst is Latin American in origin (*Britannica* 177). Thus both the snuff and the amethyst hail from regions where imperial power like Britain and Germany had their colonies. By asserting that the snuff box is "a little souvenir from the King of Bohemia", the detective suppresses the non-European origin of the box's contents and the amethyst, and treats them as possession of the colonial power itself (Doyle, *The Complete* 127). The "remarkabl[y] brilliant" gemstone of Holmes's ring might similarly have been made of a resource from the colony (127). It is important that as a practising representative of the imperialist, the investigator cannot divulge the secrets

of “the reigning family of Holland”, another colonial power, to Watson, he having had already retired from the imperial army (127). This instance also testifies Holmes’s practise of class distinction. Perceptively hailing from the middle class, the physician is kept out of a matter concerning a royal family.

Mary Sutherland, dressed in “a heavy fur boa round her neck, and a large curling red feather in a broad-brimmed hat which was tilted in a coquettish Duchess-of-Devonshire fashion over her ear” exemplifies the traditional late-Victorian dress code for British women (128). She is also subsumed into the fashion-conscious British society through the author’s comparison of her hat with that used by the Duchess of Devonshire, Georgiana Cavendish (1757-1806), whom Baring-Gould refers to as “a celebrated beauty and setter of fashions” (*The Annotated I* 406). Watson later describes her dress in more details:

“... she had a slate-coloured, broad-brimmed straw hat, with a feather of a brickish red. Her jacket was black, with black beads sewn upon it, and a fringe of little black jet ornaments. Her dress was brown, rather darker than coffee colour, with a little purple plush at the neck and sleeves. Her gloves were greyish, and were worn through at the right forefinger” (Doyle, *The Complete* 133).

It is significant while Doyle depicts the apparel of the British lady in ninety-three words, the dresses of Indian characters like Tonga, Mahomet Singh, Dost Akbar and Abdullah

Khan and Daulat Ras have never been described. Even Achmet of The Sign of Four has been sparingly described as “a little, fat, round fellow, with a great yellow turban, and a bundle in his hand, done up in a shawl” (88). In context of his meticulous description of Sutherland’s dress, the writer symbolically practises stripping of the Oriental natives.

In connection with Sutherland’s case, Sherlock Holmes refers to his ‘index’ while simultaneously exhibiting an encyclopaedic knowledge while referring to problems similar to Sutherland’s “in Andover...and...the Hague” (133). He consults his ‘index’, alternatively the reference books or the *dossiers* laboriously prepared “for many years ...[by]...docketing all paragraphs concerning men and things...”(101-2), in several other stories like The Sign of Four (58), “A Scandal in Bohemia” (102), “The Adventure of the Blue Carbuncle” (185), “The Adventure of the Noble Bachelor” (224), “The Adventure of the Musgrave Ritual” (334), “The Adventure of the Empty House” (550-1), “The Adventure of the Priory School” (599), “The Adventure of the Sussex Vampire” (1005-6), “The Adventure of the Three Garridebs” (1025), and “The Adventure of the Veiled Lodger” (1098). It is, however, significant that even though the Orient has been obsessively referred to in stories like The Sign of Four and “The Adventure of the Speckled Band”, Holmes does not collect references to the East from the impartially-written newspaper reports in his *dossiers* but from gazetteers perceptively written by Orientalists like him (75). Towards the conclusion of the story, he does not actually whip James Windibank with his hunting crop most probably because Doyle did not want to depict one coloniser lashing at another without any regard for

etiquette, and also portraying differences between them (137). In contrast, the detective outrightly shoots Tonga, a colonised individual, dead in The Sign of Four (82).

Doyle's Sherlock Holmes stories also contain, in addition to the Orient, allusions to Britain's other former and contemporary colonies like the United States of America and Australia in stories like "The Boscombe Valley Mystery", "The Five Orange Pips" and The Valley of Fear. By distortedly representing the colonised individuals, the writer exhibits the general concern of the contemporary European colonisers about the perceived mystery, unpredictability and malignancy of the subaltern and the debilitating influence of the colonies on the imperialists obsessed with them.

First published in the October 1891-issue of *The Strand Magazine*, "The Boscombe Valley Mystery" deals with the tragic experiences of John Turner and the death of Charles McCarthy, two British businessmen who had settled down in their early life at Ballarat in the "Colony of Victoria", Australia, where they made money by utilising the colony's resources like the gold mines before returning back to the imperial centre of England (152). By associating himself with the Australian Ballarat Gang, Turner comes under the debilitating influence of the colony (152). On the other hand, "The Five Orange Pips", first published in *The Strand Magazine* in November 1891, deals with the dangers of stealth attacks in Britain by a group of xenophobic inhabitants from the United States of America. "Captain James Calhoun...[of]... Barque *Lone Star*, Savannah, Georgia" is an active member of the

American secret society of Ku-Klux-Klan and typifies the perceptively malignant subaltern that Holmes was supposed to prevent from causing impediments to Britain's imperial interests, and exterminate when required (165).

The second part of The Valley of Fear, the novel having been serialised in *The Strand Magazine* between September 1914 and May 1915, is also set in the United States of America, in the industrial township of Vermissa (887). In its first part Doyle once again deals with the issues of disturbance and social unrest created at the imperial centre by inhabitants of one of its former colonies. Having embarked upon the investigating the cause of the murder of John Douglas, supposedly a British citizen who "had spent a part of his life in America" and amassed formidable wealth from the former colony's "Californian gold fields" (845), Holmes comes across a card inscribed with "V.V 341" beside the mutilated corpse of Ted Baldwin and detects "a curious brown design, a triangle inside a circle" on its right arm (847-8). Doyle projects the agrarian and scenic English town of Birlstone and its rich heritage dating "back to the time of the first Crusade" (845) in the first part of the novel against the dirty and corrupt industrialised American town without any significant heritage or history (888) in the second part to assert the cultural superiority of the colonisers to that of the subaltern. Significantly, while all the villains like McGinty, Morris, Scanlan, Ted Baldwin and Tiger Cormac are Americans, the very organisation of the Scowrers is controlled by the British criminal Moriarty from the imperial centre. Birdy Edwards, an intelligent colonised who upholds law and justice migrates to Britain for safety because the former colony has failed to give him protection. Doyle paints a seedy and repulsive picture of the

United States by detailing the anarchy and lawlessness of the Scowlers in Vermissa, the corruption of law keepers like McGinty, the barbaric custom of branding the Scowlers (909), and the arbitrary attacks on James Stanger (914), Menzis (927), William Hales (928) and Chester Wilcox (929).

“The Man with the Twisted Lip”, published in the December 1891-edition of *The Strand Magazine*, begins with a reference to the effects of opium upon “Isa Whitney, brother of the late Elias Whitney, D.D., Principal of the Theological College of St. Georges” (166). The European colonisers, particularly the British, used opium to drug the colonised people of China, north-western India and south-eastern Asia into submission. The narcotic relaxed the addicts to the point of losing the power to resist physically and psychologically. Moreover, they were forced to continuously purchase the narcotic at a high price from the colonisers, thus harming their own economy. Bhattacharyya and Hazra write,

“In its bid to neglect and even ignore the Western culture, China became diversified and weak; Japan, on the other hand, learned the Western science and technology and soon strengthened itself to such a point that it emerged as a formidable force to reckon with...Taking opportunity of weakness of the Manchu kings, the British East India Company began to transfer opium in large quantity from India to China. It benefited the English traders but the Chinese grew weak and sickly using the narcotic. They grew lazy and lethargic. In order to stop this evil trade, the Chinese

government promulgated a law banning the import of opium to the Chinese mainland. In 1839, Lin, an efficient Chinese government official, was appointed to tackle narcotic-trafficking. Under his orders twenty thousand boxes of opium stocked for smuggling were burnt. The British government cited this incident as an excuse to declare the First Opium War, also known as the First Chinese War, that continued for three years until China was defeated and forced to sign the *Nankin Treaty* in 1842 in which Hong Kong had to be relinquished to the British forces and Canton, Fuchow, Ningpo, Amoy and Shanghai opened to free trade as *Treaty Towns*. In this treaty there was no written reference to the Opium trade. In fact, Opium was...a British excuse... [and instrument]...for spreading its imperial control over China..." (Bhattacharyya and Hazra 142-3).

Watson, after reaching the opium tavern behind Upper Swandam-lane, describes the interiors in a manner reminiscent of Dante's description of the *inferno* in The Divine Comedy. He informs,

"Through the gloom one could dimly catch a glimpse of bodies lying in strange frantic poses, bowed shoulders, bent knees, head thrown back and chins pointing upwards, with here and there a dark, lack-lustre eye turned upon the new comer. Out of the black shadows there glimmered little red circles of light, now bright, now faint, as the burning poison waxed or waned in the bowls of the metal pipes. The most lay silent but some

muttered to themselves, and others talked together in a strange, low, monotonous voice, their conversation coming in gushes, and then suddenly tailing off into silence, each mumbling out his own thoughts, and playing little heed to the words of his neighbour..." (Doyle, *The Complete* 167).

The shifting of the venue of colonial operation from south-eastern Asia to an isolated part of London not only shifts the reader's focus from the colonial exploitation of the Easterners but also suggests the debilitating influence of anything Oriental under which Whitney comes and suffers. The story suggests how interaction among the colonised could be cut off through the narcotic to prevent them from exchanging ideologies and regrouping themselves against the imperialists. Doyle adds an Oriental setting to the locality when, on entering the tavern Watson is led to an empty berth by "a sallow Malay attendant" (167). His description of the opium tavern can be compared with Georges Remi's portrayal of the opium-serving Chinese restaurant in the Tintin narrative, "The Blue Lotus" (Paris: Casterman, 1936). However, Watson does not acknowledge the role of the British traders in popularising the narcotic in the East, and Holmes's retaining of "excellent ears" and alertness even after spending hours at the tavern might be interpreted as indicative of the imperialists' insularity from the devices and customs promulgated for perpetuating domination over the colonised (168). It is important that the only dark character of the story, Lascar, appears to an Oriental as far as Sidney Paget's *The Strand Magazine*-illustration is concerned.

First published in the January 1892-issue of *The Strand Magazine*, “The Adventure of the Blue Carbuncle” asserts the Christian identity of Doyle’s Sherlock Holmes narratives by dealing with identifiably Christian characters like Peterson, Henry Baker, James Ryder, Breckinridge, Mrs. Oakshott, and John Horner and focussing on the Christmas celebrations, along with the practise of having Christmas geese (181-2). The writer depicts the imperial metropolis of London by referring to its as an overcrowded city (181) and describing its localities and streets like the Doctors’ quarter, Wimpole-street, Harley-street, Wigmore-street, Oxford-street and Bloomsbury in context of Holmes and Watson’s travelling through the city (187). He also administers a regionality to the story by naming seven newspapers that were reputed London dailies during the 1890s and 1900s: *The Globe*, *The Star*, *The Pall Mall*, *The Saint James’s*, *The Evening News*, *The Standard* and *The Echo* (185-6). It is important that carbuncle or almandite is an Oriental gemstone³. By describing the history of the particular gemstone, Holmes re-implies that an association with the Orient is dangerous for the White imperialists:

“This...[blue carbuncle]...is not yet twenty years old. It was found in the banks of the Amoy River in Southern China, and is remarkable in having every characteristic of the carbuncle, save that it is blue in shade, instead or ruby red. In spite of its youth, it has already a sinister history. There have been two murders, a vitriol-throwing, a suicide, and several robberies brought about for the sake of this forty-grain weight of crystallised charcoal” (186).

When admitted to the British realms, the Oriental object causes social unrest at following its theft from Countess of Morcar's possession (185), and leads to the respective harassment and downfall of two British citizens – John Homer and James Ryder. The uncommon blue colour of the carbuncle symbolises the perceived Oriental mystery and ambiguity.

The fifth line of “The Adventure of the Noble Bachelor”, which was first published in April 1892-edition of *The Strand Magazine*, refers to Watson's painful experiences with the Oriental country of Afghanistan, like the sixteenth line of “The Boscombe Valley Mystery” (139). The *Jezail* bullet in one of his limbs “throbb[ing]...with dull persistency” is described by the former imperial militaryman as “a relic of...[his]...Afghan campaign” (223). In this adventure, Holmes deals with the case of Lord Robert Walsingham de Vere Saint Simon whose aristocratic British ascendancy is asserted by his being second son of the Duke of Balmoral and his hailing from a family that has “Azure, three caltrops in chief over a fess sable” as its coat-of-arms (224). Being a British aristocrat, of “Plantagenet blood by direct descent, and Tudor on the distaff side”, Simon is responsible for supervising Britain's colonial interests and expansions, and is understandably the “Under Secretary for the Colonies in a late administration” (224). By engaging himself to “Hatty Doran, the only daughter of Aloysius Doran, Esq[ui]re, of San Francisco, Cal[ifornia], U.S.A” (224), the imperialist commits a hubris according to the contemporary British society that supposes a primordial polarity between the coloniser and the colonised, former or existing. The

paragraph that Holmes reads from *The Morning Post* reveals a conservative and xenophobic British society that is simultaneously alarmed at the growing prosperity of its former colony and patronises the American subaltern:

“...There will soon be a call for protection in the marriage market, for the present free-trade principle appears to tell heavily against our home product. One by one the management of the noble houses of Great Britain is passing into the hands of our fair cousins from across the Atlantic. An important addition has been made during the last week to the list of the prizes which have been borne away by these charming invaders...” (224-5).

The theme that association with the colonies ultimately proves to be fatal for the coloniser recurs in the story when having had married Doran, Simon is made to suffer at her disappearance.

The story also obtrusively displays the class distinction as practised by the English colonisers against their colonies. *The Morning Post* demeans Doran, an American, by describing her as “the fascinating daughter of a Californian millionaire” (225). The British newspaper focuses more on her dowry than on her antecedents and attempts to impart a sense of recognition to the lady by reminding her of her having had become a British peeress from a Republican American (225). Simon himself describes his would-be wife in unflattering terms:

“My wife was twenty before her father became a rich man. During that time she ran free in a mining camp, and wandered through woods or mountains, so that her education has come from Nature rather than from the schoolmaster. She is what we call in England a tomboy, with a strong nature, wild and free, unfettered by any sort of traditions. She is impetuous – volcanic, I was about to say. She is swift in making her up mind, and fearless in carrying out her resolutions...” (227).

Doyle incorporates within Doran every characteristic feature that was considered unsavoury in the traditional Victorian British upper-class society. She is also so much frequently patronised because through her inner strength and resolution she poses a formidable challenge to the definition of a *cultured* woman promulgated by an overwhelmingly patriarchal British society. By reflecting on the fact that the impecunious Simon intends to marry Doran not only because of her “graceful figure and striking face” but also because of her six-figures-worth dowry, Doyle subconsciously betrays the hypocrisy of those colonisers who are irrationally proud of their nobility (225). On the other hand, Doran is transformed into an unfavourable figure when she chooses Francis Hay Moulton even after having flirted with Simon, thus causing him considerable public humiliation. Watson projects himself as an Orientalist when he compares the confectioner’s man and his assistant with “the genii of the Arabian nights” (231).

“The Adventure of the Dancing Men”, first published in *The Strand Magazine* in December 1903 similarly portrays the predicament of another impoverished British nobleman, Hilton Cubitt, after he marries the American Elsie Patrick who retains a subconscious attraction for her former American lover, Abe Slaney. While narrating the details of his marriage to Holmes, Cubitt says,

“...You’ll think it very mad, Mr. Holmes, that a man of a good old...[British]...family should marry a[n American]...wife...knowing nothing of her past or of her people...” (573).

Like Helen Stoner of “The Adventure of the Speckled Band” (196), Cubitt might thus be implying that an imperialist’s attempt to efface the polarity between the coloniser and the subaltern is a sign of his lunacy. Against Cubitt, “a fine creature, ...man of the English soil, simple, straight, and gentle, with...great, earnest blue eyes and broad, comely face” (573), who is a representative of “one of the oldest families in the County of Norfolk” (577), Doyle contrasts Slaney with “a bristling black beard, and a great, aggressive hooked nose” (583) to point out the wild and repulsive appearance of the latter. Slaney is also portrayed as a jealous lover when he says, “...I had a right to...[Elsie Patrick]...she was pledged to me years ago...who is this Englishman that he should come between us?”(584).

In Doyle’s detective stories even the White colonised individuals are capable of exerting lethal influences on the imperial centre. In “The

Adventure of the Abbey Grange”, published in the September 1904-issue of *The Strand Magazine*, Theresa the nurse is an Australian, and understandably is “taciturn, suspicious, ungracious” (709). On the other hand, “The Adventure of the Red Circle”, published in *The Strand Magazine* in March 1911 deals with the incompatibility of one colonial power to adjust itself in the realm of another. Here, Tobias Gregson of A Study in Scarlet returns to investigate, along with Holmes and Lestrade, a detective of Pinkerton’s American Agency, the case of a suspicious pair of lodgers at the house of the British citizens – the Warrens. Emilia Lucca and Gennaro Lucca are Italians who having had initially settled in New York, travel over to the imperial centre of London and trust with the British administrations their security, which, significantly, the Italians, one of Britain’s imperial rivals, and the Americans, have had failed to provide (801). The arrival of the foreigners disturbs the calm in British society, which is aggravated further with the coming of Giuseppe Gorgiano, “who had earned the name of ‘Death’ in the south of Italy for he was red to elbow in murder” (801). Even as Doyle dehumanises him in his description, it is also important that Gorgiano goes first to the United States and not Britain to escape the Italian police (801). While the British imperial locus is defined by moral, societal and administrative order and coherence, chaos and laxities perceptively reign in former British colonies as well as its imperial rivals.

Both “The Adventure of the Beryl Coronet” and “The Adventure of the Mazarin Stone” published respectively in May 1892 and October 1921-issues of *The Strand Magazine*, have got as their central theme, like “The Adventure of the Blue Carbuncle” the issue of missing gemstones with Oriental associations ⁴.

Alexander Holder “of the banking firm of Holder and Stevenson, of Threadneedle-street” describes the beryl coronet as “one of the most precious public possessions of the Empire”, thus denying the rightful ownership of the gemstone to the western Africa colonies (238-9). A British identity is assigned to the story when Holder boasts of his client being “one of the highest, noblest, most exalted names in England” (238).

The arrival of the gemstone from the colony causes a rift between Holder and his son Arthur, and exerts a corrupting influence on Mary Holder and George Bumwell. Alexander Holder grieves that after the arrival of the coronet, he has lost his honour, his gems and his son in a single night (243). Similarly, in “The Adventure of the Mazarin Stone”, Billy and Holmes describe the Mazarin Stone as “the Crown diamond”, thus linking the prestige of the British Empire to a precious stone that has identifiably been mined from one of the European colonies (959, 964). Apart from this, by referring to the list of Holmes’s clients like the British prime minister, the Home Secretary and Lord Cantlemere (959-60), the story underscores the detective’s connection to the section of British aristocracy responsible for planning the British imperial expansion. References to his other aristocratic clients can be found in “The Adventure of the Second Stain” – Lord Bellinger, “twice Premier of Britain”, and Trelawney Hope, the “Secretary of European Affairs” (717), “The Adventure of the Priory School” – Thomercroft Huxtable, M.A., Ph.D, and Baron Beverly, the Sixth Duke of Holdernessee, The Hound of the Baskervilles – James Mortimer, M.R.C.S and Sir Henry Baskerville, the next-of-kin of Baron Charles Baskerville, and in “The Adventure of the Illustrious

Client” – the diplomat Sir James Damery. Holmes’s rapport with such aristocrats also explains why he vociferously advocates Britain’s colonial exploits.

“The Adventure of the Silver Blaze”, published in *The Strand Magazine* in December 1892, deals with characters all of which are British citizens, the English locale of Dartmoor, and portrays the characteristic snobbery of the British aristocrats against members of the proletariat and the colonised individuals. Colonel Ross, who is dressed in a very European “frock coat and gaiters” and has “trim little side-whiskers and an eye-glass”, always maintains distance from the non-aristocratic people like Holmes (276). Ross’s effacement in the conclusion of the story can be extended to signify Holmes’s acceptance by and initiation into the society of the imperial aristocrats (283-6).

“The Adventure of the Cardboard Box”, first published in the January 1893-issue of *The Strand Magazine*, starts with the description of a hot August day at London, and Watson dismisses its dreariness by judging the weather against the extreme Indian climactic conditions as he says, “For myself, my term of service in India had trained me to stand heat better than cold” (287). Doyle reconstruction of an Oriental atmosphere at the heart of the imperial centre of London might be interpreted as his attempt to indicate the debilitating influence of the East on the West and to portray the suffering of the colonisers in an atmosphere that is apparently suitable for the perceptively *dehumanised* Easterners.

“The Adventure of the Yellow Face”, first published in *The Strand Magazine* in February 1893, exhibits Doyle’s attitude toward the Afro-Americans. Having placed an American subaltern individual in Britain, he depicts the social unrest that Effie Munro creates. The British citizen Grant Munro suffers because of his marrying the American Effie whose identity is further complicated because of her initial marriage with the Afro-American John Hebron. Doyle tries to anglicise Hebron, whom Effie prefers to the Whites, by avoiding referring directly to his complexion in his description:

“There was a portrait within of a man, strikingly handsome and intelligent, but bearing unmistakable signs upon his features of his African descent” (309).

Nevertheless, the White woman has been portrayed as having reservations about the complexion of her husband and her daughter Lucy by which she symbolically mitigates Hebron’s challenge to the White supremacy on the issue of marriage preference. Effie Munro asserts,

“...but never once *while he lived* (italics mine) did I for once instant regret...[my marrying Hebron] [...]...It was our *misfortune* (italics mine) that our only child took after his people rather than mine. It is often so in such matches, but little Lucy is darker far than ever her father was” (309).

Effie Munro's speech might indicate two things: that after Hebron's death, she came to realise the implication of her marrying a Black man, and that her child has chosen to perpetuate her father's dark complexion that is a misfortune for the White Westerner. Understandably ashamed of her daughter's skin colour, Effie Munro dresses her up elaborately to hide her skin in frock, gloves and mask. Holmes's act of removing the mask from the child's face can be interpreted as the symbolic colonial *demystification* of the colonised, who attempt to be subsumed into the Western society by following Eurocentric dress codes and learning European languages, thus producing an ambiguity and mystery of culture. Doyle writes,

“Holmes, with a laugh, passed his hand behind the child's ear, a mask peeled off from her countenance, and there was a little coal-black negress with all her white teeth flashing in amusement at our amazed faces...”
(309).

The phrase “coal-black negress” has racialist connotations, and exemplifies Doyle's practise of distinguishing between the White colonisers and the Black colonised.

First published in the May 1893-edition of *The Strand Magazine*, “The Adventure of the Musgrave Ritual” re-explores the nationalistic feelings often exhibited in Doyle's detective narratives. Holmes is here an Orientalist with strong nationalistic sentiments. The detective, who keeps “his tobacco in the toe-end of a Persian slipper”, expresses himself as an aggressively patriotic British citizen by bulleting

“V.R” or *Victoria Regina* on the drawing room wall of his 221B Baker Street-residence (334). Doyle’s description of Reginald Musgrave displays his pride in the British tradition and aristocracy:

“In appearance he was a man of an exceedingly aristocratic type, thin, high-nosed, and large-eyed, with languid and yet courtly manners. He was indeed a scion of one of the very oldest families in the kingdom, though his branch was a cadet one which had separated from the Northern Musgraves some time in the sixteenth century, and had established itself in Western Sussex, where the manor house of Hurlstone is perhaps the oldest inhabited building in the country. Something of his birthplace seemed to cling to the man...” (336).

Doyle also demonstrates the traditional British prejudice against the Welsh when he states: “The maid had loved the butler, but had afterwards had cause to hate him. She was of Welsh blood, fiery and passionate...” (339).

“The Adventure of the Reigate Squires”, first published in *The Strand Magazine* in June 1893, reflects on the old English feudal society of landlordship and the corresponding estates, thus it is thus a story with distinctive European characteristic features. When Doyle defines the residence of the Cunninghams as the “fine Old Queen Anne house”, he actually refers to Britain’s period of glory in imperialism and architecture under Queen Anne between 1702 and 1714 (349).

Colonel James Barclay, one of the important characters of “The Adventure of the Crooked Man”, first published in *The Strand Magazine* in July 1893, is a soldier with the Royal Mallowes regiment that worked “wonders both in the Crimea and the Mutiny” (358). Thus Barclay becomes the representative of the imperial Britain during its war with another colonising power, that is, Russia, and the colonised Indians. Because of his active part in suppressing the Indian natives during the Sepoy Mutiny, he is raised to commissioned rank (358). However, his association with the East makes him treacherous, and he betrays Henry Wood to the marauding Sepoys “by means of a native servant” (366). Wood, “late of India”, is another of the White British colonisers whose tenure at the Orient results in his immense suffering (364). Through Wood, Doyle gives a graphic description of the mutinous Indian soldiers and betrays his Orientalist and imperialist prejudices against them:

“...the Mutiny broke out, and all Hell was loose in...[India]. We were shut up in Bhurtee, the regiment of us with half a battery of artillery, a company of Sikhs, and a lot of civilians and women-folk. There were ten thousand rebels round us, and they were as keen as a set of terriers round a rat-cage. About the second week of it our water gave out, and it was a question whether we could communicate with General Neill’s column, which was moving up country. It was our only chance, for we could not hope to fight our way with all the women and children, so I volunteered to go out and warn General Neill of our danger...Bhurtee was relieved by

Neill next day, but the rebels took me away with them in their retreat, and it was many a long year before ever I saw a white face again. I was tortured, and tried to get away, and was captured and tortured again. You can see for yourselves the state in which I was left. Some of them that fled into Nepaul took me with them, and then afterwards I was up past Darjeeling. The hillfolk up there murdered the rebels who had me, and I became their slave for a time until I escaped, but instead of going north, I found myself among the Afghans. There I wandered about for many a year, and at last came back for the Punjab, where I lived mostly among the natives, and picked up a living by the conjuring tricks that I had learned” (365-66).

Even as he dehumanises the rebel Indian soldiers into barbarians, it is of importance that Wood, like Jonathan Small of *The Sign of Four* (87), reposes his faith in the Sikhs of all the Indians (366). The nationalist Indian soldiers have repeatedly been referred to as “rebels” who “were as keen as a set of terriers round a rat cage”, and Doyle hints at the Indians’ lust for the British women. Wood retains his association with the Orient by petting an ichneumon that is “amazing quick on...[the Oriental]...cobras”, which appears symbolic of the coloniser taming the colonised with the help of a collaborating subaltern (367). It is also important in the postcolonial perspective that in Sidney Paget’s *The Strand Magazine* illustration, six Indian soldiers have been depicted as crouching like conspirators, turbaned and in loose, dishevelled clothes, looking dangerous but identifiably lacking in strength (366).

In “The Adventure of the Greek Interpreter” and “The Adventure of the Bruce-Partington Plans”, published respectively in the September 1893 and December 1908-issues of *The Strand Magazine*, readers are introduced to Mycroft Holmes, the intelligent but lazy elder brother of Sherlock Holmes who is initially described as an officer with the British administration. According to Sherlock Holmes in the former narrative, Mycroft Holmes “has an extraordinary faculty for figures, and audits the books in some of the Government departments” (380). However, in “The Adventure of the Bruce-Partington Plans”, he describes his brother’s indispensability to the British government. The investigator displays his imperial lineage when he terms Mycroft as “the British government” itself (756), and goes on to describe his assignments:

“All other men are specialists, but his specialism is omniscience. We will, suppose that a Minister needs information as to a point which involves the Navy, India, Canada, and the bimetallic question, he could get his separate advices from various departments upon each, but only Mycroft can focus them all, and say off hand how each factor would affect the other. They began by using him as a short cut, a convenience, now he has made himself as an essential. In that great brain of his everything is pigeon-holed, and can be handled out in an instant. Again and again his word has decided the national policy. He lives in it...” (757).

Mycroft Holmes becomes the direct representative of the British colonialists and identifies himself as an Orientalist when he says, “In the present state of Siam it is most awkward that I should be away from the office” (757).

In the initial section of “The Adventure of the Greek Interpreter”, Mycroft and Sherlock Holmes subsume the person accompanying the billiard-marker into the imperialist and Orientalist tradition by deducing him to be a lately-discharged non-commissioned officer of the Royal Artillery who has served in India (381).

Said writes, “Later in the nineteenth century, in the works of Delacroix...the Oriental genre tableau carried representation into visual expression and a life of its own (*Orientalism* 118). As far as Eugene Delacroix’s paintings like “Greek Cavalry”, “A Treacherous Greek” and “The Greek War of Independence” are concerned, he seems to identify Greece, in spite of its European location, with something exotic in art and culture and stresses on its Oriental resemblances (*The Great Artists* 378-80). Judged in this context, the appearance of the Greeks – Melas and Paul Kratides – in London is perceptively bound to disturb the British society. Mycroft Holmes describes Melas “a Greek by extraction” who “earns his living partly as interpreter in the law courts, and partly by acting as guide to any wealthy Orientals who may visit the Northumberland Avenue hotels” (Doyle, *The Complete* 381-2). Watson judges Melas, a “short, stout man, whose olive face and coal-black

hair...[proclaim]...his southern origin”, in a Eurocentric perspective when he notices “his speech...[is]...that of an educated Englishman” (382).

In spite of being a Greek, Melas travels over to the imperial centre of London to earn and enjoy higher standards of living. He seems to exhibit what Said terms as the Oriental undependability and inscrutability (*Orientalism* 52) when he intersperses his conversation with Kratides with Greek words that the English-speaking Europeans Wilson Kemp and Harold Latimer fail to understand (Doyle, *The Complete* 384). However, Kratides becomes an easy victim of Kemp and Latimer because of his inability to speak English, the major European and imperial tongue (390). On the other hand, the two Europeans’ lust for Sophy Kratides, identifiably Oriental in being “tall and graceful, with black hair” (384), results in their suffering and annihilation through mutual murders at Budapest (390).

“The Adventure of the Naval Treaty”, serialised in *The Strand Magazine* in October and November 1893, portrays England’s Conservative government that advocated a more complete domination of the British colonies in the East. The protagonist Percy Phelps is the nephew of Lord Holdhurst, “the great conservative politician” (391), who is a study of the characteristic aristocratic coldness and is a member of that society which is more aware of its position than of its resources. Holmes satirically observes,

“[Lord Holdhurst]... is a fine fellow... But he has a struggle to keep up his position. He is far from rich and has many calls. You noticed, of course, that his boots had been re-soled...” (404).

The missing document concerns a secret memorandum of understanding between the imperial navies of England and Italy about which two other imperial powers – France and Russia – are in need of information (394). “The Adventure of the Naval Treaty” thus assumes a specific imperial connotation.

Serialised in *The Strand Magazine* between August 1901 and April 1902, The Hound of the Baskervilles is a Gothic novel set in the British countryside of Dartmoor, and deals with an aristocratic family of squires whose history dates back to the 1730s and 1740s when Britain was under the rule of King George II (1727-60): a period when its foreign policy concerning colonial expansion particularly in America had led to the Anglo-Spaniard War of 1739. Other wars with imperial connections that were fought in contemporary Europe include the War of Austrian Succession involving Germany, France and Spain in 1743, the Jacobite Revolt supported by France in 1745 after which Scotland was brought directly under the British rule, and the Seven Years War of 1756-63 between England and France on the issue of spreading colonial control over America and India.

In the initial part of the narrative, Doyle refers to Holmes’s unreadiness to be secondary to any other investigator and advocates the British

supremacy by making Mortimer admit his being Europe's most efficient practical-minded investigator. Holmes thus reacts to Mortimer's observation that he is the "second highest expert in Europe":

"Indeed, sir! May I inquire who has the honour to be the first?" asked Holmes, with some asperity.

"To the man of precisely scientific mind the work of Monsieur Bertillon must always appeal strongly".

"Then had you not better consult him?"

"I said, sir, to the precisely scientific mind. But as a practical man of affairs it is acknowledged that you stand alone. I trust, sir, that I have not inadvertently -" (432).

It is significant that Mortimer, Holmes and Watson are attracted to the Baskervilles primarily because of their aristocratic tradition. Mortimer observes,

"In these days of the *nouveaux riches* it is refreshing to find a case where the scion of an old county family which has fallen upon evil days is able to make his own fortune and to bring it back with him to restore the fallen grandeur of his line..." (435-6).

In his introduction of the family of the Baskervilles to Holmes, Mortimer repeatedly reaffirms his faith and pride in Britain's imperial history. His statement, "Sir Charles [Baskerville]...made large sums of money in South African speculation" suggests the colonisers' sustenance and enrichment of their own economy by using resources of colonies (436).

Holmes and Watson's appointment with Henry Baskerville begins affably identifiably because of his aristocratic ascendancy (446). It is significant that of the three Baskervilles represented in The Hound of the Baskervilles – Hugo Baskerville, Charles Baskerville and Henry Baskerville – two of them (Charles Baskerville and Henry Baskerville) are knighted in recognition of their service to the British Empire that also traditionally includes domination of the natives. Having had actively served in the Indian subcontinent as a coloniser, Watson takes pride in the British ascendancy and appearance of Henry Baskerville:

"[Henry] Baskerville sat for a long time, his eyes fixed... and I read upon his eager face how much it meant for him, this first sight of that strange spot where the men of his blood had held sway so strong and left their mark so deep. There he sat, with his tweed suit and his American accent, in the corner of a prosaic railway carriage, and yet as I looked at his dark and expressive face I felt more than ever how true a descendant he was of that long time of high-blooded, fiery and masterful men. There were pride, valour, and strength in his thick brows, his sensitive nostrils, and his large

hazel eyes. If on that forbidden moor a difficult and dangerous quest should lie before us, this was at least a comrade for whom one might venture to take a risk with the certainty that he would bravely share it” (462).

The Baskerville Hall is perceptively built in the shape of a castle that the English conquerors built in their immediate dominions like Ireland and Scotland. The “maze of fantastic tracery in wrought iron” and “weather-bitten pillars” symbolise England’s old, glorious past that is progressively changing under the influence of the colonial wealth (463). Facing the old section of the hall is “a new building, half-constructed, the firstfruit of Sir Charles’s South African gold” (463). It is significant that Holmes and Watson choose to stay in the old castle rather than the new building.

The old mansion is forbidding in its appearance and appears to exhibit characteristics of Gothic architecture like “the high pointed arch and vault, flying buttresses, and intricate recesses” (Abrams, *A Glossary* 110) about which John Ruskin has described in details in “The Nature of Gothic” , collected in “The Stones of Venice” (1851-3). Watson describes:

“The avenue opened into a broad expanse of turf, and the house lay before us. In the fading light I could see that the centre was a heavy block of building from which a porch projected. The whole front was draped in ivy,

with a patch clipped bare here and there where a window or a coat-of-arms broke through the dark veil. From this central block rose the twin towers, ancient, crenellated, and pierced with many loopholes. To right and left of the turrets were more modern wings of black granite. A dull light shone through heavily mullioned windows, and from the high chimneys which rose from the steep high-angled roof there sprang a single black column of smoke..." (Doyle, *The Complete* 465).

The Hound of the Baskervilles incorporates all the ingredients of Gothic fiction in accordance with Abrams's definition. Abrams writes,

"The locale...[is]...often a gloomy castle [,]...[and it is]...a typical story focused on the sufferings imposed on an innocent heroine by a cruel and lustful villain, and ma[kes] bountiful use of ghosts mysterious disappearances and other sensational and supernatural occurrences (which in a number of novels turned out to have natural explanations) (*A Glossary* 111).

While the ancient Baskerville Hall is the gloomy castle, Mrs. Stapleton symbolically becomes the suffering heroine. Tortured by her cruel and villainous husband who lusts for the Baskerville inheritance, she is discovered tied in the Merripit House with:

"one towel pass[ing]...round the throat and...secured at the back of the pillar [,]...[while]...[another]...covered the lower part of the face...In a

minute...the gag...[is torn off]...and...the bonds...[unswathed]...[,]...and Mrs. Stapleton...[sinks]...upon the floor in front of us. As her beautiful head...[falls]...upon her chest, [Watson sees]...the clear red weal of a whiplash across her neck” (Doyle, *The Complete* 528).

Mortimer’s story about the fate of Charles Baskerville concludes with his implication of the presence of an apparition – the “Baskerville demon” about which the inhabitants of the villages surrounding Baskerville Hall vociferously discuss (438, 442). In context of the Abramsian “mysterious disappearances”, Henry Baskerville’s stoppage of communication with his acquaintances (437), and the disappearance of his shoes in the fifth chapter find relevance. On the other hand, the perceptively apparitional hound is revealed in the fourteenth chapter of the novel as a hybridised dog reared by Stapleton (527).

Doyle uses an identifiably European background and a sub-genre belonging primarily to English literature in context of Horace Walpole’s definition in The Castle of Otranto: a Gothic Story (1764), to portray a horror tale set in imperial Britain. However, the litterateur negates the presence of any real apparition in any of his stories. As a rationalist, Holmes dismisses the presence of supernatural beings in “The Adventure of the Sussex Vampire”, first published in *The Strand Magazine* in January 1924, by saying:

“Rubbish, Watson, rubbish! What have we to do with walking corpses who can only be held in their grave by stakes driven through their hearts? It’s pure lunacy.” (1006).

This might be interpreted as Doyle’s irony against Abraham Stoker’s famous Gothic novel, Dracula, published twenty-seven years before the narrative.

The Orientalist presumption about the corrupting effect of the East once again finds mention in “The Adventure of the Empty House”, first published in *Collier's* on 26 September 1903. Colonel Sebastian Moran, “once of Her Majesty’s Indian Army, and the best heavy game shot that... [the British] Eastern Empire has ever produced” has not only taken an active part in suppressing the Indian natives but also has been given superiority to the colonised populace as far as hunting their *own* wild animals is concerned (548). Doyle uses the Hindi word “shikari”, or hunter, to stress the Oriental association of Moran and to identify him as the symbolic hunter of the subaltern individuals (550). His Orientalist lineage and training are suggested in his being the “son of Sir Augustus Moran, C.B, once British Minister to Persia”, his career in the imperial army during the “Jowaki Campaign” and “Afghan Campaign” and his having had served at Charasiab, Sherpur, and Cabul” (550-1). Besides, he has published two books perceptively dealing with the Orient – Heavy Game of the Western Himalayas in 1881, and Three Months in the Jungle in 1884, and is a member of “The Anglo Indian [Club], the Tankerville [Club], the Bagatelle Club” (550-1).

Moran has all the qualities to be a competent coloniser: physical strength, keenness of eyes, education, a martial background, and financial stability. However, like Grimesby Roylott of “The Adventure of the Speckled Band” whose destruction, according to Nicholas Stewart, is brought about due to his prolonged association with the Orient, Moran’s stint at the Orient degrades him to be “the second most dangerous man in London” (551)⁵.

As the Orientalist imperialist, Sherlock Holmes obtains his knowledge about the East by travelling widely in the Asian and African continents during the days he had been living *in cognito* following his near-fatal confrontation with Moriarty. He reports to Watson:

“I travelled for two years in Tibet, therefore, and amused myself by visiting Lhasa and spending some days with the head Llama. You may have read of the remarkable explorations of a Norwegian named Sigerson, but I am sure that it never occurred to you that you were receiving news of your friend. I then passed through Persia, looked in at Mecca, and paid a short but interesting visit to the Khalifa at Khartoum, the results of which I have communicated to the Foreign Office” (544).

Holmes’s return to the imperial metropolis of London in “The Adventure of the Empty House” negates the supposed death of the coloniser and provided the contemporary

British commoners with the assurance of continuation of protection of Britain's imperial interests.

In "The Adventure of the Norwood Builder", published in *Collier's* on 31 October 1903, Doyle asserts the unconventional intelligence of Sherlock Holmes and vindicates his superiority to the British police concerned with maintaining Britain's internal law and order and not conversant, unlike Holmes, with the Empire without. Watson's demeans Lestrade, the representative of the official police forces and projects Holmes as an unchallengeable intellectual when he comments,

"Lestrade had learned by more experiences than he would care to acknowledge that the razor-like brain...[of Holmes]...could cut through that which was impenetrable to him" (559).

Published in *Collier's* on 26 March 1904, "The Adventure of Charles Augustus Milverton" deals with the follies of the British bourgeoisie based in London but Doyle understates its serious defects like the continuation of blackmail, extra-marital affairs and retaining of pre-marital liaisons testimonies to which are contained in the letters admittedly in Milverton's possession (633-4). His opulence is stressed when Holmes reports that he collects letter confidential letters by bribing servants and confidants "with no niggardly hand" (632).

Doyle projects Milverton is as a misogynist blackmailer who specifically targets women like Eva Brackwell and Miss Miles (632, 634). However, in the British society depicted in the story, men appear to be unconcerned about their pre-marital affairs that the society seems to allow them. Milverton's nefarious activities ultimately lead to his murder the non-specified aristocratic lady (640), and the story becomes an exhibition of Doyle's attempt at presenting the coloniser's society where there might be evil but also upholders of justice like Holmes to mitigate chances of damage to the common British interests.

"The Adventure of the Six Napoleons", first published in *Collier's* on 30 April 1904, deals with serial attacks on statues of Napoleon Bonaparte (1769-1821), imperial Britain's bete noire, by Beppo who is a representative of another imperial power – Italy, the cradle of European Renaissance. The issue of Orient being synonymous with trouble is reiterated towards the conclusion of the narrative when Holmes demonstrates that Beppo has had been launching his attacks to retrieve an Oriental pearl (657). Through the story Doyle pits one imperial representative against an icon of the other and revels in the resultant fiasco at the cost of both Italy and France.

In "The Adventure of the Golden Pince-Nez", published in the July 1904-issue of *The Strand Magazine*, the imperial France accepts the supremacy of the British investigator through "an autograph letter of thanks from the French President" and by bestowing upon him "the Order of the Legion of Honour" in 1894 (671). Sergius, impersonating as Professor Coram, is an Orientalist who has had

analysed “the documents found in the Coptic monasteries of Syria and Egypt”, and is revealed as the villain (679). Significantly, he is a Russian and represents an imperial power that was not on friendly terms with Britain in 1904 when the story was published. England supported Japan when the Japanese defeated the Russians in the 1905-war. Sergius has therefore been presented as an unsavoury traitor who betrays his rebellious wife and her comrades to the tyrannical Russian government (683).

In “The Adventure of the Abbey Grange”, published in *The Strand Magazine* in September 1904, Doyle projects a British gentleman and a lady to represent the ideal physical appearances while simultaneously excluding the Easterners from the purview of his consideration. Watson thus describes Lady Brackenstall as the epitome of beauty:

“Seldom have I seen so graceful a figure, so womanly a presence, and so beautiful a face. She was a blonde, gold-haired, blue-eyed, and would, no doubt, have had the perfect complexion which goes with such colouring had not her recent experience left her drawn and haggard...” (702).

On the other hand, Captain Croker has been vividly described as the model for ideal male physique:

“Our door was opened to admit as fine a specimen of manhood as ever passed through it. He was a very tall young man, golden-moustached,

blue-eyed, with a skin which had been burned by tropical suns, and a springy step which showed that the huge frame was as active as it was strong..." (712).

Doyle habitually judges the appearances of Oriental colonised people like Tonga, Daulat Ras and Achmet against such Eurocentric standards of beauty to project the White Europeans as being physically superior to them.

In "The Adventure of the Second Stain", published in *The Strand Magazine* in December 1904, Doyle re-depicts the society with which Holmes is acquainted, and involves him deeply in Britain's imperial interests by showing him as helping such British government officials as "Lord Bellinger, twice Premier of Britain... [and]...Trelawney Hope, Secretary for European affairs" (717). In the narrative, Eduardo Lucas, like Grimesby Roylott of "The Adventure of the Speckled Band", shows an obsessive interest in the Orient by maintaining an arsenal of Eastern weapons and is killed by a "curved Indian dagger, plucked down from a trophy of Oriental arms which adomed one of the walls" (721).

In "A Reminiscence of Mr. Sherlock Holmes: The Tiger of San Pedro", initially published in the October 1908-issue of *The Strand Magazine*, Inspector Baynes suspects the cook for the Oxshott murder and arrests him primarily because of his resemblance to the African natives. Doyle describes him as "a huge and hideous mulatto, with yellowish features of a pronounced Negroid type" (747). Don

Murillo, “a terror through all Central America” (751), is once again a representative of one of the British colonies, and by portraying him as a dictator the writer implies that the colonised individuals are customarily failure as rulers. Baynes informs,

“He had made his name as the most lewd and bloodthirsty tyrant that had ever governed any country with a pretence to civilization. Strong, fearless, and energetic, he had sufficient virtue to enable him to impose his odious vices upon a cowering people for ten or twelve years...he was as cunning as he was cruel...” (751).

The White police inspector also describes the Negroid cook to Holmes in a manner that dehumanises him:

“This fellow is a perfect savage, as strong as the cart-horse and as fierce as the devil. He chewed Downing’s thumb nearly off before they could master him. He hardly speaks a word of English, and we can get nothing out of him but grunts” (748).

Holmes plays his role as the Orientalist investigator as he reads a quotation from the White litterateur Eckermann’s Voodooism and the Negroid Religions, which presents the Orientals as barbaric people who indulge in fabulous violence and cruelty:

“The true Voodoo-worshipper attempts nothing of importance without certain sacrifices which are intended to propitiate his unclean gods. In extreme cases these rites take the form of human sacrifices followed by cannibalism. The more usual victims are a white cock, which is plucked in pieces alive, or a black goat, whose throat is cut and body burned” (754).

Among the different objects related to Voodooism – the “sinister relic”, the white cock with limbs and body savagely torn off, the zinc pail containing blood, and the heap of charred bones, Doyle details on the first one to allude to a savage and inferior alien culture. Watson reports,

“An extraordinary object...stood at the back of the dresser. It was so wrinkled and shrunken and withered that it was difficult to say what it might have been. One could but say that it was black and leathery, and that it bore some resemblance to a dwarfish human figure. At first, as I examined it, I thought that it was a mummified Negro baby, and then it seemed a very twisted and ancient monkey. Finally, I was left in doubt as to whether it was animal or human. A double band of white shells was strung round the centre of it” (745).

In “The Adventure of the Devil’s Foot”, published in *The Strand Magazine* in December 1910, Sterndale uses the Devil’s Foot-root to murder men. The root of the herb “shaped like a foot, half-human, half-goat like”

is “used as an ordeal poison by the medicine-men in certain districts of West Africa, and is kept as a secret among them” (786). By stressing its Oriental connection, the root having had its origin in “the Ubanghi country”, Doyle reasserts that Eastern objects are primarily malignant and have debilitating influences on the White Westerners.

The malignant influence of the Orient is further reflected in “The Adventure of the Dying Detective”, published in *Collier's* on 22nd November 1913, in which Holmes pretends to have developed a “coolie disease from Sumatra” (819). His Orientalist prejudice is asserted when he says, “There are many problems of disease, many strange pathological possibilities in the East...” (819). According to the investigator’s Eurocentric perception, the East, though a source of sustenance for the British economy, incorporates certain dangerous qualities that should be strenuously identified and avoided. Culverton Smith, a White British physician, is identifiably corrupted during his service at Sumatra. Watson relates the “well known resident of Sumatra now visiting London” (822) to “an out-of-the-way Asiatic disease in the heart” of the imperial capital (825). While portraying the primacy given by the Easterners to their imperial dominators, he also refers to the dangers posed to the European countries by their Oriental colonies.

When he states, “...the collies used to do some squealing towards the end”, Smith refers to his usage of the technologically and culturally underdeveloped Indian coolies as guinea pigs to test his biological weapon (825). On the other hand, the “small black and white ivory box with a sliding lid” (821) that he mails to

Holmes has an ostensibly Oriental design and naturally has been portrayed as dangerous for those Western colonisers that are without a thorough knowledge of the Orient.

In “The Adventure of the Illustrious Client”, published in *Collier's* on 8 November 1924, differences between the military dominator of the Easterners and the intelligent Orientalist are further explored. Even though Watson has actively participated as an army surgeon with the imperial army in India, he does not possess a thorough theoretical knowledge of the East and fails to describe the paraphernalia of the “real egg-shell pottery of the [Chinese] Ming dynasty” about which the Orientalist Holmes knows every detail (1043). The surgeon’s reading about “the hall-marks of the great artist-decorators, of the mystery of cyclical dates, the marks of the Hung-wu and the beauties of the Yung-lo, the writings of Tang-ying, and the glories of the primitive period of the Sung and the Yuan” is the symbolic portrayal of acquiring Orientalist knowledge by the White Westerner (1042).

It is important that Adelbert Gruner’s face has been described as “swarthy, almost Oriental, with large, dark, languorous eyes which might easily hold an irresistible fascination for women” (1044). By attacking it with vitriol, Kitty Winter symbolically erases the debilitating mark of the East from the imperial realm (1047). Gruner’s depiction as a villain might be accounted by his imperial connections that go against the British interest. First of all, he is an Austrian, contemporary Austria being under the imperial German influence (1033); second, he lives in a house that has been built by “a South African gold king in the days of the great

boom” (1044), and finally, he deals in Oriental goods that are supposed to be the principal property of the British (1044). Gruner associates himself with the Orient by dealing in Eastern antiques and, therefore, has to suffer.

Published in *Liberty* on 18 September 1926, “The Adventure of the Three Gables” opens with Doyle’s satiric description of a haughty African who threatens the White colonisers even as he resides in the imperial centre, and is rendered into a ridiculous figure when he is forced to act in a docile manner before Holmes’s coldness and Watson’s aggressive stance with a poker (1051). Doyle’s description underscores the insufficiencies and incongruities in the Oriental natives who attempt to express themselves as civilized while living in Britain without having a definite tradition and cultural sophistication. Watson reports,

“The door flung open and a huge Negro had burst into the room. He would have been a comic figure if he had not been terrific, for he was dressed in a very loud grey check suit with a flowing salmon-coloured tie. His broad face and flattened nose were thrust forward, as his sullen dark eyes, with a smouldering gleam of malice in them, turned from one of us to the other” (1051).

The African’s incompatibility to the West is accentuated by his ostentatious dress and erroneous English dialect. He thus remains the Other to the British imperialists who view him in a Eurocentric perspective to treat him as an object of laughter.

The main narrative of “The Adventure of the Blanched Soldier”, first published in *Liberty* on 16 October 1926, is set in January 1903, “just after the conclusion of the Boer War” (1061). It is the only story of the canon which is narrated by the investigator himself and which contains references to the Boer War and the Crimean War in both of which Britain had to suffer humiliation and heavy casualties. The story deals with the predicament of the British soldier, Godfrey Emsworth, “the only son of Colonel Emsworth, the Crimean V.C” (1062) who joined in 1899, the year when the Boers declared war upon the imperial power.

The author painstakingly depicts the European tradition of the Emsworths by focussing on the Western architecture of their house through James M. Dodd “of South Africa...Imperial Yeomanry, Middlesex Corps” when he visits it to search for his missing friend:

“Tuxbury Old Hall...is a great wandering house, standing in a considerable park. I should judge it was of all sorts of ages and styles, starting on a half-timbered Elizabethan foundation and ending in a Victorian portico. Inside it was all panelling and tapestry and half-effaced old pictures, a house of shadows and mystery” (1063).

Dodd frankly expresses his own racial superiority and mental agility while comparing the efficiency of the British soldiers against that of the native Boers:

“But when a man has been soldiering for a year or two with brother Boer as a playmate, he keeps his nerve and acts quickly” (1065).

Once the White imperialist leaves the safe confines of his country and steps into the unfamiliar realms of the Eastern colonies, he begins to suffer. While fighting the Boers, Emsworth is “hit with a bullet from an elephant gun...near Diamond Hill outside Pretoria” (1062). However, his misery reaches its nadir after he reaches a hospital for the colonised lepers and faints in exhaustion. As the soldier later describes, he found on waking:

“[that]...in front of me was standing a small, dwarf-like man with a huge, bulbous head, who was jabbering excitedly in Dutch, waving two horrible hands which looked to me like brown sponges. Behind him stood a group of people who seemed to be intensely amused by the situation, but a chill came over me as I looked at them. Not one of them was a normal human being. Everyone was twisted or swollen or disfigured in some strange way. The laughter of these strange monstrosities was a dreadful thing to hear.

It seemed that none of them could speak English, but the situation wanted clearing up, for the creature with the big head was furiously angry and, uttering wild beat cries, he had laid his deformed hands upon me and was dragging me out of bed, regardless of the fresh flow of blood from my wound. The little monster was as strong as a bull, and I don't know what he might have done to me had not an elderly man who was clearly in authority been attracted to the room by the hubbub. He said a few stern words in Dutch and my persecutors shrank away. Then he turned upon me, gazing at me in the utmost amazement..." (1070).

Other than describing the debilitations of the Eastern colonies, Doyle perceptively implies that the White man who knows English is always "clearly in authority". He paints a rather deformed picture of the subaltern leapers, and once again demeans them when, in context of Holmes's mentioning the Orientalist dermatologist James Saunders, he writes, "The prospect of an interview with Lord Roberts would not have excited greater pleasure in a raw subaltern than was now reflected upon the face of Mr. Kent" (1071-2).

Doyle's attitude towards Germany, one of England's imperial rivals, is outrightly hostile but cautiously expressed. In the two narratives where the Germans are directly involved – "The Adventure of the Engineer's Thumb" and "His Last Bow", published respectively in the March 1892 and September 1917-issues of *The Strand Magazine*, in "A Scandal in Bohemia" and in "The Adventure of the Priory

School" (first published in *Collier's* on 30 January 1904) in which a German participates but not as chief character – the Germans Lysander Stark, Von Bork, Count Von Ormstein, with the exception of Heidegger, have been portrayed in shades of grey. Importantly, "The Last Bow" has been subtitled as "The War Service of Sherlock Holmes". The narrative is not only an instance of Doyle's obtrusive patriotism and his characterisation of Holmes as a patriotic British who discharges his national duties simultaneously with his investigations, but also it portrays the symbolic clash of two imperial nations in which the British vanquish the Germans. Holmes's warning to Von Bork, "The Englishman is a patient creature, but at present his temper is a little inflamed, and it would be as well not to try him too far" actually indicates Doyle's warning to the Germans against their interference with the British colonial interests (956).

Doyle's imperial ideology and advocacy of the domination of the Orientals perceptively endeared him to the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth White European readers. On the other hand, Saradindu Bandyopadhyay presents Byomkesh Bakshi as his spokesperson against Britain's imperial domination India and the hegemony of Eurocentric detective stories. Born in colonised India, and educated under the British system of education, Bandyopadhyay was trained as a lawyer and had to initially practise at British courts. Obtrusively anti-imperial stories would have been immediately restricted by the contemporary British Indian government that was reeling under militant nationalism of the Indians between the 1890s and 1930s. Understandably, Bandyopadhyay follows the path of literary and cultural hybridity to write Bengali stories

in an identifiably Indian perspective to counter those specific areas in which the Eurocentric detectives gained their success and popularity.

“Shimonto Heera”, first published in 1933, opens with the author’s ironic reference to the characteristic silence and lack of protest among the Bengalis. Nevertheless, he presents a resilient society that *withstands* in direct opposition to the British society depicted in the Sherlock Holmes stories where not a single crime goes unreported and unreciprocated. While this might indicate that the colonised Bengali people lack the courage and inclination to register their protest, this might also point to the lack of power of adjustment among the British citizens when compared to the Indians. According to Bandyopadhyay, the Indians lack tact but the crimes in the British colony are seldom of serious magnitude:

“It is a bad habit among the Indians that they remain undeterred by small thefts – they do not even approach the police. Perhaps they think that mental peace is superior to happiness. In those rare cases when the crime is really serious, the news reaches the police no doubt, but no one seems to be interested or take initiative to spend his hard earned cash in employing a private investigator. After a few days of mourning and indicting the policemen for inaction, they fall silent again.

Murders and assaults do sometimes take place in our country. But there is often no sign of intelligence in them; the

murderer who kills in a rage is immediately apprehended, and the Government police first put him in a lock up and thereafter, send him to the gallows as soon as possible" (70).

Significantly, while the imperial police in India showed laxity in arresting the general criminals, the Indian nationalists met with swiftest retribution.

The above quotation might also be interpreted as Bandyopadhyay's irony against the frequent employment of private investigators in Eurocentric detective fiction like the Sherlock Holmes and Hercule Poirot narratives in context of the fact that the affluence of imperial powers is dependent on their utilisation of the colonies' resources. Bandyopadhyay asserts his patriotism by using the phrase "our country" similar to what Sherlock Holmes does by bulleting "V.R" or *Victoria Regina* on his drawing room wall in "The Adventure of the Musgrave Ritual" (Doyle, *The Complete* 334). It is significant that the author mentions "lock-up" and "gallows" side by side, but no "court", thus implying that justice was denied to the Indians in the British-Indian courts.

Just as Holmes shows a restlessness in "The Adventure of the Norwood Builder" because of the lack of criminals in London (Doyle, *The Complete* 555), Bakshi says, "What can I do that talented criminals are becoming paradoxes in our country? It is not my fault, it is that of your poor, waxen-eyed Bengali language: the criminal-genius is rare" (Bandyopadhyay, *Byomkesh* 70). Other than the

implicit irony, the Bengali inquisitor also indicates that the Bengalis are never develop themselves hardcore criminals and indicts the British police for failure when he comments,

“Whom you occasionally find in police-reports are persons of no importance. Those belonging to deep waters are rarely identified” (70).

However, Bakshi and Ajit Bandyopadhyay exhibit the influence of British system of education when they talk about the European psychoanalysis among themselves (70-1).

The coloniser-initiated Indian postal system of insuring envelopes is exemplified by the arrival of the insured envelope on behalf of Tridibendra Narayan Roy, a northern Bengal landlord, at Bakshi’s Harrison Road-residence (71). Roy’s “estate” indicates the system of landlordship in British India in which Indian landlords had to pay rental to the government in exchange of rights to rule specific groups of villages.

The landlord has been conferred with the title of “Roy” by the British imperialists identifiably in recognition of his services to them, and he follows a European lifestyle. He maintains a secretary who composes letters in the imperial language of English (71). Understandably, Bakshi makes fun of the whimsies of such landlords. He comments,

“As far as my knowledge of the landlords of this country is concerned, it seems that Kumar Tridibendra Narayan Roy has dreamt about his elephant being stolen by his neighbour-landlord; and apprehensive, he has sent for a detective” (71).

It also satirises factionalism among the small landlords in British India.

The first class compartments in colonial Indian railways being reserved for the Whites, Bakshi and Ajit Bandyopadhyay have to travel to northern Bengal in a second-class compartment, and are taken to the landlord's residence in a foreign-made car (72). The feudal lord's building identifiably follows the European architectural pattern. Ajit Bandyopadhyay describes,

“It was an ancient and large five-mansion building, surrounding which, there were spread over thirty to forty *higha-s* of land, garden, hot-house, tanks, tennis-courts, secretariat, guest house, post office, and many more”(71).

Roy's adherence to Eurocentric customs is revealed when his private secretary himself receive the inquisitor and his associate at the station and the landlord, “well-educated and intelligent”, meets the in the library stocked with Indian and foreign language books and periodicals (72-3). However, the author's resistance against the Eurocentric customs is exhibited when he makes the imperially educated Roy appear “in an ordinary Punjabi like

us – a smiling young man, handsome and fair, without a trace of pride or extravagance in his demeanour” (73).

While describing his ancestry to Bakshi, Roy refers to his family’s landlordship dating back to the time of the Mughals and informs that prior to the Act of Permanent Settlement passed by Cornwallis, the 1786-1793 (and 1805) Governor-General of Bengal, in 1793 his ancestors bore the title of “*raja*”, thus underscoring the relationship between the subaltern aristocrats and the imperialists. Even as Roy refers to the Indian custom of the accession of the eldest, he reposes faith in the security of the imperial forces in context of an exhibition of precious gemstones on behalf of the British government (74). Bandyopadhyay ironically depicts the diamond’s stealth in spite of elaborate security arrangements.

Sir Digindra Narayan Roy has been presented as an imperial *collaborator* through such points as his being knighted for serving the British government by submitting a theory about plaster-of-Paris, and his monthly pension of “three thousand rupees” (74-5). When Roy says, “Had...[Digindra Narayan Roy]...been born in England, he would have been a most renowned personality”, he indicates physical and intellectual marginalisation and de-recognition of the intelligent colonised by the colonisers (75).

Byomkesh Bakshi and Ajit Bandyopadhyay exhibit lingual hybridity by habitually using English words and phrases like “plan of action”, “compound”, and “interview” during their conversations (76-7). On the other hand,

Digindra Narayan Roy's mansion at the former imperial-capital of Calcutta is built in the European architectural style, and is made secure by four European mastiff dogs (77). However, the perceptively culturally superior Indian has a servant in Ujre Singh whose country Nepal was and continues culturally dominated by India.

Even as he sticks to the Western requirements for an office assistant while advertising for a secretary, Digindra Narayan Roy exhibits hybridity as he sits at a European secretariat table wearing a *piran* or an Indian sleeveless shirt during the interview (77). Bakshi's apparent qualification of M.Sc from Calcutta University also alludes to the British system of education (78).

Digindra Narayan Roy's judging Bakshi's brain as containing "at least fifty ounces of brain matter" (79) is reminiscent of Mortimer's analysis of Holmes's skull in The Hound of the Baskervilles (Doyle, *The Complete* 432). Having had been imperially educated, he projects himself as being intellectually superior to the Bengali detective. Calling Bakshi "the Indian Bertillon", he alludes to the French anthropologist and inventor of different investigative methods Alphonse Bertillon (1853-1914), and swears "...be damned!" in English (Bandyopadhyay, *Byomkesh* 80). The writer's acquaintance with Eurocentric detective fiction is exhibited when Ajit Bandyopadhyay recalls a story written by Edgar Allan Poe "about a file that was always before everyone's eyes but was being frantically searched for" (81). Significantly, the Oriental diamond is also kept on Digindra Narayan Roy's table, but the procedure of its recovery is different.

Significantly, while Holmes uses Western gazetteers for knowing the East, Bakshi is forced to consult English encyclopaedias at the British-built Imperial Library of Calcutta to secure information about the Occidental plaster-of-Paris (83).

Digindra Narayan Roy's exhibition of Nararaj's statue at Paris's Louver Museum is a postcolonial response because it depicts the acceptance of the superiority of Indian art by the Orientalists (82). After the statue's recovery, Bakshi takes it to the British-constructed Calcutta Grand Hotel where Tridibendra Narayan Roy has "reserved an entire suit" in accordance with European convention (88). Bakshi's breaking the statue with a paperweight (88) is reminiscent of Holmes's breaking of the Napoleon statue in "The Adventure of the Six Napoleons" to recover "the famous black pearl of the Borgias" (Doyle, *The Complete* 656). Bandyopadhyay subsumes the Holmesian theory of deduction in Indian philosophy when the inquisitor says,

"If...[the plaster of Paris cast does]...not...[contain the Shimonto diamond]...[,]...I shall presume that there is nothing as truth on this earth; that the chapter on deduction based on prediction given in the *Shastra* is erroneous"(Bandyopadhyay, *Byomkesh* 88).

First published in 1933, "The Venom of the Tarantula" opens with a description of Bakshi's sickness due to the strain of a forgery

case (Bandyopadhyay, *Picture 71*), which is similar to Holmes's fatigue in "The Adventure of the Reigate Squires" (Doyle, *The Complete* 345). But while Watson, being a doctor, can supervise the British investigator medically, Ajit Bandyopadhyay merely offers his presence and attention. The system of education in British India is reiterated when readers learn that Dr. Mohon has had studied with Bandyopadhyay "until the Intermediate class" (71).

Nandadulal's family has been referred to as "a very affluent" one that "goes back a long way to when the city was just coming up", and one of their principal incomes is from the market in the city "from which they earn...[the]...massive monthly amount...[of fifteen thousand rupees]...as rent" (72). The family had identifiably gained affluence by collaborating with the British colonisers in pre-independence India ~~by collaborating with the British colonisers~~, thus proving itself to be against the nationalist cause. Naturally, Bandyopadhyay depicts Nandadulal as "foul-mouthed, mistrustful, crafty, malicious", and given to "depraved lines" in youth (73). William Dalrymple's *The White Moguls* (2003) depicts how affluent youths had taken to drinks and womanising in colonised India.

Mohan asserts his Bengali identity by referring to the Indian custom of "holy oblation" while describing the quality of Nandadulal's erotica. On the other hand, on hearing about his client's addiction, Bakshi says,

“Tarantula dance! It used to be practised in Spain – the spider’s bite would make people cavort! It’s a deadly poison! I have read about it but I haven’t come across anyone using it in this country” (74)

Having been taught under the British system of education, Bakshi, like Holmes, has acquired encyclopaedic knowledge. Other than exhibiting a firm knowledge of the Indian customs and behavioural patterns, the inquisitor attributes crime and social debilitations to the West just as Holmes identifies East with danger and disorder. Like Bakshi, Mohan also traces the addiction to “the hybrid Hispanic tribes of South America” (74). Ajit Bandyopadhyay displays his acquainted with the Western scientific postulates when while describing the nervous problems with Nandadulal’s left hand, he says, “Those who have seen a dead frog’s limbs jump up when they come in contact with electric current may perhaps be able to visualise this nervous twitch” (78). He thus refers to the frog-leg experiment of Luigi Galvani and Alesandro Volta performed in 1780 (Dasgupta 271). The Indian author also satirises Emile Zola (1840-1902), an eminent imperial litterateur and philosopher, when he mentions, “The writing...[of Nandadulal]...would have made Emile Zola blush” (80).

The Parker pens with which Nandadulal composes his erotica are British-made and demonstrate the Easterners’ affinity for Western goods. Nandadulal’s dependence on tarantula venom ingested through these pens symbolises the imperial slow-poisoning of natives, like the opium-poisoning of the South Asians, to perpetuate colonial domination. The danger of Nandadulal’s funding the Indian nationalists is thus mitigated. Importantly, though he keeps a bottle of the Oriental *attar*

or perfume with him, he expresses his detachment from the Eastern traditions by never using it (81).

Being a White and a woman, the Jew Rebecca Light becomes the *Other* to Nandadulal. By mailing him the tarantula venom every month, she becomes an agent of the colonisers, and is assisted by an Indian postman trained and working under the British postal system (87). Bakshi's smoking of cheroots in the narrative indicates his cultural hybridity (85).

Written in 1934, "Chorabalee" centres on different occurrences at the estate of Himangshu Roy, the friend of Tridibendra Narayan Roy of "Shimonto Heera". Ruler of another British protectorate, Himangshu Roy is an avid shooter of tigers thus following the custom of the imperial administrators in India. About his hobby, Tridibendra Narayan Roy reports, "Day or night, you would find him either in the arsenal or in the jungle, hunting!"(128).

Bakshi, Ajit Bandyopadhyay and Tridibendra Narayan Roy show the influence of the colonisers in their manner of dressing, breakfasting with tea and cake, using a car of European-make and carrying shotguns and lunch boxes. Ajit Bandyopadhyay describes:

“We could barely manage dressing ourselves in warm hose and shorts and thereafter gulped down cake with steaming tea. Three shotguns, numerous cartridges and a lunch box had already been stored in the car.”(129).

Importantly, the forest they visit for hunting is conspicuously tropical and Oriental in its flora and fauna, where under the colonial influence, they shoot down their own natural resources like rabbits, stags, woodcocks and peacocks (129).

The author describes Roy’s physique and dress vividly to portray his cultural hybridity. Ajit Bandyopadhyay reports,

“His age almost matched ours’, and he was stoutly built. A loud pair of German moustache had made his face look unnecessarily ferocious. The cruel sight of an old big-game hunter occasionally flashed in his eyes.....He was wearing Jodhpur breeches, a khaki Boy Scout cap on his head and a broad belt to which large number of cartridges were struck.”(130-1).

Following the Western food habit, he lunches with cutlets and boiled eggs (131).

The unrest in Roy’s estate depicts the gradual destruction of different Indian feudal systems during the British rule through court cases

fought against the peasants. That indirectly favoured the imperial government which benefited financially upon judging such disputes at British Indian courtrooms.

Himangshu Roy satirises the British rulers when he says to Bakshi and Ajit Bandyopadhyay praising his sharp-shooting skills, "Let's forget it! A few minutes more of your applause, and my cheeks would redden like a British-engineered eggplant!" (133). However, he reposes trust in the British police for arresting the fugitive Haranath (133).

Kaligati Bhattacharyya, Roy's *dewan* or the chief secretary under the British-initiated feudal system, has been described as resembling an Indian hermit: "...thin and fair; clean shaved...beads of *rudraksha* adorning his neck with vermilion smeared over his forehead" (134). While Bhattacharyya's mentioning of the *amla*-s or secretaries denotes another feature of British-initiated landlordship, his mention of borrowing money from pawnbrokers to fight cases against affluent peasants indicates how the Indian landlords were exterminated during the colonial rule (135).

Saradindu Bandyopadhyay projects his own Hindu faith by making Haranath, a tutor employed by Roy for his daughter, a devotee of Kali, the Hindu goddess for annihilation and a believer in the occult. On the other hand, Bhattacharyya, a Brahmin, has been shown to possess an Indian name indicating death. Even though he depicts his own religion, Bandyopadhyay, by portraying Haranath's death due to his belief, condemns its innate superstitions (158).

Bakshi, like Holmes, asserts his intellect when he immediately detects gross monetary misappropriations by checking Roy's account registers (137). Like Holmes, he declares himself to be "neither a poet, nor a lover" (139). Ajit Bandyopadhyay's ignorance with the Indian zodiac indicates the growing distance of the Indian intelligentsia from the traditional astronomy under the influence of British system of education (139). The author, nevertheless, depicts the Hindu social evil of sending widows in exile to Kashi or Benaras in Uttar Pradesh (140).

Himangshu Roy's arsenal that is decorated with the hides of tigers, bears and deer is identifiably decorated in the Western style (141). His affinity for the West is further exhibited in his passion for foreign firearms about whose range and paraphernalia he knows in details (141). Thus he uses English phrases like "a tooth for a tooth, an eye for an eye" for avenging Haranath's murder and uses European gadgets like the radium watch (154-5).

Saradindu Bandyopadhyay's "Chorabalee" exhibits different similarities to Arthur Conan Doyle's The Hound of the Baskervilles, with the locale Indianised and some actions assigned to different persons. The depleting resource of the Chorabalee Estate is similar to that of the Baskervilles'. In each story, one member from the family of landlords, Himangshu Roy and Henry Baskerville, comes under the machinations of a scheming acquaintance (Kaligati Bhattacharyya and Stapleton) bent on unlawful inheritance. Both the aristocratic families have dwindling

resources but a pronounced tradition. While Baskerville is scared by the legend of the hound, Roy is disturbed at the news of the tiger, and in both the narratives the landlords experience artificially-prepared incarnations of the beasts. Bandyopadhyay's Haranath is similar to Doyle's Selden, and both the fugitives suffer because reposing faith in the legends. On the other hand, Bhuvan and Barrymore are the cooperative and intelligent attendants in "Chorabalee" and The Hound of the Baskervilles, respectively. Radha and Mrs. Stapleton symbolise the persecuted women in each narrative. Both the dilapidated kennel of Stapleton's hound and the former abode of Bhattacharyya's mentor, the *tantrik* or the Hindu practitioner of the Occult, are built across areas of quicksand, respectively called the Grimpen Mire and Chorabalee through which only Stapleton and Bhattacharyya know the safe passage. On their way to investigate the huts, Holmes (Doyle, *The Complete* 530) and Ajit Bandyopadhyay (Bandyopadhyay, *Byomkesh* 145) are nearly sunk in the quicksand, and at the end of both the narratives the criminals die near the region of quicksand. Holmes kills the hound by firing and Himangshu Roy's bullet kills Bhattacharyya. However, while Bhattacharyya an Oriental believer and practitioner of the occult, Stapleton is an Occidental 'naturalist' or scientist.

Written in 1935, "Calamity Strikes" begins with Bakshi's restlessness at the absence of crime in Calcutta similar to Holmes's in "The Adventure of the Copper Beeches", "The Adventure of the Cardboard Box" and "The Adventure of the Norwood Builder".

In a long article on science and technology, Bandyopadhyay reposes his faith in the ancient Indian science and implies that scientific development would be instrumental in making India independent. As Ajit Bandyopadhyay reads,

“There is no denying the fact that without the aid of scientific knowledge no nation can achieve greatness. There is a prevalent belief that Indian scientists lack the powers of invention and are incapable of productive research – this is often cited as the reason why India is still not self-sufficient. But this belief is completely baseless, and our glorious past is proof of that. It is needless to mention in such erudite company that it was in India that the first seeds of modern science had germinated and then gradually spread, like pollen dust on gusts of wind, to locales far and wide. Mathematics, astronomy, medicine and architecture are the four pillars of modern scientific thought, and India was the founding ground of all four...[Today]...the state does not patronise scientific research... We have to work within the constrained resources that a handful of universities and some meagre grants from here and there are able to afford us. Our success, too, is commensurate with our circumstances...Still, I can confidently claim that if we could pursue our research with a mind unfettered by financial concerns, we would not have been lesser to any nation on earth...But, in spite of all this, what we have accomplished under such penurious conditions is a matter of shame. Does anyone keep a count of

the innumerable inventions that are achieved, often surprising even the inventor himself, in our little laboratories?" (Bandyopadhyay, *Picture* 131-2).

Through the article Bandyopadhyay indicates how the imperial government obstructed Indian science lest it should lead to an increased scientific awareness among the dominated and incite them to nationalistic sentiments.

Bandyopadhyay presents Dr. Rudra ironically to indict the imperial collaborators discriminating against the fellow Indians. Ajit Bandyopadhyay reports,

"He was middle-aged and one of...[pre-independence]...Calcutta's most renowned physicians. But he was notorious for his rudeness and bad temper...Dr. Rudra's appearance said a lot about his personality. He was as dark as dark can be; his bloodshot eyes set within his ugly, horse-like visage, seemed to scorn all those they fell upon. The shape of his lips too carried that disdain. When he entered the room, it felt as if hauteur personified had come in, dressed in trousers, coat and shoes" (137).

The two female characters in the narrative – Rekha and the second wife of Debkumar – have been underrepresented. While Rekha is a mute sufferer, the latter is ill tempered, foul mouthed, finicky about her personal hygiene,

unsympathetic, suspicious and extrovert. Apart from indicating Bandyopadhyay's patriarchal treatment of women, Debkumar's wife also realistically represents the transformation of Hindu women by the social beliefs and superstitions of pre-independence middle class society, unlike Doyle's Holmes stories that seldom focus on the domination of women.

The Indian writer uses Bakshi to patronise Biren Sinha, the colonial police officer similar to what he does in "Where There's a Will", "An Encore for Byomkesh" and "Amriter Mrityu". The officer's usage of "disappointing" (Bandyopadhyay, *Byomkesh* 174) suggests his adaptation of the colonial language of English. Bandyopadhyay's satires the imperial police official when his apparent praise for Birenbabu that he does not "have a bloated sense of self-importance that was so typical of the police...[employed under and trained by the imperial forces]...or the desire to show his opponent down in any way" ends in the anti-climactic observation that he has "an immense amount of knowledge about the lower classes of criminals and pickpockets" (*Picture* 143).

The inquisitor and his associate's hybridity and adaptability of the imperialists' language is expressed in the latter's casual usage of "tragedy" (Bandyopadhyay, *Byomkesh* 171) to describe the predicament of Manmotho Rudra and the former's usage of the phrase "vengeance coming home to roost" (*Byomkesh* 180). Bakshi's familiarity with hydrocyanic acid indicates his acquaintance with contemporary European scientific research and technology (Bandyopadhyay,

Picture 144). Debkumar's cultural hybridity is expressed in the way he dresses himself in "buttoned up coat", smokes cigars, and uses a walking stick (146-7). Ironically, he kills his wife for recovering money under the British-initiated system of life insurance that actually aimed at providing monetary aid and security to the Indians (152).

While Sherlock Holmes and Watson depend on constant movement for investigation, Ajit Bandyopadhyay indicates Bakshi's habit of performing psychoanalytically from his house. While moving at College Square, Calcutta, he says,

"Byomkesh had a characteristic reluctance to leave the house without reason. If there wasn't any work to be done, he liked to sit in a corner quietly. In his company I too had become rather inactive physically, and my habit of venturing out by myself had deserted me entirely" (153).

This seems to exemplify what Said defines as the Oriental lethargic inertia (*Orientalism* 38-9). Judged in this context Bakshi appears to be an "arm chair detective" like Poe's Dupin.

Bandyopadhyay's usage of the phrase, "the students in our country are rarely prone to squabbling", might be interpreted as his irony against the contemporary Indian youths for their reluctance to take part in the nationalistic movement (154). The students described at College square exemplify those who, after being taught under the British system of education, became cheaply-hired colonised assistants or

'writers' of the imperial government (154). The "gas lights" serve to evoke an atmosphere of the colonised India.

Debkumar's wish of sending his son "Habul abroad for further studies" symbolises the utopian dream that every colonised individual nurses about the imperial centre (156). On the other hand, the sternness of British law is referred to by Debkumar's surety about his being hanged identifiably without an elaborate trial (156). The narrative ends with Bandyopadhyay's implicit warning to the Western imperial powers against their production of sophisticated weaponry to dominate the natives:

"The day that man discovered the tools to kill another being, he also brought into being a weapon that could boomerang upon him at any time. The sophisticated weaponry that is, in great secrecy, being produced all over the world today, might one day serve to destroy the entire human race. Like the demon who sprang into being from Brahma's imagination, like Frankenstein's monster, it won't even spare its creators." (161).

Written in 1935, "An Encore for Byomkesh" begins with the author's satire against the perceived impartiality of British jurisdiction in pre-independence India when he comments that "high politics did not always go by the penal code" (162). His usage of the phrase "the legal juggernaut had run its full course" also indicates his attitude to the colonial law (162).

The lethal matchbox whose label shows a rebel going to chop wood with axe becomes symbolic of Bandyopadhyay's indirect resistance against the colonial rule. A symbol of Indian nationalistic movement being reduced to the status of a match box label might appear as the author's attempt at trivialising the movement but the very mention of freedom struggle in matchboxes widely used by the common Indians suggests its popularity and omnipresence. The lethal matchstick appears to symbolise the nature of the Indian nationalist movement which, in spite of its apparently insignificant status, had the potency to cause wide damage to the imperialists.

Bakshi's patronising attitude toward the imperial police officer Biren Sinha (165) is comparable with Holmes attitude toward John Ranch and Tobias Gregson in *A Study in Scarlet* and Lestrade in "The Adventure of the Norwood Builder". Through his observation that "the main business of the policemen was to make enemies, Sinha indicates the general hatred of the Indians for the imperial police (165). The arbitrary arrest of "a few...[Indian]...peons and subordinate employees ...on suspicion" demonstrates the discriminatory behaviour of the British colonisers toward their Indian employees. Similarly, his statement, "The Government itself has become concerned...Orders have arrived directly from the Government of India that the matchbox must be recovered, whether or not is the criminal apprehended" is an instance of the author's satire at the perceived omnipotence of the imperialists (Bandyopadhyay, *Byomkesh* 185).

With the failure of the colonial police, the British administrative officials are forced to consult the Indian inquisitor, thus admitting the intellectual superiority of the colonised to the White colonisers. Bakshi's being free to meet the White British police commissioner "whenever...[he]...want[s]...to" suggests his importance to the colonisers (Bandyopadhyay, *Picture* 166).

Bakshi's going into a trance while concentrating on a case is reminiscent of Holmes's. As Ajit Bandyopadhyay reports,

"At such times it became impossible to have a conversation with him. Either my words would fall on deaf ears or he would lose his temper and snap at me irritably. But this particular afternoon when he sat in the living room after lunch and burnt several cigarettes to ashes, I could make out that something was getting in the way of his single-minded deliberation" (170).

The advertisement in *The Daily Kalketu* about the poisonous match sticks is significant because it suggests the advertiser's intention of selling the destructive implement to imperial powers like Britain, Italy and Japan (172). This also presents an ironic scenario where the colonisers have become victims to a colonised individual into whose possession the weapon has passed. Anukul, the villain of "The Inquisitor", dares the British Indian government by publishing the address of Biren

Sinha, and is understandably applauded by Bakshi for his cracking “jokes even at the...[perceptively omnipotent British]...government’s expense” (173-4). The inquisitor’s assertion that “the learned...[fourth century B.C Indian economist and politician]... Chanakya says...the key to successful politics lies in the secrecy of the scheme”, apart from indicating the coloniser’s perpetuation of colonial control through suppression of facts, statements and conclusions, imparts an Indian context to the narrative (175). The authors’ satire against the British administration is further demonstrated during the conversation between Ajit Bandyopadhyay and Anukul impersonating as Byomkesh Bose:

“He remained quiet for a few moments and...said, ‘I work for the government.’

‘A government job?’

‘Yes, but the job doesn’t really involve regular working hours; it is a peculiar kind of job’.

‘Oh – so what do you have to do?’ I knew I was crossing the bounds of decency, but my curiosity urged me on.

Very slowly he replied, ‘In order to maintain law and order in the country, the government needs to conduct some of its activities in private, to gather a lot of information and keep an eye on some of its subjects. My job involves that sort of activity’.

In hushed wonderment I asked, ‘You’re a C.I.D officer?’

He smiled, ‘There can be policing over the police as well’...”(176-7).

The above conversation indicates the colonial administration's practice of not trusting the subaltern irrespective of his social or administrative position and maintaining a strong information network regarding their Indian administrative employees in chains of espionage. Ajit Bandyopadhyay's apprehension when Anukul enquires about Biren Sinha is another exhibition of the existence of this practice (177).

In context of Puntiram's inability to read the number plate of Anukul's taxi, Bakshi laments that he "doesn't know English" what Bakshi does (185). However, in spite of his knowing the imperial language, the inquisitor does not even converse at length in English. Even at the scene of Prafulla Roy's death where the White police commissioner enquires "What's up? Dead?" in English, the inquisitor replies in Bengali (Bandyopadhyay, *Byomkesh* 65). However, English being an important language that would enable the colonised Indians to register their postcolonial protests before international readership, Bakshi and Ajit Bandyopadhyay support Sinha's insistence upon Puntiram's learning English when he says, "Puntiram, you need to learn English. I shall buy you a copy of the first book and Ajit will start teaching you from this very day." (Bandyopadhyay, *Picture* 186). Ironically, Anukul escapes by using the very imperial numerical system to befool Puntiram. Assigned with the duty of reporting the White police commissioner directly, Bakshi finally outwits ^{one} ~~the~~ imperial collaborator like Biren Sinha (187).

Bakshi's reference to criminals like Amir Khan, Kunjalal Sarkar and Anukul (193) is reminiscent of Holmes's periodic remembrance of criminals like Huret in "The Adventure of the Golden Pince Nez" (Doyle, *The Complete* 672), Wilson in "The Adventure of the Black Peter" (619), Carruthers in "The Singular Experience of Mr. John Scott Eccles" (735), Brooks and Woodhouse in "The Adventure of the Bruce-Partington Plans" (755), Baron Dawson in "The Adventure of the Mazarin Stone" (963), and Moriarty, Morgan, Merridew, Matthews and Moran in "The Adventure of the Empty House" (550). Bakshi's criminals are identifiably Indian and their crimes like trafficking of women and stealing do not normally involve usage of violent force. Following the classic-realist pattern of detective fiction, Bakshi psychologically analyses the reason for Anukul's disguising himself as "Kokanad Gupta" in his position as a Bengali like the errant homeopath:

"...The name Kokanad is so unusual that it was obviously an alias – and add to that "Gupta" or "covert". Perhaps you have noticed that whenever someone in this country assumes an alias, they tend to attach a Gupta at the end of the name." (Bandyopadhyay, *Picture* 193).

"Raktomukhi Neela", written in 1936, starts with the description of a dreary summer noon at Calcutta, the former capital of colonised India (Bandyopadhyay, *Byomkesh* 205) just as Doyle begins "The Adventure of the Cardboard Box" begins with that of a warm August noon at London (*The Complete* 287). Bandyopadhyay imparts an Indianness to the narrative by likening items in newspapers to

“puffed-rice” and “rice-grain fry” – two widely-ingested Indian fast food items (*Byomkesh* 205). The Indianisation is further depicted when Bakshi refers to the Bengali litterateur Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyay’s Charitrahin and to the release of the Bengali criminal Ramanath Neogi from Alipur Central Jail particularly used for detaining Indian nationalists (205). Topicality is brought about by Bakshi’s mentioning of gold-trade and of “Jawaharlal Hiralal” and “Dutta Company” – two prominent jewellers of colonial Calcutta (206).

The culturally-hybridised Maharaja Ramendra Singha exhibits an imperial “habit of collecting quality gemstones” and displaying them “in a glass showcase on the first floor of his mansion” (206). The apparent abundance of precious stones in India seems to accord with the Orientalist conception of the East being a land of jewels, gemstones and spices. The ‘raktomukhi neela’ or the scarlet sapphire is a gemstone characteristically found in the Orient to which are juxtaposed the Oriental beliefs and mysticism. Acquainted with the eastern precious stones as he is, Bakshi describes,

“In India, the price of sapphire depends upon its mystic prowess. The stone is a representative of the zodiac Saturn. It has often been heard that sapphire has made a millionaire out of a poor man, and vice versa. For some it is the luckiest stone possible, for others it is the unluckiest. It is not that the same sapphire would be lucky for all those who use it. The same stone that makes someone prosperous may ruin someone else. That

is why its cost does not depend upon its weight. Mostly so for the scarlet sapphire" (206-7).

Having described how an impecunious Marwari businessman recovered his wealth by sporting a sapphire, the inquisitor asserts,

"I am not a superstitious communal Hindu; I do not believe in the unnatural or in the mysterious, post mortem life and the occult. But I do believe in the supernatural prowess of the scarlet sapphire" (206-7).

According to him, the scarlet sapphire exerts a hypnotic prowess on Ramanath Neogi and leads to his arrest (212). On the other hand, the imperial police officer Nirmal's failure to recover the sapphire indicates the failure of colonial collaborators.

Bakshi's method for predicting Ramendra Singha's age and dressing habits after hearing his footsteps (207) is reminiscent of Holmes's deducing that Von Ormstein's carriage is being run by two horses (Doyle, *The Complete* 100), or that he would not immediately have to leave home in a "wild, tempestuous night" because Stanley Hopkins is heard bidding the cab to go (671). Singha's dependence on the British colonisers is exhibited in his using the Rolls-Royce (Bandyopadhyay, *Byomkesh* 207). Built by Rolls-Royce Motor Cars Limited of Manchester between 1904 and 1998 when the British company merged with Germany's B.M.W, the aristocratic sedan became a symbol of British imperialism on Indian streets in the 1930s (Roy 1).

Like Digindra Narayan Roy of "Shimonto Heera", Singha employs a secretary who knows shorthand and typing to help him (207-8).

Significantly, Himangshu Roy and Ramendra Singha, in spite of their acquaintance with the British culture, are sympathetic to the interests and requirements of their Indian subjects. Acting as intermediates between the White administrators and the colonised Indians to prevent their direct interaction, Roy and Singha emerge as symbolic champions of the Indian subaltern. Singha expresses his Bengali identity by using the Bengali term "Falgun" instead of the English equivalent of "March" to denote the time when Haripada Rakshit had joined as his secretary (208). He also satirises the arbitrary functioning of the British Indian judiciary when he says,

"I think he had become a criminal out of abject poverty; he rectified himself as soon as the cause for his being poor was removed. We would come across numerous people belonging to this group if we search through our jails!" (209).

Bakshi's observation, "The prisoners cannot carry money to the cells, but many of them are addicts. It becomes necessary for them to bribe the wardens to procure liquor and narcotics from outside.", also questions the honesty of the British police (213).

The inquisitor ironically describes his relationship with the colonial police who are compelled to consult him. He says, "I have no quarrel with the police; rather they have a special affection for me! Why shall I object?" (209). He also refers to Inspector Bidhu as "buddhubabu", the Bengali equivalent for "the idiotic gentleman" (211). Puma, The other Indian policeman in the narrative, is underrepresented and does not speak a single word. Bidhu's adherence to the British-promulgated codes of duty is depicted in his indignant witnessing of the Bakshi-Neogi encounter (212), and he is progressively demeaned. Just as the hybridised Bakshi uses raincoat, speaks about "matinee show" and eats "omelettes", Neogi wears "an old multi-coloured buttoned leather-made sporting *coat* and a pair of rubber *boots*" (211-2). Adhering to a Eurocentric dress code, Neogi becomes a character "to be laughed at and not usually feared." (212).

"Byomkesh O Baroda" (1936) is the ultimate narrative of the canon to be written before the Indian independence. It starts with Bandyopadhyay's ironic description of the mentality of Indian policemen employed under the British administration:

"Byomkesh had a childhood friend employed as a D.S.P in the Bihar province. He had been transferred to Munger a few days earlier and he began to write letters to my friend at regular intervals. Possibly there was some design lurking behind his invitations; otherwise, that a policeman

would become desperate to re-establish bondage with an old civilian acquaintance becomes hard to imagine!” (215).

The author’s usage of “Bhadra” instead of September to indicate the time of the narrative discreetly expresses his Bengali identity (215). He also refers to the Bengali custom of travelling during the Doorga Pooja vacation usually in late September or early October when he writes,

“During the Pooja days the pleasant weather induces an urge in Bengali commoners to travel to the west; on the other hand, the non-resident Bengalis become desperate to return home” (215).

The fort in which D.S.P Shashanka resides reportedly belonged to Mir Kashim, the British-supported ruler of Bengal’s Murshidabad between 1760 and 1763. Therefore, the Munger-fort becomes a symbol of British domination. Its losing “all the qualities for being identified as a fort” becomes symbolic of destruction of the colonial relics (215).

It is important that Shashanka and Bakshi do not outrightly refute the presence of apparitions, which indicates the author’s realistic depiction of Indian characters (216). To the occult-practitioner Baroda, the detective says,

“I do not exactly believe in the occult and the existence of apparitions; however, I do not disbelieve either.” (220).

While Baroda, who adopts different technique to evoke the supernatural, exemplifies an Indian believer, Baikuntha Karmakar, the murdered jeweller, depicts the Eastern attraction for gemstones like diamonds, pearls and emeralds (216).

Shashanka's hybridity is demonstrated when even after explicitly identifying himself as a colonial employee by referring to the British Indian government as *his* government, he mentions the Bengali date, “12 Baishak” along with the English “26 April” to indicate the day of Karmakar's murder (217).

Through four speeches – one by Shashanka, two by Bakshi and one by Ajit Bandyopadhyay, the Indian author expresses his animosity towards the Indian policemen employed under the White colonisers. First, When Bakshi enquires whether Shashanka had paid enough attention to the clues, he replies, “Look here...we are not asses as you think of us to be!” (218).Second, on hearing about the police officer's observations about Karmakar's addiction, Bakshi says, “No! That's sufficient! Regarding your patience and perseverance we have absolutely no complain. But had you employed a bit of brain with that...well, let's not speak about it!”(218). Third, on being directly questioned by Shashanka whether he has had deduced correctly the name of the murderer of Karmakar, Bakshi says,

“Dear brother, initially I presumed from your demeanour that the Police Department do not need my help. You mock at the ways we investigate in Bengal – your disrespect for fingerprints and torn paper bits knows no bound! That is why I refrained from commenting unless I have had been asked to. Just think what an embarrassing situation it would be for me if you and your forces conceive my observations as parts of an engrossing adventure story and begin to have a hearty laugh at my expense!” (240).

Finally, Ajit Bandyopadhyay thus comments on Shashanka’s character:

“I could immediately perceive the precise mentality of the deputy superintendent of police. He is always prepared to seek the help, but never ready to officially acknowledge the favour or to share the resultant wealth and reputation with the helper.” (219).

Baroda’s companions, Dr. Sachi Roy and Amulya, who participate in his practice of the occult identifiably belong to the Bengali intelligentsia and thus become important subaltern believers. Baroda describes death and post-death life based on the Indian philosophy when he says,

“We believe that when the soul of a human being is suddenly detached from the body, it cannot forget its corporal identity easily. It cannot understand that it is no more contained within the body. Even in cases it

does, the attraction of the human beings for the family forces him to return as an apparition to his workplace...The apparition might have no body, but it certainly has its soul." (220, 223).

During his conversation with the sceptical Achintya, Baroda uses the word "ectoplasm" to describe the 'science of the occult' and participates in a planchette (236). Bandyopadhyay thus convincingly portrays a superstitious subaltern. On the other hand, being "the greatest and the most efficient advocate in the whole district", Tara Shankar helps Indians to escape unlawful detention by the imperial police, and his cultural hybridity is expressed in his wearing loose clothes and white *piran* or half sleeve shirt (224), even as he uses the European phaeton car (234).

The conversation between Bakshi, Ajit Bandyopadhyay and Shashanka when they discover a fingerprint on the wall in Kailash's room (232-3) is reminiscent of the conversation between Holmes, Watson and Lestrade in "The Adventure of the Norwood Builder" over McFarlane's fingerprint deceptively imprinted on the wall by Jonas Oldacre (Doyle, *The Complete* 560). Both Shailen and Oldacre are ultimately captured because of the finger-prints.

Written after a long hiatus of fifteen years in 1952, "Durgo Rahoshyo", the first Byomkesh Bakshi story to be published in independent India, might be read simultaneously as historical narrative as well as detective fiction, thus exemplifying Bandyopadhyay's experiment of mingling other sub-genres with sleuth

stories. Spread over ten pages, the *purvakhanda* or the prologue deals with the history of Bengal between the time of the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb's death in 1707 and the Indian Sepoy Mutiny of 1857 (Bandyopadhyay, *Byomkesh* 282-91). The initial section of the narrative depicts the relationship between the British Indian soldiers, the colonisers, and the Indian landlords like Raja Ram, who were hated equally by the colonisers as well as the insurgent Sepoys (283).

The whole narrative is a combination of detection, history and Gothicism. The main incident occurs in a ruined fort of Janki Ram, an associate of Aliwardi Khan, the *nawab* of Bengal between 1740 and 1756. Battles like the Muslim-Maratha-British wars and the 1757-Battle of Plassey have also been referred to (282). When Bakshi and Ajit Bandyopadhyay visit the fort, the list of important characters comes to include Monilal, the lustful villain and Tulshi, the persecuted lady, and they face apparently supernatural incidents like the seemingly-unexplained deaths of Ram Kishore's family members and acquaintances, the presence of gypsies with their knowledge of the occult, and the manoeuvres of the suspicious aesthete. These features impart "Durgo Rahoshyo" with a Gothic setting.

Written after the Indian independence, the story depicts a Bengali society being moulded by the British colonisers through imperially-compatible education for producing collaborating Indian clerks. While Ram Kishore's family members are taught under the British system of education, Ram Kishore comes to employ a *nayeb* or secretary-accountant following the European system (284). Bandyopadhyay

also refers to the matriculation examinations and colleges following British educational systems (285).

Employed at a college in colonial India, Professor Majumdar exhibits his hybridity by constantly referring to two seminal Oriental works – Shibnath Shastri-edited Chanakya's Arthashastra and the English version of Shayar-e-Mutaksharin, and being well-versed in Bengali, English and Farsi (308). He also exhibits an obsessive desire for possessing treasures about which he thus writes in his dairy:

“It is strange that I could not find any secret chamber in the fort! Where did they store their jewels? Of course, there must be an ante-chamber! But where? Had the soldiers come to know of it, the secret chamber would have lost its secrecy – the broken door would have become obtrusive. That is why I may deduce: they could not find out the place I have been searching for.” (308).

The atmosphere in which Ram Kishore and his family members live seems to vindicate the Orientalist perception of the East being a land of “mystery...monsters, devils, heroes, terror, pleasures, desires...[snakes and snake charmers]...and “mystics” (Said, *Orientalism* 52, 63, 268-9). The snake charmers, the *bede-s* or gypsies possessing the aphrodisiac *shilajit*, the deer-musk *kasturi*, poisonous snakes, venom, and flavoured soap (Bandyopadhyay, *Byomkesh* 287, 289), and the mysterious aesthete add to the strangeness to the place. Haripriya and Tulshi, like Julia

and Helen Stoner of “The Adventure of the Speckled Band”, become targets of poisonous snakes released by errant human beings. In both the stories, the sisters are attended by unsympathetic fathers – Ram Kishore and Roylott – and the elder sisters Haripriya and Julia falls prey to snakebite. However, whereas Grimesby Roylott possesses a poisonous swamp-adder, Monilal’s snake used to terrorise Bakshi and Ajit Bandyopadhyay is non-poisonous (314). Both Roylott and Monilal are ultimately killed by their own device for annihilation. While the former dies after being bitten by the adder, Monilal commits suicide by injecting himself with poison with the Parker pen (336).

Tulshi, whom D.S.P Purandar Pandey describes as “not foolish, not pretentious, not even precocious, and yet mysterious” (295), appears to conform to Orientalist notion about the subtlety and mystery of the Easterners (Said, *Orientalism* 38-9). On the other hand, the unused canon at the entrance to the fort is a postcolonial symbol and indicates a weapon used by the Indians in their struggle against the British imperialists. Bandyopadhyay writes,

“The canon lying at the entrance of the fort, a ruined representative of the past, evoked pity in our hearts. It seemed that the gun was a great fighter in his youth; now old and infirm, it was counting days for its death!”
(*Byomkesh* 297).

The story having been written five years after Indian independence, the weapon has become a relic of the past, but it is conspicuous in its very presence. The *mohor* or gold

coin found on the corpse of Majumdar “belongs to the age of Aliwardi Khan” (294, 306). Being a part of the pre-British Indian history, it also becomes a postcolonial symbol that sanctions the Indian struggle for recovering its heritage. Bandyopadhyay further asserts his Oriental lineage by minutely describing Munshi Ataullah, dressed in “tight Indian version of ulster and pajamas”, with the eye-lid dye *shurma*, coloured beard, and betel leaf in mouth” (306), realistically as an Indian Muslim. He expresses his and his inquisitor’s hybridity by identifying the day on which Monilal attacks Bakshi as “shukla dwitiya” according to the Bengali astronomical chart, and following it with the Eurocentric furnishing of Bakshi and Ajit Bandyopadhyay’s room inside the fort. Ajit Bandyopadhyay reports,

“We found that we were to lodge in the same room whose entrance was heavily nailed. Furniture like two iron cots, table, chairs, and so on, had successfully covered the bleakness of the decolourised walls. Meanwhile Sitaram had lit the lantern, made our beds, started cooking on *ichmic* cooker and had begun boiling water to prepare tea...” (311-2).

The iron cots, the lantern, the pressure cooker and the stove are Western implements.

Bakshi’s recitation of “Balaka”, a Bengali poem written by Rabindranath Tagore, and Ajit Bandyopadhyay’s memorising parts from the patriotic Bengali poem “Palashir Yuddhya” or the Battle of Plassey also signify Bandyopadhyay’s

attempt at projecting a Bengali inquisitor and his associate against Doyle's Eurocentric Sherlock Holmes and Watson (324-5).

"Chiriakhana" (1953), made into a 125-minute feature film in 1967 by Satyajit Ray (1921-1992), begins with a reference to the game of chess in the eight line of the first chapter (344). *Shatranj* or the game of chess originated in Middle Eastern Asia and is a very popular game among the Arabs and north Indians. The symbol of chess in literature like T.S.Eliot's "The Waste Land" signifies a situation demanding deft planning and shrewdness, apart from intellectual confrontation. Bakshi's characteristic excellence at the game presents him as an intellectual Oriental potent enough to counter the European hegemony in the realm of detection (344). Ajit Bandyopadhyay recalls,

"I knew the game well and I had tutored Byomkesh in that. Initially he used to lose each and every game very easily; but soon he began to resist. And at last the day came when he defeated me in a big game" (344).

Having had first learned the paraphernalia of the game, Bakshi challenges the perceptive excellence of his tutor and defeats him. Similarly, having had been taught in the imperial tongue and culture, the enlightened Indians brought about the Bengal Renaissance against the British colonialists in the first half of the nineteenth century⁶. The game is also played by Nepal Gupta, who plans to head the Golap Colony and deconstruct the locus of power

from Nishanath Sen (397). The pervasive hot tropical weather in the initial chapter of the story also contributes to its Oriental locale and identity (344).

Nishanath Sen, who has an identity card printed in his name: “Nishanath Sen, Golap Colony, Mohunpur, 24 Parganas, B.A.R ... Telegram: GOLAP, Phone number: -”, exhibits cultural hybridity in his dress and profession. Ajit Bandyopadhyay writes,

“A middle-aged gentleman was standing outside. He was moderately built, clean shaved, sharp faced, with a pince-nez. He was clad in white trousers and sleeveless silk kameez. He wore no socks, but a pair of knotted, leather Grishan sandals” (344).

When he takes Bakshi and his associate around the Golap Colony, he wears a European-style hat and a pair of dark goggles (358), and Bonolakshmi is shown weaving a silk gown for him (399). It is also important that he was a session judge at “the Department of Justice at Bombay” in pre-independence India (345). He has perceptively collaborated with the colonial administrators by judging and sentencing the nationalist Maharastrians who first promulgated militant nationalism (Pahari 253). Understandably, he is demeaned by his having the condemned convict Lal Singh’s wife Damayanti as his concubine (411).

The gradual destruction of Indian languages like Bengali under the influence of the imperial tongue is reflected when Sen questions Ajit Bandyopadhyay the Bengali equivalent of “blackmail” in English. The latter writes,

“I was caught unawares. I have been dealing with the Bengali language for a long time – and it is not unknown to me that the language and its speakers have failed to cope with the culture as well as the language of the sophisticated modern Occidental society. In most of the cases, we are forced to express ourselves through foreign tongue and English words!” (346).

Having been taught under the British system of education, Bakshi and Sen intersperse their conversations with English phrases like “plastic surgery”, “municipal market”, “sparkling plug”, “compound”, “rash driving” and “motor mechanic” (347-8). The detective and his associate’s are also well-acquainted with Eurocentric culture and the Freudian psychoanalysis. Analysing Sen’s demeanour, Bakshi says,

“Let’s consider the type of dress he was wearing the type of dress he was wearing – no ordinary Bengali goes around in such a garb, nor do they produce visiting cards to introduce themselves. Beside these, he delivers his words slowly – in a style that is characteristic of those associated with the judiciary.” (349).

Reflecting on Sen's psychosis of blackmail during the same conversation, Ajit Bandyopadhyay says,

"I believe that is the work of his *subconscious* (*italics mine*) mind. Possibly Lal Singh has been released...probably he is trying to make him scared by sending him spare motor parts!" (349).

Their acquaintance with the European psychoanalysis is more vividly demonstrated at the conclusion of the story. Contrary to Holmes's reliance on empirical proofs, Bakshi bases his investigation on psychoanalytical interpretation of his and Ajit Bandyopadhyay's dreams about Bonolakshmi. After Bhujangadhar Das and Nita's deaths, he explains,

"Ajit, can you remember the instance when you dreamt of Bonolakshmi for the second time? I had seen Satyabati in my dream too. Our dreams were similar in symbolic significance. It is the gist of psychoanalysis. Though our corporeal eyes had failed to detect the fact that Bonolakshmi was wearing false teeth, our subconscious mind has had hit the bull's eye!" (428).

The second chapter bears autobiographical references to Bandyopadhyay's acquaintance with cinema between 1938 and 1952 with Bombay Talkies and other Hindi film corporations. Ajit Bandyopadhyay reports:

“In the evening, Byomkesh asked, ‘A number of famous Bengali litterateurs have associated themselves with the cinema. Do you know any one of them?’

Fate has limited my acquaintance with the world of literature. Those who have already established themselves do not give me any importance because I write detective fiction; and I have no affinity for those who, after gaining recognition, have had effaced their personal identity and entered the world of cinema...” (350).

Through such statements, Bandyopadhyay successfully maintains his literary impersonality and insularity.

Sen’s farmhouse, Golap Colony, identifiably possesses a manor-house structure. Significantly described as a ‘colony’, the area is:

“spread over fifteen to twenty *bigha*-s, and...enclosed by barbed wire with cactus plants doubling the fences. Inside there...[is]...a huge garden, with small tiled-houses scattered all over. The colony...[appears to be]...an oasis amidst the bleak, dreary sun-burnt surroundings.” (356).

The isolated Colony symbolises an empire headed by Nishanath Sen, formerly a representative of the British judiciary in India. When compared to T.F.Tout’s sketches of the early British manor houses (*A History* 48, 77), Bandyopadhyay’s depiction of the

colony through a map demonstrates its feudal structure (*Byomkesh* 359). Sen, the symbolic feudal lord, occupies the central position of the estate, while his tenants, secretaries and employees like Bijoy, Bhujangadhar Das, Brojodas, Rashik, Muskil Miah, Panu, Mukul, Nepal Gupta, reside at the periphery. The Colony is self-sufficient with its own source of water, gardens, pastures, stable, horse-drawn carts, dispensaries and large kitchens. The difference of occupations of the inhabitants symbolises the professions those residing in feudal England. Bhujangadhar Das is a physician, Rashik is an accountant, Muskil Miah is a chauffer, Bijoy is a merchant, Panu is a shepherd and milkman, Mukul is a cook, Professor Nepal Gupta is a teacher, and Baishnab Brojodas is a religious preacher. These characters might also be grouped on the pattern of feudal estates. Nishanath Sen, being the owner, belongs to the First Estate; Professor Nepal Gupta, Bhujangadhar Das, Rashik and Baishnab Brojodas are either scholars or religious preacher and belong to the Second Estate, while Muskil Miah, Panu and Mukul, the agrarian working class, to the Third. Moreover, being actively engaged in trade and commerce, the Colony assumes a feudal identity. The materials for its trade – flowers, fruits and vegetables – underline the agrarian quality of the Colony's economy, similar to that of feudal England. Ajit Bandyopadhyay reports,

“Inside Muskil's carriage there were three to four seats for passengers, but most of the empty spaces were occupied by a number of empty baskets. It could be assumed that every morning a supply of flowers, fruits and vegetables would be ferried to the station from the Golap Colony and would be sent to Calcutta to be sold. On the other hand, hampers sent on

the previous day would return emptied, by the same train, and would be sent back for the next day.” (354).

Importantly, Bandyopadhyay simultaneously underscores four characteristic features of the Golap Colony that, through their hybridity, maintain the farmhouse’s insularity from the British feudal society. First of all, contrary to what was practised in feudal Britain, the locus of power in Golap Colony has been decentralised from Sen the patriarch to his wife Damayanti Sen. Bakshi notes, “She has at her disposal all the financial reservoirs of the Colony and maintains the account.” (376). Her education under the British system of education at Calcutta’s Saint Martha Girls’ School and her acquaintance with European etiquettes and societal norms sanctions her power to rule (364). Second, in spite of her education and Eurocentric etiquettes, Damayanti Sen symbolises what Ajit Bandyopadhyay describes as “the perfect...[Bengali]...housewife” (368). Third, although the Colony possesses a European feudal manor-house structure, not single inhabitant is a non-Bengali or foreigner. Sen’s house might contain such European furniture and implements as the roll-top table, the bookcase (358), the electric fan, and the telephone, but the Colony’s food, comprising of “rice mixed with *ghee*, pulses, prawn-cutlets, curry made out of jackfruit, *chutney*, *payesh*, and *chhanar burfi*”, is identifiably Indian (368). Finally, in spite of his former profession and preference for Eurocentric dresses, Sen retains nationalistic sentiments. Answering to Bakshi’s query about his characteristic cynicism, he replies,

“Don’t you think that the present culture is based on losing respect? Those people who have lost their own self respect can never respect others!” (357).

Bandyopadhyay thus indicts those Indians who have allowed themselves to be subsumed in the colonial Eurocentric culture.

The predicament of women in the patriarchal Indian society is also realistically depicted when Muskil Miah says of his former wife,

“She did not die. She was not bad at all; only infertile! When I brought along with me my new wife, the master instructed me either to keep one wife or leave the Colony. I had, therefore, no choice but to divorce my first lady through the *talaque*” (373).

Miah’s anti-feminism is further vindicated when he replies to Bakshi’s query regarding the liaisons between the inhabitants of the Colony,

“Whom shall I count out, my master? The women are inherently evil. God has created them only for the destruction of males!” (390).

Similarly, Ajit Bandyopadhyay's prejudice against women is revealed when he observes, "It is the general nature of women to spy on others!" (383).

The former professor of Chemistry, Nepal Gupta, is described by the author in various states of undress (362, 383). He thus appears to conform to the Orientalist conception of the Easterners as "half-naked Indians" (Said, *Orientalism* 90). In spite of his former association with British education, he shows an aversion toward Western dresses and incorporates within himself the characteristic features of an *intelligent native*.

The police inspector, Promod Barat, another former colonial employee, has been portrayed as in opposition to the imperialists. He is dark, corpulent, and with sharp facial features (Bandyopadhyay, *Byomkesh* 385). In spite of his colonial career, he exudes "a child-like innocence", and more importantly, "although he...[is]...a policeman, he admires Byomkesh" (385). Barat and Purandar Pandey are the only police officers in the Byomkesh Bakshi narratives who get a sympathetic portrayal by the author, most probably because they are uncritical admirers of the Bengali detective.

The nineteenth chapter of the narrative contains a detailed portrayal of colonised Calcutta. While following Bhujangadhar Das, Bakshi dresses himself as a *firingi* or British gentleman. Ajit Bandyopadhyay describes,

“After five minutes a middle-aged *firingi* emerged from Byomkesh’s room. He wore a dirty pair of jeans and a faded coat. An oil-smeared nightcap was carelessly struck on his head and a half-smoked cigar dangled from his lips under a pair of ill-shaped moustache.

I asked, ‘Hello! Where are you going out in such a guise?’

The Englishman angrily retorted [in English], ‘None of your business, young man!’ ” (406)

The author’s satire against the British colonisers is further demonstrated in the following conversation. Ajit Bandyopadhyay says,

“‘It is a great quality of coat-and-trousers: wear it and you will become tempestuous!’

Byomkesh replied, ‘They have another advantage too. They conceal you well-enough without elaborate makeup!’ ” (406).

Though the inquisitor’s statement, Bandyopadhyay indicts the British administrators for having concealed their brutal imperialistic interests under the garb of etiquette and dress codes. The presence of the imperialists even in early post-independence India is indicated by the existence of European and Anglo-Indian suburbs in Calcutta (406). Bakshi’s observation, “The best quality of the European dress is that you can adapt yourself to every society” might be interpreted as the author’s irony against the British hypocrisy of adapting themselves to every Indian province to win the local trust (406).

As narrated by Bakshi, Bhujangadhar Das's history demonstrates the typical subaltern dream for settling down in the affluent imperial centre whose opulence, ironically, has been secured from the colonies (429). It is to gratify his desire for the Occidental affluence that Das visits England, referred to as *Bilet* in Bengali, and marries a British danseuse, Nita, who later disguises herself as "Nityakali" and "Sunayana" (426). The union between a White British and a coloured Indian is indicted by Bandyopadhyay as source for producing evil, and Das and Nita have been depicted as "true criminals" (429).

Written in 1955, "Aadim Ripu" deals with a crime committed in India on the verge of attaining its independence from the colonial rule. Bandyopadhyay paints a country ravaged by the Hindu-Muslim riots engineered by the British imperialists to divide the colony on communal lines. Chandra, et al., note,

"The root of this increased communal tension...[after 1939]...was the reactions between British imperial policy and Indian communalism and regionalism. The British policy ...[led]...Hindu[s] as well as Muslim[s]...dance to the rhythms of 'Divide and Rule' (*Freedom* 207).

Mohammad Ali Jinnah (1876-1948), the president of the Muslim League and the first governor general of the Dominion of Pakistan, 1947, has been portrayed as an imperial collaborator. Hazra and Bhattacharyya write:

“Refusing to concede to the terms of the Cabinet Mission, Mohammad Ali Jinnah, the leader of Muslim League, demanded a separate state for the followers of Islam, and issued an appeal to the Indian Muslims to observe 16 August 1946, as the day for Pakistan’s independence...But his efforts were counterproductive. Hindus and Muslims all over India engaged themselves in communal clashes and massacres” (*Adhunik* 218).

The first chapter of “Aadim Ripu” vividly describes the Calcutta Riots:

“The first round of carnage had ended – but the general atmosphere was tense, and skirmishes were not uncommon...Occasionally bullets would fly at borders – there would be commotion, the shops would down their shutters, and a number of corpses would thereafter be found strewn all over the roads. The police forces of Surawardi would come to discipline the Hindus, and add a few more to the growing number of dead bodies.”(Bandyopadhyay, *Byomkesh* 433).

Bandyopadhyay’s Calcutta is an expose of the ravages wrecked in the Empire by the British imperialists that had reduced the colonised individuals to beasts. When Nripen Dutta goes to the police station to report the death of Anadi Halder, the attendant-constable retorts,

“Get lost! It is nothing but a dead Hindu – why are you raising so much a din? Throw the corpse on the road!” (450).

The anarchy and social debilitations are further described in the fourteenth chapter (488-9) in a similar vein.

In the narrative, Bandyopadhyay paints India as full of “tigers and snakes” and with severe climactic conditions, thus appearing to attest the Orientalist view of the East being a land of snakes, wild animals, treasures and mystery and extremes (433). His irony, “We had enslaved life and death after the great famine of 1950” actually underscores the resilient power of the Easterners (433).

The atmosphere of anarchy and lawlessness prevalent in India during the final freedom struggle is depicted through the character of Bantul Sardar, who also symbolises the mutual distrust between the contemporary Hindus and Muslims (432). Sardar sports a vermilion mark on his forehead to identify himself as a Hindu whose principal job is to “protect the...[Hindu]...gentlemen of the locality from the...[Muslim]...goons” (433). Significantly, he is also well-informed about the politics of the Second World War Allies and Axis powers, the congregations of major imperialists (434). It is also in this narrative that Bakshi, contrary to Holmes, underscores his Bengali middle-class identity by informing that his father was a schoolteacher for mathematics and his mother was a Vaishnavite housewife (434).

In context of the hostile atmosphere as depicted in “Aadim Ripu”, the attitudes first of Nemai and Netaji Halder and then of Anadi Halder toward Bakshi and Ajit Bandyopadhyay during their visit, display the colonised individuals’ lack of faith in one another (441, 444). In an atmosphere of lingual and cultural ambiguity brought about by the mingling of the coloniser and the colonised, Nanibala Roy is openly hostile to Anadi Halder’s secretary Nripen Dutta because of his compatibility in the imperial tongue unlike her son Probhat Halder (445). On the other hand, by describing Anadi Halder’s addiction to foreign aphrodisiacs, the author indicts the Westerners for corrupting the Orientals with their own science and technology (456).

Bakshi’s psychological approach to crime detection is once again demonstrates when, in his capacity as a colonised Indian like Probhat Halder, he identifies his love for Shiuly Majumdar as the motive for Anadi Halder’s murder (469). Similarly, Anadi Halder employs a Gurkha to guard Probhat Halder’s bookshop primarily because he is a south Asian native like himself (437). It is, however, significant that the Gurkhas have formed an important part of the British colonial army since the Indian Sepoy Mutiny the British forces, and in their being trusted equally by the imperialists and the colonised, they exhibit a lack of culture or one of high permeability.

Bikash Dutta’s losing of the job of police informer signifies the arbitrary treatment of the colonised natives by the White colonisers, like Jonathan Small’s attitude toward Tonga. Dutta explains to Bakshi,

“No, sir, it was not a crime. Had it been I would have been hung! Because I have not committed one, I have lost my job!” (483).

Contrary to Watson who attributes his occasional inertia to the Jezail bullet lodged inside one of his limbs in “The Adventure of the Noble Bachelor” (Doyle, *The Complete* 223), Ajit Bandyopadhyay consciously eschews excitement and is inclined to “work only when the mind is calm” (Bandyopadhyay, *Byomkesh* 487). Thus he seems to indicate the Oriental laziness caused by tropical weather (Said, *Orientalism* 38-9).

“Aadim Ripu” is Bandyopadhyay’s first narrative to explicitly deal with the Indian freedom struggle, with main action ending on the morning of 15 August 1947, when India formally became independent. The role of imperial policemen has been minimised and officials of colonial administration are totally absent. By releasing Probhat Halder even after his homicide because on the morning of independence, he is “a new Indian of a new India...[who is]...free within and without”, Bakshi registers his protest against the erratic and anti-Indian British law and administration (Bandyopadhyay, *Byomkesh* 510). The protest is further demonstrated in his burning imperial currency notes while chanting a Sanskrit *shloka* or hymn as “a tribute to...[India]...on...the...holy day of Indian independence” (508).

Fazlu Rahaman, Ajit Bandyopadhyay's friend who invites him to bludgeon him to death, portrays the vein of communal harmony running among the general Indians that is ultimately annihilated by the imperially-engineered communalism and riots (489). Ajit Bandyopadhyay recalls,

"We sat down and I introduced Byomkesh to Fazlu. The latter was working as an advocate at Patna High Court, and was a blind supporter of Pakistan and its principles. We were soon engaged in a fierce verbal duel, and paid no attention to the sentiments of the other" (489).

He follows it with a poignant description of the resurgence of riots:

"The violence started once again. First at Noakhali, and thereafter at Bihar...Fazlu was killed in this carnage. He was honest and courageous, and never flinched to raise his voice for his faith. That was probably the reason why he was annihilated. After the situation had calmed down, we went on a search for Isaac Sahib at Patna. He too had been killed. Only his guttered shop stood as a mute witness!" (489).

Shiuly Majumdar's decision to record at a British-owned gramophone company exhibits the imperial commercialisation of Indian fine arts, music and drama and how the Indian businessmen registered their anti-colonial protest against it. Poddar writes:

“An initial market survey...[by the British businessmen]...revealed that India could be a large market provided voices of popular local artists are recorded and released. A recording expedition to India was thus planned to take local recordings...The Gramophone Company had tested almost instant success after undertaking the first recording expedition (in 1902)...The success of the Gramophone Company began to lure other players...like Nicole, Beka, Pathe...[and]...Odeon. The Swadeshi movement seemed to have its effect on the music industry as well. Although there is no clear evidence as to whether there was a mass and open rejection of foreign made records or record players, the situation nevertheless was utilised by a handful of Indian traders who had entered into the record business. They claimed to be the makers of indigenous or have made records...The advertisements that [Hemendra Mohon] Bose gave in the newspapers to market his photograph were just the kind to stir Swadeshi emotion. The caption “Don’t send your money beyond the seas, be a true Swadeshi seas, be a true Swadeshi by using genuine Swadeshi records” was a direct appeal to the people to reject foreign records sold by European companies...” (*Mary Had* 151-3).

Bakshi, as a patriotic Indian, is subsumed into the Indian national movement when “Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel...[expresses]...a desire to meet” him (490). His “emaciated frame” on his return from Delhi on 10 August 1947

(491) also indicates his active involvement in the freedom struggle under the Indian leader who had supervised the struggle for *Purna Swaraj* or complete independence from 1 August 1920 onwards (Bhattacharyya and Hazra 207). On the other hand, Ajit Bandyopadhyay's nationalism is displayed in his statement,

“The country...[is]...yet to become fully independent and...the separatists...[have]...sprung into action. It...[has]...therefore become necessary to identify and segregate the friends and the enemies of the nation.” (490).

On the morning of 14 August 1947 he judges the extent of his own contribution to Indian nationalist struggle and freedom. He describes,

•
“After I woke up, I fell into deep contemplation: how much (or how little) did I own to the whole history of the struggle for Indian independence? I have had never even waved a flag. On the other hand, Byomkesh had gone to Delhi and worked for seven months. There were thousands of people like me who had not contributed a bit to the struggle, but were ready to enjoy the freedom. One takes the responsibility, and ten reap the benefit. If that is the way of the world, where is the connection between the deed and its result?” (495).

The sixteenth chapter provides a step-by-step description of the final night before the Indian independence from the viewpoint of an Indian residing in the former imperial capital of Calcutta:

“As the dusk approached, the metropolis was decorated with thousands of lamps, and it presented a scene of an early Deepavali. At houses or at shops, one could hear the blare of radio sets. Everyone was waiting for the news from Delhi – the coveted announcement of the Indian independence.” (497).

Prior to Bakshi and Ajit Bandyopadhyay’s capture of Probhat Halder, they “hear the conch-shells being blown loudly at every house” (498). The climax involving Halder’s capture symbolically ends with the moment India formally becomes an independent nation:

“All of a sudden a loud din struck our ears: the first sound the transistor sets make at dawn. Startled we looked out of windows. The sun was rising!” (508).

Saradindu Bandyopadhyay gives an Oriental identity to the whole narrative in his treatment of the theme of “aadim ripu” or human concupiscence that has been traditionally identified in the Indian philosophy as the most primitive instinct in human beings that causes their destruction. Anadi Halder’s

concupiscence for Shiuly Majumdar ultimately brings about his murder at the hands of Probhat Halder who loves her.

Written in 1956, “Bonhi Patango” deals with the theme of adultery that is considered a taboo in Indian society. The title of the narrative refers to a certain group of winged insects that stalk north-eastern India in the months of September and October and burn themselves to death in the open fires of candles and lamps. By “patango” or insect Bandyopadhyay indicates the police inspector Ratikanta Choudhury, whose lust for Shakuntala Singh, the fiery wife of Deep Narayan Singh, causes his and his paramour’s deaths.

The first chapter of the narrative, referred to previously in “Aadim Ripu” (488), opens with the description of an informal party at Purandar Pandey’s house where the invited guests served with Indian food items like “tea, *ghugni*, *laddu* and tobacco from Gaya” (511). That Bakshi, Ajit Bandyopadhyay and Pandey smoke the Indian *gargara* or *hookah* rather than pipes, cigars or cigarettes also adds a conspicuous Indianness to the story (511). On the other hand, Bandyopadhyay indicts the former colonial administrators for the spurt in subversive activities in early post-independence India. Pandey reports,

“The number of criminals has increased manifold since the World War, and so have the responsibilities of police. Crimes that were even unthinkable a few years before, had come to be committed almost

everyday. The foreign colonisers had taught the Indians varieties of crime. They had introduced and popularised a number of drugs, narcotics and poisons.” (511).

The above scenario could be compared to Watson’s observations on the effect of opium upon human beings in “The Man with the Twisted Lips” (Doyle, *The Complete* 167).

Bakshi’s instantaneous identification of the poison found in an apprehended criminal’s possession as “curary” indicates his encyclopaedic knowledge similar to that of Holmes’s. However, by making Ratikanta Choudhury whose “ancestors were powerful landlords of Pratapgarh” (513) and who, being “fair, with sharp facial features and blue eyes”, resemble “more a European than an Indian” (512) a criminal, the writer symbolically links criminality to the West. He thus opposes the Sherlock Holmes canon where Orient and debilitations are synonymous.

Deep Narayan Singh exemplifies the opulence of Indian landlords, formerly protected by the imperialists, even in post-independence India (513). He exhibits his preference for the Occident by furnishing his house “according to the European standards” (514), and by employing chefs and servers from a European-owned hotel of Calcutta for his parties (528). However, in spite of dressing himself in a European long coat, Singh asserts his cultural hybridity by supporting the *purdah* or veil system for Indian women (514). His patriarchal ideology is supported by Pandey, who explains to Bakshi that:

“Women do not become defaulters if they discontinue following the *purdah*. But it is hard to get over a long-induced norm. Because the average male of Bihar has not yet been able to adjust himself to the absence of the veil, a little demonstration of women’s liberation makes them press the alarm bell!” (514).

Unlike Doyle who seldom focuses on the social debilitations of Britain in his Sherlock Holmes narratives, Bandyopadhyay frequently portrays different social evils like the *purdah* system to make his Byomkesh Bakshi stories appear realistic. Thus he also depicts the problem of provincialism in early post-independence India through his characterisation of Dr. Jagannath Prasad. The physician from Bihar, who is “dressed according to the latest European standards, and...[carries]...a satiric smile on his lips”, demeans the Bengali physicians like Dr. Palit by indicting them for ‘worthlessness’ (515).

Both Deep Narayan Singh’s nephew Deb Narayan and Shakuntala Singh exhibits cultural hybridity. Though the former is dressed in a European “blazing shark-skin coat”, he exhibits his Indianness in chewing betel leaves (516). On the other hand, Shakuntala Singh, who is “excellent at fine arts...singing and dancing... and a first-class first graduate from Allahabad University”, plays the role of a housewife in spite of her colonial education (513). In his description, Ajit Bandyopadhyay identifies her as a beautiful woman native to tropical India:

“She was too beautiful! Though she was above twenty four to twenty five years of age, she had retained her sexuality, and was extremely provocative. Such golden-hued women might be found in one or twos in the northwest, but are extremely rare...[in the provinces around Bihar]...Her name became her! She was the same Shakuntala, the daughter of a heavenly danseuse, who had enthralled King Dushyanta!” (517).

Bandyopadhyay gives his narrative an Indian identity by describing Shakuntala Singh in context of the Sanskrit legend of love between the omnipotent Indian king Dushyanta and Shakuntala, the daughter of a divine danseuse who had been brought up by a saint. His portrayal of Shakuntala Singh’s companion Chandni, who is “fair, plump and slow...[and]...bedecked with expensive clothes and jewellery” also necessarily identifies her as an Indian woman (517). Even the Anglo-Indian Lambert, “an elderly...lady with conspicuously European features like white complexion and blue eyeballs” has been shown as preferring betel leaves, thus exemplifying her hybridity (543).

It is important that even in post-independence India, the characteristic police hostility toward private investigators has been retained. When introduced to Bakshi, Ratikanta Choudhury does not show any enthusiasm. Ajit Bandyopadhyay observes, “It became immediately clear that Ratikanta was not happy at being introduced to Byomkesh” (522).

Shakuntala Singh's bedroom, consisting of an Egyptian wall-mat, a number of Indian musical instruments including a *tanpura*, a framed oil painting and a thick rich velvety carpet is identifiably decorated in the Oriental style, interspersed occasionally with European inventions like the organ and the neon light (535). Shakuntala Singh's oil painting is a major Oriental symbol (535). It not only depicts the mythological theme of Dushyanta staring at Shakuntala when she fills her pitcher from river but also underscores the Aryan tradition of gaining education and salvation at the *tapavana* or forest. However, by stating that the painting's theme is "not new", Bandyopadhyay asserts his acquaintance with the Sanskrit mythology and exhorts his readers to be similarly knowledgeable.

Having had been subsumed like Holmes's women into a conservative society, Shakuntala Singh expresses her lust for Choudhury by painting the eyeballs of Dushyanta in blue like her paramour's while simultaneously making his physique very different (558). Thus she displays rare psychological intricacies that are traditionally identified with the Oriental mind by the Orientalists. Unlike the European women in Doyle's stories, she does not vociferously declare or exhibit her love. Significantly, Bakshi perceives her criminality in his capacity as an Indian and describes her extra-marital liaison with Choudhury by quoting from Geetgobindo by the twelfth century Bengali poet Jaydeb (538). The encounter between Bakshi, Pandey and Choudhury also symbolically takes place in a tropical Indian mango-grove. Contrary to the chase sequences generally depicted in the Sherlock Holmes narratives, the climax is

that ends with Choudhury in supplication and Pandey standing, eschews vigorous movement (555). While Jim Browner of “The Adventure of the Cardboard Box” is compelled to kill his wife in a heat of passion as she cries over the corpse of her paramour Fairbairn (Doyle, *The Complete* 298), Choudhury kills his illicit beloved through a series of premeditated moves in order to save himself, thus testifying to the Indian attitude toward extramarital affairs (Bandyopadhyay, *Byomkesh* 555).

In the first chapter of “Rakter Daag”, written in 1956, Saradindu Bandyopadhyay projects the superiority of traditional Bengali poetry to those composed under the influence of the imperial tongue and culture. Ajit Bandyopadhyay recalls,

“With few cases at hand, Byomkesh had begun reading old Bengali poetry. Starting with Bharat Chandra, he was advancing genre-wise. I was afraid that he would drift into the realms of the ultra-modern poets too, and that he might take to composing poems himself! The rhyme and metre of poetry having been abolished in modern poetry, writing a poem was no longer difficult. But I would prefer not to dream of Byomkesh the Inquisitor’s becoming a poet!” (560).

Bandyopadhyay’s characterisation of Satyakam Das, who carries a gold cigarette case, and dresses in a transparent synthetic punjabee and deer-skin shoes, testifies to his satire against the Bengali nouveau riches that had gained

affluence by collaborating with the imperialists (561). Thus Das's appearance is deceptive and he leads a bohemian life. He has been consuming alcohol "since the age of fourteen" and flirts with different girls "even from respectable families" (562). His shop *Suchitra Emporium* has identifiably gained recognition in colonised India, stores foreign goods like "foreign-made quilts" and "beaver-skin coats", and retains its colonial identity with its "glass showcases and mosaic floor" and by catering to "aristocratic ladies" (564).

Byomkesh Bakshi's rendezvous with Ushapati Das, Satyakam Das's *father* highlights the basic difference between the societal acceptability of Doyle's detective and Bandyopadhyay's inquisitor (568-9). Representing an imperial power and working in the British society concerned about maintaining its etiquette, Holmes is never out rightly insulted other than by Grimesby Roylott of "The Adventure of the Speckled Band". In contrast, Ushapati Das not only tries to prevent the Indian inquisitor from commencing his investigations but also demeans him by impolitely enquiring about his "fees" (569). Suchitra Das also asks Bakshi and Ajit Bandyopadhyay to leave (573).

Bandyopadhyay satirises the contemporary detective fiction when Ajit Bandyopadhyay, reminiscing on Satyakam Das's murder, says,

“Different thoughts came crowding in my mind. Has the murderer of Satyakam left marks of his identity through the shiny circular object? The ace of clubs! It seemed to be as improbable as the Bengali potboilers and detective fiction of these days!” (573).

It deserves mention that The Ace of Clubs was a popular crime story by Panchkari Dey.

Sitangshu Dutta’s confession of killing “two to three Muslims with chopper” during the Hindu-Muslim communal riots (578) and the “turbulence in Kashmir” about which Ajit Bandyopadhyay hears at Howrah Railway Station (583) re-invoke the issue of communalism orchestrated in late pre-independence India by the British imperialists. Bakshi’s assertion that “Ushapati Das was a terrorist in his early wife, and knew well how to fire a revolver” identifies him as a militant Bengali nationalist (586). His patriotism and honesty leads him to murder his *son* for his nefarious activities, and Bandyopadhyay’s sympathetic treatment of the former freedom fighter ennobles and endears him to readers.

The author further imparts Indianness to the canon by describing the poem-inscribed card presented by the employees of *Suchitra Emporium* to Ushapati Das on the occasion of his marriage with Suchitra Choudhury. The card is “written on a wafer-thin paper in red ink, and...decorated with an open-winged butterfly on the top”, butterfly or *Projapati* being the Hindu deity for marriage (581). Similarly, Ushapati Das’s description of the general social conditions of Bengal after the conclusion

of the First World War bears testimony to the conservative Bengali attitude toward unrestrained friendship between young men and unmarried women and toward Suchitra Choudhury's pre-marital pregnancy (585). Ramakanta Choudhury's action of taking his daughter Suchitra to Britain for delivery might be interpreted as the author's implication that the imperial centre sanctions acts generally considered outrageous to the Eastern societies (585).

In "Monimandan" (1958), jeweller Rashomoy Sarkar's drawing room, like Shakuntala Singh's, is furnished and decorated according to both the Oriental and Occidental styles, thus indicating his hybridity. Ajit Bandyopadhyay writes,

"A velvet curtain hung above the door to which a European lock was fixed. The floor was covered with a thick carpet. Inside the drawing room, between the sofa sets, there was a tea table made of wood from Kashmir. There was a bookshelf between two windows, and a Persian painted tapestry adorned the wall." (590).

The instance of Monimoy Sarkar's wife nursing the feet of her father in law Rashomoy Sarkar testifies to the treatment of women in the patriarchal Bengali society of early post-independence India (590). However, the society's cultural ambiguity is demonstrated when the inquisitor and his associate are taken to Sarkar's residence in a Cadillac and when Monimoy Sarkar offers a tin of the British-made "555" cigarettes to Rashomoy, Bakshi and Ajit Bandyopadhyay (589, 591). On the other hand,

Monimoy's mother and his brother Hironmoy Sarkar exhibit their faith by visiting southern India for *tirtha-s* or Hindu pilgrimages for salvation. Even the domestic help Bholā has been depicted as the ideal Indian servant. Ajit Bandyopadhyay observes,

“Physically Bholā was not different from the general...[Indian]...servants. His face, like that of many other domestic helps, had become emaciated with advancing age, and his sharp nose and pointed chin have had become obtrusive. His skin was drawn and his body was as twisted as the skin of a bamboo plant. He was forty, and his face betrayed no sign of fear, but of caution” (595).

Importantly, while Monimoy Sarkar plays Western games like bridge, billiards, ping-pong and chequer at the club, the congregation itself has got the identifiably Bengali name of *Kheladhula* or sports (592).

In “Amriter Mrityu” (1959), Bandyopadhyay shows his aversion toward the general Whites. He begins by accusing the Second World War American soldiers who had temporarily settled in north-eastern India of spreading social unrest and corruption. Ajit Bandyopadhyay objectively describes,

“During the War, a group of American soldiers had camped for a few months in the jungle between Shantalgola and Baghmari. They used to go only in trousers, bare-chested, and smoked hookahs with the farmers. At

the end of the War, they returned home but left back a number of illegitimate children and fire arms as relics!" (604).

The narrative displays its Indian character by detailing on the general belief in the existence of ghosts and how they can be warded off through the utterance of the Hindu god Rama's name (606). In the ninth chapter, Bakshi demonstrates his own faith by saying, "If you watch jackals in moonlight, it brings you luck and salvation." (633).

The second chapter of the narrative displays Bakshi's closeness with the new Indian government. That Bakshi is increasingly consulted by the government officials from "Aadim Ripu" onwards might indicate Bandyopadhyay's attempt at projecting the inquisitor as an important investigator like Holmes who is consulted principally by the British aristocrats and government officials. In the same chapter Bandyopadhyay indicts the former imperial administration for sowing germs of unrest and criminality in the colony. He writes,

"At the time of Second World War, thousands of Euro-American soldiers had come and established their bases in India – at Bengal. After the War they went back, and the Indian government and governance changed hands. After the bloody war for Indian independence was over, it was found that a significant section of subversive elements had remained back. They were freely using the leftover arms and weapons of the foreigners.

With the help of those weapons, they began to harass the new Indian government by engineering train accidents, explosions and dacoity on a daily basis.” (608).

While Monotosh, the travelling ticket examiner, retains his administration for the inquisitor (618), the Shantalgola police inspector in charge Sukhomoy Samanta tries to harass him (608). When he warns Bakshi against disobeying him in the fourth chapter, he replies,

“You may be the head of the police forces here, but you cannot command me! Inspector Samanta, I am here on a governmental assignment. But I have been noticing how, instead of helping me as your orders are, you have constantly been creating hindrances. Let me warn you, if I find you doing this once again, you would have to leave this area! Even dismissal from service cannot be ruled out!” (617).

Bakshi thus expresses his proximity to higher government officials of post-independence Indian administration. However, while threatening Bidhubabu similarly in “Where There’s a Will”, he flaunts his connections with the police officials but not the British administrators (Bandyopadhyay, *Picture* 101).

Bandyopadhyay satirises the character of Robert Blake created by Dinendra Kumar Roy by projecting the erratic Samanta as his ardent admirer. He asks Ajit Bandyopadhyay,

“Hello Ajit babu! How are you? Continuing your worship of the muse? Well, I do not find your fantastic stories uninteresting. But, of course, they nowhere match Robert Blake’s!” (Bandyopadhyay, *Byomkesh* 611).

In spite of being an Indian, Sadananda Sur follows a Eurocentric dress code by wearing “black, polished Albert shoes” but fails to conceal his rustic behaviour (614). Thus he becomes the target of Bandyopadhyay’s irony (614), and failing to conceal his rural behaviour, becomes a target of the author’s irony. Bandyopadhyay continues to add Indian perspectives to the narrative when Ajit Bandyopadhyay compares Bakshi’s investigative processes with that of “Kalidasa’s puzzles” (616), Kalidasa being one of famous Sanskrit litterateur-philosophers at the court of Vikramaditya in the fourth century.

Bakshi exhibits an encyclopaedic knowledge reminiscent of Holmes’s when he explains to Ajit Bandyopadhyay the procedure of setting up booby-traps and describes the paraphernalia of the .38 bullet that killed Amrita (616, 621). He also shows an acquaintance with the details of ballistic examinations (635). Significantly, Bandyopadhyay presents the former jockey Biswanath Mullick, who wears Jodhpur breeches and admires the American soldiers for their friendliness, as a

brutal murderer (624-5). Moreover, Prankestha Paul, “who wears...[European]...trousers and bush coat”, has also been given an ironic portrayal. Ajit Bandyopadhyay makes fun of him for “parroting the European style” while decorating his drawing rooms (631). Understandably, he has been presented as a coward and liar.

The main action of “Shaiylo Rahoshyo”, written in 1959, takes place at *Sohadri Hotel*, Mahabaleshwar – a hill station in the state of Maharashtra. The author himself resided in Maharashtra between 1952 and 1970, until his death on 22 September. The narrative begins in an epistolary mode with two letters: one from the inquisitor to his associate and vice versa, and Bakshi begins his by asserting his own Bengali identity. He writes,

“You know, the Bengali boys learn writing letters only after their marriage. But I have seldom been separated from my wife for a long period! So how can I master the art?” (641).

Apart from shifting the locale to the south-west Indian towns of Pune and Mahabaleshwar, Bandyopadhyay avoids narrow provincialism by characterising two non-Bengali gentlemen: the Maratha police officer Vishnu Vinayak Apte and the Parsi owner of the Hotel Shorab Homji (641-2). Nevertheless, the main plot concerns the Bengali couple Bijoy and Hymabati Biswas. In contrast to the restraint of Doyle’s Sherlock Holmes stories, Bandyopadhyay’s plot deals with the theme of adultery and concerns with how the married Hymabati Biswas wages an extramarital affair with Manek Mehta

to entrap and thereafter murder him with the help of her husband inside the office room of *Sohadri Hotel* (658).

Unlike Holmes who never believes in the apparitional existence of the dog in *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, Bakshi confesses in his letter, "I have been forced to believe in the existence of ghosts after my coming to Mahabaleshwar" (641). Bandyopadhyay vindicates Bakshi's faith by portraying different supernatural incidents that takes place at his hotel-room for two consecutive nights around 02:00 a.m. This includes the arbitrary ringing of the alarm clock at two, unexplained change in position of the rocking chair on which the inquisitor sits smoking, the sudden extinguishing of the candle, Bakshi's sensation of "something...crawling near the belly" and his recovery of a piece of brownpaper containing the name and address of Hymabati Biswas from his wardrobe, and finally his direct dialogue with the apparition of Manek Mehta to which the latter responds by moving the rocking chair (649-51). While *The Hound of the Baskervilles* concludes with the exposition of Stapleton's deceit, Bandyopadhyay does not offering any plausible explanation for the apparently poltergeistic incidents, thus reposing his faith in the occult and supernatural and exhibiting an attraction for the Gothic that culminated in the collection of his ghost stories in the fifth volume of *Saradindu Omnibus*. Having been subsumed in the Indian faith, Bakshi observes, "It does not require mention that the apparition stalking me was of Manek Mehta" (657).

Written in 1960, “Achin Pakhi” further testifies to Bandyopadhyay attempt to counter the hegemony of Eurocentric detective fiction by projecting a subaltern Indian scenario. Apart from detailing on the Hindu marriage of Biren Sinha’s daughter (660), he draws Bakshi as welcoming the retired police official Nilmoni Majumdar with an Indian *namaskar* instead of a Western handshake (660). Bakshi and Majumdar discuss their subaltern roots at Calcutta and eastern Bengal, smoke hookahs instead of cigarettes or cigars, and the latter shows a preference for *zarda* or shredded tobacco generally consumed with betel leaves and nuts (661-2). Moreover, when Dinomani Halder’s son-in-law Sureshwar Ghosh, Kalikinkar Das, Debu Mondol and Bilash Dutta carry Hashi for cremation, they conform to the Hindu custom of transferring corpses for cremation on *chali*-s or bamboo stretches (663).

In “Achin Paki”, Bandyopadhyay realistically describes the patriarchal Bengali society of early post-independence India. Accusing Hashi Ghosh of impotency, Sureshwar Ghosh eschews considering the chances of his own sterility and readily believes in the rumours of his wife’s adulterous character (666). Subscribing to the patriarchal prejudice that “when a woman desires to be morally tainted, no one can stop her”, he unconsciously absolves the Indian males of similar crime (666). Kalikinkar Das spares Dinomani Halder for theft while lambasting his wife for her “loose morale” and Hashi Ghosh for losing her “character while living in slums” (667). Debu Mondol explains Hashi Ghosh’s habit of relaxing in front of her house as a sign of her lack of “pure culture” (667). Even Binod Sarkar, “Hashi’s guardian and well-wisher”, exhibits his patriarchal ideology by admitting that “Probably Hashi was undesirably attracted

toward men...[and]...stood at door to wage conversation with the male pedestrians and acquaintances” (669). Significantly, Bakshi’s inference that Nilmoni Majumdar had fathered Hashi is based on his presumption that her mother had been an adulteress and that she contained “bad blood” (672-3). Though patriarchal, the Sherlock Holmes canon does not contain any such misogynist statements or presumptions. It also deserves mention that “Achin Pakhi” follows the narrative mode of Agatha Christie’s The Murder of Roger Ackroyd in which the storyteller himself turns out to be the criminal.

While the police official Nilmoni Majumdar has to undertake series of interrogations and strenuous movements to identify Hashi Ghosh’s murderer (663-671), Bakshi identifies him Sureshwar Ghosh’s assassin listening to his own narrative, thus demonstrating his superiority to the regular police forces (672). Importantly, Bakshi is symbolically subsumed in the official forces when introducing the inquisitor to Majumdar, Biren Sinha says, “Byomkesh is a part of our police forces!” (660). Nilmoni Majumdar’s inspection on bicycles faithfully represents the method of vigilance promulgated by the British imperialists in India (663).

The very title of “Kahen Kabi Kalidas”, written in 1961, provides an Indian context to the narrative by alluding to the puzzles devised by the Sanskrit litterateur Kalidasa. The narrative, like “Achin Pakhi”, presents a patriarchal Bengali society in early post-independence India. Ajit Bandyopadhyay writes,

“We could not find any woman at our party. We were the four men to ourselves. But I could, at the same time, presume that there must be at least two women in the family. Manish Chakroborty did not seem to have had forgotten his *swadeshi* sentiments. But then, in this period of decadence a little caution is often fruitful in the long run.” (675).

Bandyopadhyay, like Doyle’s description of Vermissa in The Valley of Fear (*The Complete* 888), paints a seedy picture of the industrial town Bakshi and Ajit Bandyopadhyay visit for investigating causes for labour unrest. Like Doyle, Bandyopadhyay resents the rapid industrialisation of post-independence Indian towns. Ajit Bandyopadhyay exclaims,

“Coal! The source of energy for machines is being brought up to the surface from the deepest confines of earth by other machines, and the wheels of civilization keep on turning. I salute you, machines! You have delved deep into the mines, and have clawed our earth to disarray! I salute you, once again!” (Bandyopadhyay, *Byomkesh* 678).

The treatment of the industrialised city life and its debilitations are different in Doyle and Bandyopadhyay. Having hailed from and settled down in industrial belts like Edinburgh and London, Doyle criticises the debilitations of industrialisation in the former British colony of the United States of America. The second section of The Valley of Fear is not narrated by Watson but described in the third person

mode which projects Vermissa as a fertile region for the subversive activities of *The Scowlers*. In contrast, Ajit Bandyopadhyay, who is a litterateur like Saradindu Bandyopadhyay himself, indicts the loss of India's agrarian face from the viewpoint of a writer. However, Bandyopadhyay's industrial town does not contain any lethal organisations like that of *The Scowlers*.

In the narrative, Bandyopadhyay realistically presents a hybridised Bengali society for the dhoti-and-punjabee clad Aurobindo Halder, Mrigendra Maulick, Madhumoy Sur and Pranhari Poddar who gamble by playing "running flash" and are attracted to maid servants like Mohini Das oblivious to their social status (694). In such a society of moral debilitations, Halder offers Das gold rings and silk sarees in exchange for sexual favours and the apparently-impartial police constable, unlike the Holmes narratives, is sexually attracted to the very woman he is expected to protect (691, 689). Also, contrary to Doyle, Bandyopadhyay describes Mohini Das sensuously to focus on her essentially Oriental features. Ajit Bandyopadhyay reports,

"The dark-complexioned girl oozed oomph from her face, lips and in her movements. The marks of youth depicted all over her curvaceous body had made her overwhelmingly sensual to behold. Had she been fairer, she would have been one of the more beautiful women I have had ever seen! But even with all her darkness, Mohini seemed to possess ample power to entice youthful hearts by giving rise to concupiscence." (687).

With her dark complexion, Das symbolically appeals to the White Westerner's psychosis of Oriental sexuality (Wyrick 49). On the other hand, in Ajit Bandyopadhyay's description, she exhibits an inscrutability:

"I was contemplating whether Mohini was immoral at all. Does she possess a good character, or is she a nymphomaniac? The level of society from which she had come is not famous for the faithfulness of the wives. For a square meal, they would willingly stoop to the lowest level possible. And yet...the coloured girl did not seem to belong to the class of servants. Somewhere...somehow...she was different!" (690).

Thus she seems to conform to the Orientalist presumption about the strangeness and ambiguity of the Easterners (Said, *Orientalism* 44, 72).

Bandyopadhyay faithfully depicts the daily-life of the upper-middle class Bengalis through Ajit Bandyopadhyay's description of different activities at *The Coal Club*. While portraying the Oriental games like chequer and ping-pong and the Western ones like billiard being played by the club members, he intersperses it with their dialogues and monologues thus following the Stream of Consciousness technique of narration. Ajit Bandyopadhyay recalls,

"I felt drowsy while sipping the iced sherbet. As the club members came in, their words occasionally drifted to me. Inside the mansion electric

bulbs were gradually coming to life. Sounds of the players floated in from the table tennis room. A member would suddenly call out, 'Orderly, come here!' It was a vivid picture of an aristocratic and cultured modern lifestyle." (Bandyopadhyay, *Byomkesh* 698).

The writer concludes his narrative by admitting the influence of Chesterton on his writings, while simultaneously asserting his ingenuity in plot construction and characterisation. In context of the undetected absence of alibi for Bhuvaneshwar Das, Bakshi observes, "We all knew that on the night of murder, Bhuvaneshwar Das was present on the scene, but it had never occurred to us that he might be, or that he *is* the murderer! This is what G.K.Chesterton has referred to as *the invisible man*." (715).

In "Adrishya Trikon" (1961), Bandyopadhyay portrays Reba Sarkar as the *new Indian woman*. In spite of her education and beauty, she follows the Indian tradition of caring for her father-in-law Shib Prashad Sarkar. Moreover, she drives, initially ignores the lechery of her husband Sunil Sarkar, attends clubs, play games, and goes to movies (717-8). However, she challenges the patriarchal norms of Indian society when she restricts her husband to a monthly pension of three hundred rupees and begins to read Western adventure stories and detective fiction (717-8) and is murdered by her husband (722). Importantly, Ajit Bandyopadhyay is unsympathetic to Reba Sarkar when while narrating the circumstances leading to her murder, and even hints at her adulterous behaviour (716-23). She is ultimately subsumed in the Indian

patriarchal system when she is forced to maintain secrecy while writing about her ideas on women liberation to the police inspector Ramonimohon Sanyal (724), and is shown to be overtly dependent on him (728).

Bandyopadhyay adds an Indian perspective to the narrative when Ajit Bandyopadhyay compares Reba Sarkar with “Sabitri”, the archetypal faithful Hindu wife, and Sunil Sarkar with “Satyaban” whom Sabitri brings back to life through her purity and virtue (726). This is symbolically in opposition to Holmes’s assertion of his European identity by referring to the biblical parable of David, Uriah and Bathsheba in “The Adventure of the Crooked Man” (Doyle, *The Complete* 367). He also identifies Bakshi’s brain with the Gandhamadan, the elixir-containing mythical mountain of The Ramayana (723).

Bandyopadhyay also moves away from Doyle’s narratives by depicting policemen as criminals in his post-1947 Byomkesh Bakshi stories. Other than Sanyal of “Adrishya Trikon”, Ratikanta Choudhury of “Bonhi Patango” and Nilmoni Majumdar of “Achin Pakhi” have been depicted as murderers that serve to grant greater realism to the Byomkesh Bakshi canon.

Written in 1961, “Khunji Khunji Nari” is full of Indian mythological references that underscore its essential difference from Doyle’s narratives written in the Christian perspective. Ajit Bandyopadhyay prays to Laxmi, the Hindu goddesses of wealth and prosperity, while distinguishing between the rich and the poor:

“I have noticed that the humorous people almost never become rich. Goddess Laxmi favours only the sedate and gloomy!” (730).

Rameshwar Roy, one of the more important characters of the story, indulges in neologism to assert his Bengali identity in his letter to Bakshi in which he uses uncommon and new Bengali words and phrases like “buddhisagareshu” or the sea of intelligence, “sashikala” or moonlight, and “mayurpuchchha” or peacock’s tail, and reposes faith in the myth that the dead are led to Yama, the Hindu god of death, by his associate Yamadut-s (731). He refers to the post-death passage of souls to the *baikuntha* or paradise, and adheres to the Bengali custom of blessing the young on *Bijoya Dashomi*, the last day of the *Doorga Pooja* festival on which the idol is immersed (731). Roy also starts his will with a Sanskrit *sloka* invoking the Hindu god Vishnu (739).

Bandyopadhyay projects his inquisitor as a believer by informing readers that he reads “The Ramayana and The Mahabharata whenever he is free”, which Ajit Bandyopadhyay explains as “a symbol of his growing religious sentiment with increase in age” (731). Significantly, Bakshi reads only the Bengali version of the Sanskrit epics – Hemchandra’s and Kali Singha’s respective translations of The Ramayana and The Mahabharata that fortifies his image of a Bengali gentleman (738).

“Adwitiya” (1962) bears references to the treatment of women in the patriarchal Indian society after the Independence. Ajit Bandyopadhyay patronises Satyabati Bakshi at the beginning of the narrative. He writes,

“I remained neutral and enjoyed whenever, by law of nature, Byomkesh and Satyabati quarrelled with each other. But when the issue of relative excellence of males and females would be evoked, I felt compelled to support my friend. But even our conjoined efforts would not be sufficient for defeating our woman!” (741).

Similarly, while commenting on the effects of women’s liberation movement in post-independence India, Bakshi lambastes women for extremities and excesses. He says to Satyabati Bakshi,

“Women like you having been confined to indoors so long, they have had failed to do as they wished. But since independence, your powers have increased manifold, and is likely to continue. Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay’s Debi Choudhurani lived hundred years before. Ajit, just imagine what she would have been if she were a modern woman!” (742).

Significantly, Satyabati, who generalises males as “liars, dacoits and murderers”, leaves the room when the unacquainted postman arrives, thus following the patriarchal norm of not appearing before strangers (742).

Bakshi and the police officers castigate Pramila Paul more for her being a female than a criminal (751). Even when the dacoit, who has murdered her husband and the constable Bidhubhusan Aich, strikes at Bakshi's neck with a knife, Ajit Bandyopadhyay remains engrossed in her femininity. He describes,

"I continued looking at the woman, mesmerized. I could not even imagine that her beautiful face could be transformed into such a hard and cruel deformity!" (751).

Written in 1963, "Magno Mainak" is set in India "fifteen years after the Independence" (754) and is centred on the former Indian revolutionary Santosh Samaddar, who engages himself in espionage against his own country. The narrative's theme is similar to that of Doyle's "His Last Vow" where Sherlock Holmes apprehends the German spy Von Bork. Samaddar's preference for violent freedom struggle is indicated when Ajit Bandyopadhyay reports that he and his wife Chameli Samaddar were "associated with the *terrorists*" in their early life (755). "Terrorist" was a term used by the British imperialists to indicate those Indians particularly from Maharashtra and Bengal who were inspired by militant nationalism (Pahari 256-7).

Bandyopadhyay paints a credible picture of the post-independence India by demonstrating the all-pervasiveness of corruption. Where as no

British citizen has been shown to spy for other imperial power in Doyle's Sherlock Holmes stories, Samaddar's being a freedom fighter does not prevent him from acting as a spy for Pakistan which he undertakes out of his lust for Meena Mullick (Bandyopadhyay, *Byomkesh* 795). Bandyopadhyay has also indicted the contemporary Indian politicians for shielding such traitors as Samaddar.

The former Indian freedom fighter misuses his recognition and immunity to "visit Dhaka at the time of partition between India and Pakistan to meet...[the beautiful Pakistani spy]...Meena Mullick", and continues to reveal important governmental policy to her even after knowing her real profession (795). Bakshi asserts his patriotic fervour when he says to Samaddar, "Because of your anti-national activities, the Indians have lost at different steps...[during partition]...[:]...we have lost much land that should have legally been ours'!" (795), and terms his seditious activities as arising out of "personal jealousy against any great leader" (797). By depicting Samaddar's betrayal of his nation for personal gains, Bandyopadhyay perceptively conforms to the Orientalists conception of the Eastern undependability and "gullibility" (Said, *Orientalism* 38), lack of "power for self-government" (32), and "despotism" (203). Such a treacherous section of Indians had helped the British imperialists in perpetuating their domination over the Indian subcontinent.

"Magno Mainak" is the singular case of international ramification that Bakshi investigates, in opposition to Holmes who habitually deals with such cases. In this narrative, Bandyopadhyay realistically depicts the condition of India

and Pakistani after the imperial division of the two countries in 1947. Significantly, whereas Samaddar betrays the Indian government, Meena Mullick exhibits a deep respect for her native Pakistan (797). Being a writer of film scripts, the Indian author transforms his narrative from being a detective fiction into a thriller involving love, sex, espionage, betrayal and suicide that are traditionally absent in the Sherlock Holmes stories.

Samaddar asserts his Oriental identity while presenting a copy of the eleventh century Iranian author Omar Khayyam's Rubiat-e-Omar Khyaam to Meena Mullick (793). By inscribing "Meena Mata Hari" in the book, he links Mullick to the First World War German spy Mata Hari or Margarethe Geertruida Zeele (1876-1917). While Zeele seduced the French generals into giving her information by her striptease, Mullick sings *ghazals* and have sexual encounters, unlike in any Sherlock Holmes story, to collect confidential data from Samaddar (797). She is, nevertheless, subsumed into the Bengali society when Bandyopadhyay makes her a former resident of Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Bandyopadhyay vividly describes the conservatism of the Bengali society in "Magno Mainak". Samaddar fails to marry the Vaishnavite singer Sukumari not only because his political opponents would gain leverage for maligning him for extramarital relations but also because the traditional Bengali society forbids the maintenance of mistresses (764). Sukumari's Oriental appearance is revealed in Ajit Bandyopadhyay's description:

“She was tall and buxom; her face was a mould of innocence, and her eyes were almost always half closed. She had nothing artificial in her, and her vulnerable and apparently virgin appearance had made her irresistible to men. I soon understood that she was famous not only for her voice; she had also a bountiful combination of beauty and artistic capabilities. She was the eternal Vaishnavite devotee of poet’s dreams.” (782).

Her song from the Bengali poet Vidyapati’s “Lord Krishna, I have prayers and requests for you” depicts her essentially Hindu faith (783).

Yugal Chand Samaddar’s four-liner Bengali poems to Hena Mullick serve to indicate the Bengali identity of the narrative and pit the Byomkesh Bakshi stories against the Sherlock Holmes canon that eschews poeticism (771, 780). Moreover, Bandyopadhyay reviews the situation of Bengali literature of the 1960s through Ajit Bandyopadhyay, who writes,

“Lately...the renowned Bengali litterateur]...Raj Sekhar Basu has oversimplified The Ramayana and translated it into Bengali, and Byomkesh was trying to pass his time reading a copy of Basu’s work. Meanwhile, I lay across the cot and had been recalling incoherent memoirs. The Bengali articles and short stories published in some of the festival issues of different journals and magazines had forced me to react

with alacrity that the Bengali writers having forgotten to write in Bengali. Similar to the Indian independence, it was a period of debilitating independence in the realm of literature – there was no rule, no quality and no art! A state of anarchy prevailed!”(756).

Thus the author advocates preservation of the pre-colonial Bengali literature and satirises the hybridised compositions. He further adds an Indian perspective to his story by comparing the animosity between the brother Yugal Chand and Uday Chand over Hena Mullick to that between the mythological demons Sambhu and Nisambhu who killed each other over the danseuse Mohini (780). Bakshi quizzes Ajit Bandyopadhyay about the name of the brother of the Hindu goddess Parvati and narrates to him how her truant mountain-brother Mainak hid himself under the Arabian Sea to escape the wrath of the divine commander Indra (756). The Pakistani Hena Mullick is also given a Bengali identity when her bookcase reveals works by modern Bengali litterateurs like Rabindranath Tagore, Satyendranath Dutta and Kazi Nazrul Islam (766). By wearing a *garad* saree and sporting vermilion mark and a *rudraksha* garland (788), Chameli Samaddar typifies a middle-class Bengali woman, fortified by her fixation of over-cleanliness (762).

“Dusto Chakra” (1964) testifies to Bakshi’s patriotism when he forces the errant pawnbroker Bishu Paul to donate one lakh rupees to the Indian Defence Fund (812).

Bakshi's influence with the post-independence Indian police officials like A.K.Ray of "Magno Mainak" and Inspector Ramapati of "Dusto Chakra" testifies to his acceptance as an integral part of the police force. While Holmes retains a polemic relationship with Lestrade right from A Study in Scarlet to such stories as lately written as "The Adventure of the Norwood Builder" and "The Adventure of the Bruce-Partington Plans", the last Sherlock Holmes story where Lestrade makes an appearance, Bandyopadhyay grants his inquisitor a gradual recognition within India in his post-1947 detective stories. Bikash Dutta, who is first introduced in "Chiriakhana", and, thereafter, appears in "Aadim Ripu", "Shaiylo Rahoshyo", "Kahen Kabi Kalidas" and "Magno Mainak" is developed as an important assistant of Bakshi and as a parallel character to replace Ajit Bandyopadhyay, who, unlike Watson, is incapable of undertaking rigorous adventures with the inquisitor. Having invoked Dutta in "Magno Mainak", Bandyopadhyay anticipates the removal of the inquisitor's narrator-associate from "Room Number Dui" onwards. Dutta might be compared with Doyle's *Baker Street Irregulars* portrayed in The Sign of Four (*The Complete* 75).

In "Henyalir Chhando" (1964), Bakshi openly expresses his pride in being a private investigator. This might be compared with Holmes's assertion of his uniqueness as a consulting detective in A Study in Scarlet (Doyle, *The Complete* 18). Bandyopadhyay writes,

"Byomkesh stiffened himself and said in a menacing tone, 'I shall not tell you the name of the criminal, inspector! The deduction is my very own.

You are paid for doing that and you should find it out yourself. Of course, I shall guide you!” (826).

It is perceptively because of his increased political influence in post-colonial India that Bakshi releases Bhupesh Chattopadhyay even though he has murdered the blackmailer Natobar Naskar. The inquisitor also thereby asserts his confidence that without his help the police would not be able to apprehend Chattopadhyay. He justifies his action by quoting from the modern Bengali litterateur Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyay that “one would not be hanged if he killed a crow” (831). He also brings about an Indian identify to his narrative by comparing Naskar to Shakuni, the maternal uncle of the Kauravas, who plots the holocaustic Kurukshetra War in The Mahabharata (831). Importantly, all the characters influenced by the Western culture have been demeaned in the narrative. Chattopadhyay, who is ultimately detected as the murderer, has a taste that is “more inclined to the West” which is revealed in his choice of furniture for the drawing room (816). Similarly, the cheats Rashbihari and Banbihari Biswas are the former accountant and assistant accountant of the Dhaka-branch of Godfrey Brown Company (827) that, according to the latter, is “a large British business organization” (823). The story also refers the imperially-orchestrated communal riots between the Hindus and Muslims (823-4, 830).

In “Room Number Dui” (1968), Bandyopadhyay once again inverses Doyle’s ideology of associating criminality with the East by identifying danger and chaos with the West and with the Indian establishments and institutions

directly influenced by the former imperialists. The former actor Sukanto Som is murdered at *Nirupama Hotel*, which, “in spite of being an Indian lodge, is built and functions according to the Western standards” (832). The writer informs that the Hotel offers continental food to customers, have attendants dressed like the European orderlies at European hotels, maintains the gatekeeper Rampreet Singh who dresses in the Western style and “salute[s] those people who are neatly dressed and suggest affluence... and grimace[s] at those in shabby overalls.” (841).

The society portrayed in “Room Number Dui” reflects prominent changes that have taken place in India and Bengal since 1947. Written twenty one years after the Independence, this story shows for the first time Calcutta Police detectives using forensic sciences to analyse fingerprints of the criminals, and depicts unmarried women as freely choosing boyfriends, dating, chatting and visiting movie theatres without guardians (837, 845). Bandyopadhyay, however, focuses on such a society’s innate paradoxes when the gynaecologist Shovna Roy is forced to introduce herself as “Mrs. Shovna Roy” without prefixing the usual “Doctor” when the police inspector Rakhal Sarkar interrogates her for murdering Som (836). Tarakumar Choudhury, who has been referred to as honest and easygoing husband of Latika Choudhury, maintains a patriarchal insistence that women should remain virgin until marriage (485). It is also in the moulded society that male patients openly display their suspicion efficiency of female physicians. On Roy, Sachitosh Sanyal asks Bakshi,

“She is a lady doctor. She has told me that I have got cough and cold, and has prescribed aspirin. Do you think women ever make good doctors?” (839).

Importantly, Bakshi vociferously condemns the elopement of Shovna Roy’s daughter with Som, and ironically describes her as having a ‘military temperament’ (847). Thus Bandyopadhyay projects a necessarily Indian patriarchal society against the pervasive picture of Western societies in Eurocentric detective stories.

Written in 1965, “Chholonar Chhando” faithfully represents the characteristic Bengali prejudice against people from other Indian states and distinguishes itself from Doyle’s detective fiction that never deals with intra-Britain provincialism. Thus while Ashok Maity from Meerut has been depicted as credulous and simple (854), Bakshi is suspicious about Gangapada Choudhury’s servant Ram Chatur from Bihar:

“Yes! He is really *ram chatur* or extremely clever! He does not want any interaction with the police. According to my estimation, he has already reached Bihar and is gorging on *bhutta* or corn” (853).

By referring to different Indian Penal Codes like “IPC 302/323 and 304”, Bandyopadhyay indicates the Indian identity of the judiciary of

his post-1947 stories and posits them against the British penal codes of Doyle's Holmes narratives (856).

Written in 1967, "Shanjarur Kanta" deals with the problem of love and futile marriage in two upper-middle class Bengali families of Calcutta. The story focuses on its Bengali identity by more intimately describing traditional Bengali marriages, conjugal life and culture rather than the murders. Perceptively influenced by Agatha Christie's The A.B.C Murders (1936), Bandyopadhyay admittedly suffered from an identify-crisis for the narrative. Introducing the story in the June 1967-publication by *Ananda Publishers Private Limited*, he writes,

"This story has got all the usual ingredients- Byomkesh, murders, detection, and so on; yet I do not know whether it should be called a sleuth story at all! It is for readers to decide what they are going to call it."
(1007).

The story portrays the uneasy married life of Debashish Bhatta, the proprietor of the Calcutta-based cosmetic goods production company *Projapati Proshadhan*, and Deepa Mukherjee. A patient of congenital *situs inversus*, Bhatta is an M.Sc from Delhi University and is "tall, stoutly built, fair complexioned, and aged between twenty seven and twenty eight" (864), thus conforming to what Nripati Laha describes as the desirable traits in aristocratic Bengali youths: "educated, rich, good-looking" (870). Deepa Mukherjee, on the other hand, hails from an impoverished

aristocratic Bengali family ruled by the patriarchal but paralysed Uday Madhav Mukherjee, a former college principal, who excludes his granddaughter's friends from his luncheons where his son's and grandson's acquaintances are invited (866). The patriarchal domination of Bengali women is sustained by Deepa's father Professor Neel Madhav Mukherjee and her elder brother Bijoy Madhav who is "an M.A in Sanskrit ...[and is]...on the verge of finding employment with college" (866). Deepa's mother, the only other female in the family, is "simple minded, silent, and always at domestic duties" and does not utter a single word all throughout (866).

Having passed Senior Cambridge Examination from a Calcutta girls' high school, Deepa Mukherjee is confined to indoors to help her mother in domestic chores, listen to radio and read books in spare time (866). Bandyopadhyay satirically observes,

"In the changed social scenario, though she could not be forced to maintain the *purdah*, she could not go out alone unless accompanied by her father or elder brother" (866).

Her predicament exemplifies what Chakravorty-Spivak describes as the domination of subaltern women in "Can the Subaltern Speak?". The writer reproduces the conservatism and traditional approach of the Mukherjees by several other examples. Deepa Mukherjee's "mind is full of rebellion" because she suffers domination as a Bengali girl while "the women in other...[Western]...countries have secured freedom to do whatever

they want.” (866). Bandyopadhyay describes how her suitors are rejected because of discrepancies in pedigree, caste and sub-castes and informs that she is a Brahmin belonging to the *Rari* sub caste, *Barendra* being the other (867). In opposition to Doyle’s Sherlock Holmes stories that contain no reference to clashes among the different groups of Christianity, Bijoy Madhav Mukherjee justifies himself when Nripati Laha decries the caste-ism of the Brahmins by referring to “what Lord Krishna has said in Bhagavat Geeta regarding the maintenance of distinction among the four major social classes – the *Brahman-s*, the *Kshatriya-s*, the *Vaishya-s* and the *Shudra-s*” (870). When Deepa Mukherjee declares her decision to marry Prabal Gupta to her grandfather, she is verbally thrashed for “defiling her family name” and is “put almost under house arrest” (868). Again, when Bijoy Madhav apprehends his sister near Calcutta’s Ballygunj Railway Station, he threatens to drag her home “by hair” and she is forced to return home “like a fish that has been hooked” (868). Nripati Laha’s manner of proposing marriage between Debashish Bhatta and Deepa Mukherjee (870-5), and Bandyopadhyay’s portrayal of the scene when Bhatta first sees Mukherjee, “dressed...[as an ordinary Bengali woman]...in saree and blouse, with two small gold ear rings, a thin gold necklace, and three gold bangles ink each hand” (875) serve to distinguish the Byomkesh Bakshi narratives from the Eurocentric canons like those of Sherlock Holmes and Hercule Poirot.

The Bengali members of Nripati Laha’s informal club – Prabal Gupta, Kapil Bose, and Sujan Mitra – display cultural hybridity by presenting a combination of Western and Indian gift items to Bhatta and Mukherjee on their wedding day. While the golden wrist watch and the fountain pen are identifiably Western, the

records of Bengali songs and the silver statue of Saraswati, the Hindu deity of learning are traditionally Indian gift items (876). Even the Nepali Kharga Bahadur is subsumed in the Bengali culture when Bandyopadhyay makes his mother is a Bengali and informs that Bahadur “is one of the more famous footballers of Bengal...and plays in a prestigious Calcutta football club” (874).

“Shanjarur Kanta” is further given Indian connotations when Mukherjee refuses to lunch along with Bhatta because “according to the practise of her family, the ladies could have their meal only after all the males have completed eating their own” (865), and hesitates to pour tea out of teapot because “in her family tea would be poured directly in teacups and thereafter be served straight to everyone” (879). She would eat eggs laid by ducks but not those by hens because the latter is traditionally eaten exclusively by the males (883). Similarly, in spite of exhibiting cultural hybridity in his preference for Western breakfast comprising of tea in teapot, warm milk, sugar cubes, toasts, butter, marmalade and boiled eggs (879), Bhatta is conscious of his belonging to a ‘higher caste’ and refers to the traditional practice of organising Sacred Thread Ceremonies for the Brahmins:

“When I underwent the Sacred Thread Ceremony, I have had heard that I am a Shandilya [*Bharadwaj* and *Kayshap* being the other two subgroups], and a Banerjee” (871).

While Doyle refers to Western writers like Goethe, Gaboriau and Poe in stories like A Study in Scarlet and The Sign of Four (Doyle, *The Complete* 18, 93) to assert the Occidental character of his Sherlock Holmes stories, Bandyopadhyay refers to Indian litterateurs like Rabindranath Tagore, Kazi Nazrul Islam, Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay, and Dwijendralall Roy while describing the contents of Deepa Mukherjee's steel trunk (*Byomkesh* 916). While Gupta writes an adaptation of a Tagore's poem in Deepa Mukherjee's autograph book (917), her friend Subhra refers to post-nuptial sexuality by quoting from the sixteenth-century Bengali poet Gobindodas or Chiranjeeb Sen (890).

Bandyopadhyay employs the stream of consciousness technique in the narrative while describing how Nripati Laha goes out every night to meet his paramour (898-9), how Prabal Gupta practises Tagore's songs at night (899), how Kharga Bahadur gambles (900-01), how Kapil Bose star-gazes through binoculars (901-4), how Sujan Mitra goes out in disguise to meet his former beloved (905) and how Debashish Bhatta suffers from a concupiscence for Deepa Mukherjee as she sleeps unaware of his feelings (906). His depiction of the night lives of the important characters of "Shanjarur Kanta" might be compared to the narrative technique of Virginia Woolf's Mrs. Dalloway (1925) and the cinematic technique of Graham Greene's The Power and the Glory (1940), which administers modernity to his stories and distinguishes them from Doyle's traditionally-narrated Sherlock Holmes narratives.

Written in 1968, “Beni Sanghar” asserts the Bengali identity of Bandyopadhyay’s Byomkesh Bakshi narratives by detailing on the inquisitor’s punning while discussing the death of Beni Madhav Chakroborty with police inspector Rakhal Sarkar. The author writes,

‘The telephone rang out. As Byomkesh picked it up, the familiar voice floated in from the other side, ‘Byomkesh-da, I am Rakhal! Have you gone through today’s newspaper yet?’

‘Yes’, replied Byomkesh. ‘Are you referring to beni sanghar?’

‘What – beni sanghar? Oh, yes! It’s beni sanghar all right! And Meghraj badh associated with it! I am speaking from the spot right now.’” (925).

While by “beni sanghar” Bakshi refers to the Bengali equivalent of ‘annihilation’ of Beni Madhav Chakroborty, Sarkar uses the Bengali phrase to describe the intricate style in which the Indian women tie their traces, thus indicating the complexity of the case (939). He also defines the murder of Chakroborty’s servant as “Meghraj badh”, Meghraj or Indrajeet being the son of Ravana in The Ramayana who is executed by Lakshmana, thus adding an Oriental and mythical connotation to the whole story (925). In opposition to Doyle’s conventions, Bandyopadhyay paints a realistic picture of the average Indian household by depicting the verbal confrontation between Beni Madhav Chakroborty’s married daughter Gayatri and his daughter-in-law Aarati (927). While Doyle exhibits a deep interest in Victorian sciences in his Holmes narratives (*The Wordsworth* 850), Bandyopadhyay reposes his in the Indian science and technology of the 1970s. He depicts

how invalidated Indian soldiers are given artificial feet, patients are treated with the help of x-ray and E.C.G, physicians keep elderly people proactive by injecting them with drugs developed to “keep the glands and ducts active” and how the press photographers use reflex cameras instead of the box-type ones (*Byomkesh* 929, 931). In the changed scenario, the Indian forensic experts try detect assassins by analysing dried blood stains (965), and the refrigerator and telephone have become so natural and indispensable parts of daily life that Beni Madhav Chakroborty “fishes through telephone directories to find names and telephone numbers of...[his]... friends to chat with them” regularly on phone (930). ‘Preferring service to money’, Chakroborty offers aeroplane tickets to Meghraj to bring his wife from Delhi and arranges purchase of tickets on phone (935). However, Bandyopadhyay simultaneously describes the debilitations of the changed Indian urban society. The press photographer Sanat Ganguli is shown maintaining an album that contains photographs of beautiful women in provocative outfits (928, 957); in spite of being a college student Markandya Chakroborty skips classes and is deeply involved in politics and horse-race gambling (930-31, 942); Parag Laha misuses his position as the dance-instructor for Laboni Ghoshal to establish a liaison with his student and marries her (946); and, finally, Gangadhar Ghoshal, who is granted refuge by Chakroborty, exploits his affection and consumes alcohol regularly (927). Thus, Bandyopadhyay portrays an Indian equivalent of the Eliotian *Waste Land*.

By referring to “the Western mystery and detective stories” (955) while describing how a raincoat could be used to wash away the blood stains after a murder is committed wearing it, and exposing the criminal before a

congregation of nine members of Chakroborty's family (953), reminiscent of Poirot's exposing Dr. Leidner as the murderer before his associates in Murder in Mesopotamia (1936), Bandyopadhyay alludes to the influence of the European writers like Doyle, Christie and Chesterton on his stories (955,953). He also evokes the holocaustic Indo-China War of 1962 in which Meghraj has had lost his foot (929), and shows the characteristic suspicion of the Indians toward the Chinese and Pakistanis, which is exhibited even in "Shanjarur Kanta" where Debashish Bhatta's friends contemplate at a tea-party that the porcupine-thorn murderer might be engineered by a Chinese or Pakistani (896). He further moves away from Doyle by exemplifying the perceived destructive prowess of women and the ill-effects of free inter-sexual interaction in context of The Mahabharata, The Iliad, and works by Alexandre Dumas (1802-1870). Bakshi says to Rakhil Sarkar,

"You should never underestimate the prowess of the fairer sex. For ages they have been born to rich and poor to bring about the destruction of the males. Draupadi, who caused the Kurukshetra War in The Mahabharata, is one such woman. Helen of The Iliad is no exception. Such femme fatales are numerous even today. Not that all of them are morally lax, but they retain within them a mysterious power that can make us, particularly the lustful men like Sanat Ganguli, defy all logic and good sense. No wonder Alexandre Dumas has said, "Cherchez la femme" – there is usually a woman at the root of every major disaster!" (957).

The inquisitor reprimands Medini for seducing Sanat Ganguli (957) more severely than what he does to Ganguli for murdering Chakroborty (956).

Bakshi exhibits his knowledge in Indian customs and ethical norms when he proposes marriage between Nikhil Halder and Jhilli only because they are not first cousins though closely related (959). In this Bandyopadhyay opposes the Western system of marriage like that described in Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice (1813) where marriages among cousins are commonly practised.

In "Lohar Biscuit", the last complete Byomkesh Bakshi story to be written in 1969, Bandyopadhyay castigates Occidental practices and superstitions as debilitating for the Indian society. The horse-nail that Akshay Mondol hangs at the entrance to his first-floor room is supposed to bring good luck and affluence to the user "according to Occidental superstition" (963), but it is actually detected to be a powerful magnet with which the smuggler pulls out gold biscuits encased in iron shells from his water tank (965-6). The author simultaneously indicates the excellence of Bakshi's torn and rusty Indian umbrella as an indigenous implement for detection. He writes,

"It was Byomkesh's favourite umbrella ~ very old and rusted; its cloth cover was discoloured and full of holes that allow the user to get a fine view of someone he has been following without the former's ever noticing

that he or she is being stalked. It was an efficient indigenous implement for our efficient inquisitor!" (963).

Bandyopadhyay adds an Indian context to the narrative when Kamal Krishna Das insists on going on a pilgrimage to Hardwar and Hrishikesh on conducted tours organised by the reputed Calcutta-based travelling agency *Kundu Special*. The author posits Hindu holy places against European pilgrimage spots like Canterbury, Rome and Nazareth commonly referred to by the White Western litterateurs.

Having started writing "Bishupal Badh" in the first week of July 1970, Bandyopadhyay suffered a cardiac arrest on 9 July 1970 following which he was shifted from Pune to Bombay where he expired on 22 September 1970 (Bandyopadhyay, *Saradindu II* 636). The last Byomkesh Bakshi narrative ends in the middle of a detailed police report prepared following the death of the actor Bishu Pal (993).

That Ajit Bandyopadhyay, in the final story of the canon, "go[es]...missing" for his "lust of money" (970-71) anticipates the termination of his relationship with Bakshi (970-1). This requires mention that he and Satyabati Bakshi sit together for a conference with Bakshi discussing minutes of a case for the last time in "Adwitiya" following which Satyabati and Bandyopadhyay never communicate among themselves (741-2). However, the story can be compared neither with Agatha Christie's

ultimate Hercule Poirot story The Curtain (1975) in which the retired Belgian police official dies, nor with Doyle's "The Adventure of the Shoscombe Old Place" (1927) that concludes with indications of Holmes and Watson's return.

Unlike Doyle who never invokes the character of Joseph Bell in his Sherlock Holmes narratives, Bandyopadhyay introduces as "an acquaintance of Byomkesh ever since his arrival at his newly-built Keyatala residence" (971) the noted Bengali critic Pratul Chandra Gupta by his first name in the concluding story (Gupta 12-3). Admittedly, Bakshi's associate has been built on the character of Ajit Sen, the author's friend since his tenure at Calcutta's Young Men's Christian Association (*Saradindu II* 634, 647).

In the concluding story of the canon, Bandyopadhyay underscores the middle-class background of his Bengali detective who, following requests from Satyabati Bakshi and Pratul, considers purchasing a second-hand car. Bandyopadhyay writes,

"But Byomkesh would not easily comply with their requests. It is true that at six or seven thousand rupees he would be able to purchase a second hand automobile. But after that? Who would drive it? A chauffer would have to be paid anything between one hundred fifty and two hundred a month. In that case the expenditure would outrun his income. It is improper for someone from the middle class family to indulge into such

aristocratic excesses and extravagance. The coat should be cut according to the cloth!" (971).

It is important that the Sherlock Holmes canon does not show the detective and his associate possessing private automobiles. Although the German companies *Benz* and *Diamler* had begun to prepare "expensive and primitive" cars for "public sale" around 1890, commercial large-scale production was undertaken by the Detroit-based *Ford Motor Corporation* as late as 1914 (*Ultimate Visual* 334, 338). In contrast, by rejecting the symbol of Western affluence in works like Francis Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* (1925) and Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* (1949), Bandyopadhyay registers his postcolonial protest in context of the 1960s when possessing private automobiles had become a common phenomenon in India.

Apart from transforming Kalicharan Das, one of the main characters of the story, into a shaven-head and garlanded Vaishnavite who marries his maid servant Chapala and leaves with her for a pilgrimage to Vrindavan (970, 983), Bandyopadhyay also judges the background of the play "Kichak Badh" against the parable of Bhima killing Kichak when he attempts to molest Draupadi in *The Mahabharata* (972). He thus distinguishes his Byomkesh Bakshi stories from the Eurocentric detective narratives by Doyle, Christie and Chesterton written in the Christian perspective⁷.

NOTES:

1. Stewart, Nicholas. "A Postcolonial Canonical and Cultural Revision of Conan Doyle's Holmes Narratives". 3 February 2003. <http://www.qub.ac.uk/english/imperial/india/conan_doyle.htm>
2. Borio, Gene. "The History of Tobacco Part I". 30 May 2005. <<http://www.historian.org/bysubject/tobacco1.htm>>
3. "Gemstones: Garnet". 31 May 2005. <<http://www.bleedingedge.net/Gemstones/Garnet.aspx>>
4. "Beryls: Magic of Colours". 31 May 2005. <<http://www.gemstone.org/gem-by-gem/english/beryl.html>>
5. Stewart, Nicholas. "A Postcolonial Canonical and Cultural Revision of Conan Doyle's Holmes Narratives". 3 February 2003. <http://www.qub.ac.uk/english/imperial/india/conan_doyle.htm>
6. Dasa, Shukavak N. "The Bengal Renaissance". 23 May 2005. <<http://www.sanskrit.org/Bhaktivinoda/BengalRenaissance.html>>
7. Stewart, Nicholas. "A Postcolonial Canonical and Cultural Revision of Conan Doyle's Holmes Narratives". 3 February 2003. <http://www.qub.ac.uk/english/imperial/india/conan_doyle.htm>

CHAPTER 7.

CONCLUSION:

Commenting on the “truth value” of a fictional text in The Mirror and the Lamp, Meyer Howard Abrams opines that *fictional sentences* (italics mine) should be regarded as referring to a special world *created* by the author that is analogous to the real world, but possesses its own setting, beings and mode of coherence (Abrams, *The Mirror* 272-85). In the Sherlock Holmes and Byomkesh Bakshi canons, Arthur Conan Doyle and Saradindu Bandyopadhyay have also created their respective personal worlds containing their personal creations : the detectives, their associates, the police officials and the criminals, and private settings: the indigenous plots facilitating actions of the detectives and other important characters. However, the locales of actions in these narratives are real cities: the British imperial locus of London and the subaltern metropolis of Calcutta in British-India. The London in Doyle presents a faithful picture of the metropolis in late-Victorian and Edwardian periods when the British colonialism had reached its zenith, whereas Bandyopadhyay’s Calcutta continues to assert its position as the former capital of British-India (until 1911) where the armed Indian resistance against the colonisers culminated in the 1930s and which, since then, had been witness to almost all the social, cultural and intellectual upheavals of late pre-independence and early post-independence India. Moreover, in context of Abram’s observation, no incoherent situation, with the exception of “Shaiylo Rahoshyo”, is found either in the Sherlock Holmes or Byomkesh Bakshi stories. It might, therefore, be postulated that both Doyle’s and Bandyopadhyay’s

narratives possess the Abrams-ian “truth value”, and command relevance as principal representatives of the sub-genre of detective fiction.

According to Ajit Kumar Banerjee, the detective fiction is a “middle class art and taste” (244). He quotes at length from Howard Haycroft’s observations on the ingredients of the sub-genre in Murder for Pleasure: The Life and times of the Detective Story (1942):

“The transcendent and eccentric detective, the admiring slightly stupid foil; the well-mentioned blundering and unimaginativeness of the official guardians of law; the locked-room convention, the pointing finger of unjust suspicion; the solution of surprise, deduction by putting one’s self in another position... [;]... concealment by means of the ultra-obvious; the staged ruse to force the culprit’s hand... the expansive and condescending explanation when the chase is done...” (244-5).

In course of vindicating the fiction’s ‘middle-class’ identity, Banerjee explains,

“The detective novel has the distinction of celebrating not deeds but the human reason. Its heroic elements consist in the battle of the wits between the detective and criminal and atmospheric elements (pursuit and chase in the urban labyrinth). It is a pastime literature which celebrates the intellectual rather than the deeds” (245).

In context of Banerjee's observations, the Byomkesh Bakshi stories could be identified as more conforming to middle-class taste and hence appear nearer to the realm of *proper* detective fiction than the Sherlock Holmes narratives. Byomkesh Bakshi identifiably belongs to the middle class, and lives a mundane life in Calcutta with Satyabati, his son Khoka, and Ajit Bandyopadhyay, and in most of his adventures he deals with the problems typical to Bengali middle class and in rare cases upper middle-class people. In contrast, Doyle never clarifies Holmes's position on the British social helix even as most of his clients belong to the aristocratic sections of the British society. Though Holmes and Watson start as boarders in a rented flat on 221B Baker Street, London, it is important that Doyle never specifies the condition and sources of Holmes's monetary reserves. Watson, however, details on his financially underprivileged condition in A Study in Scarlet:

"I had neither kith nor kin in England, and was therefore as free as air – or as free as an income of eleven shillings and six pence a day will permit a man to be. Under such circumstances I naturally gravitated to London, that great cesspool into which all the loungers and idlers of the empire are irresistibly drained. There I stayed for sometime at a private hotel in the Strand, leading a comfortless, meaningless existence, and spending such money as I had considerably more freely than I ought. So alarming did the state of my finances become that I soon realised that I must either leave the metropolis and rusticate somewhere in the country, or that I must make

a complete alteration in my style of living. Choosing the latter alternative, I began by making up my mind to leave the hotel, and to take up my quarters in some less pretentious and less expensive domicile” (Doyle, *The Complete* 13).

Although Stamford informs Watson that Sherlock Holmes is willing to share a “suite in Baker Street” identifiably because of financial constraints, the investigator never appears to suffer from low monetary reserves in the other fifty-nine narratives (13).

Banerjee’s characterisation of the detective novel as celebrating the human reason and not deeds appears, once again, to apply more exclusively to the Byomkesh Bakshi stories than the Sherlock Holmes narratives because the Bengali inquisitor gives primacy to psychoanalytical approaches where as Holmes depends on strenuous outdoor adventures and minute examination of the physical evidences. On the other hand, Haycroft’s observations perceptively appear more relevant in the European context and applicable primarily to the English and French detective stories. It, therefore, applies that the Eurocentric English detective fiction and the Indian detective stories possess indigenous and distinctive characteristic features which appear relevant only when they are judged in the Western and Eastern social perspectives.

Importantly, Saradindu Bandyopadhyay was the first Indian litterateur in colonial India to use his native detective narratives for the first for counteracting and negating the perceptive uniqueness and omnipotence of the Eurocentric

detective stories. It deserves mention that while early Indian detective stories written by Priyanath Mukhopadhyay, Panchkari Dey and Dinendra Kumar Roy testified to the direct influence of style and methodology of Orientalists like Doyle, Christie and Chesterton that actually subsumed their narratives in the realm of colonial literature, Bandyopadhyay successfully manipulated his Byomkesh Bakshi stories to assert his nationalistic sentiments and demonstrate basic errors inherent in the imperially compatible narratives.

Sherlock Holmes, to reiterate, is a typical British citizen who adheres to a strictly European lifestyle and food habits and who boasts that he is “the only one in the world...[:]...a consulting detective” (Doyle, *The Complete* 18). His self-assurance and confidence that border on pride make him refute every eminent literary character like Dupin and Gaboriau and scientific hypothesis like the Copernican theory that do not emanate from Britain or cater to the British imperial ideology (Doyle, *The Complete* 16). In the Holmes canon he explicitly identifies himself as a subject of the British Crown, whose chief responsibility is to ensure continuation of peace and prosperity in the imperial locus of England and apprehend or exterminate any anti-social, seditious or Oriental individual like Tonga of The Sign of Four with the potency of intimidating the English imperial interests. The detective’s pride and arrogance might be attributed to Doyle’s living through the period of *Victorian complacency*. His dismissal of the French detectives C. Auguste Dupin and Lecoq respectively as “very inferior fellow” and “miserable bungler” is not only a sign of his exterminating any challenge to his perceived omnipotence but also a coloniser’s attempt at nullifying competition for the Empire and chance of dominance by other imperial powers (18).

In most of the Sherlock Holmes stories, the detective exhibits a concern for either India, one of Britain's major colonies, that was under the direct British rule when Doyle published his detective stories between 1887 and 1927, or the United States of America, a colony of Britain until 1776. This particular behavioural trait of the sleuth exemplifies Doyle's Orientalism and advocacy of the spread and perpetuation of the British imperialistic control. Sherlock Holmes, therefore, remains the White detective who disciplines and punishes the Orientals and other colonised populace as well as the White anti-socials who interferes with the governance of the imperial nation, thereby positing a threat to its existence as a formidable coloniser.

When Saradindu Bandyopadhyay confessedly considered composing indigenous stories in 1929, the Eurocentric litterateurs like Holmes, Christie and Chesterton had long been enjoying hegemony in the realm of sleuth fiction (*Saradindu II* 646). Countering the popularity of the Sherlock Holmes stories, which Ousby, et al., describe as "the most famous and enduring contribution to detective fiction by any single writer", required not only a deft construction that decentralises aspects of White supremacy and involves encyclopaedic coverage, but also some specialties that would mark the intellectual prowess of the newly conceived investigator and project him, his methodology and his nationality as being at par with and exactly in opposition to Holmes's (*The Wordsworth* 850). Even though he began as a subaltern individual in a British colony, Byomkesh Bakshi soon garnered sufficient popularity to project himself as a formidable opposing force to Doyle's British detective. Moreover, having become

the centre of anti-imperial activities by the nationalistic Indians, Calcutta – the cultural capital of contemporary India – came to suitably counteract London’s importance as the locus of colonial culture.

In direct opposition to Holmes’s European dress of tweed coat and deerstalker cap, Bakshi sports Indian garments like *dhoti-punjabee*. He also follows ordinary Indian food habit and exhibits traditional Hindu faith. It is significant that while Holmes despises the middle class values, Bakshi himself belongs to the Bengali middle class society and embodies its ethical values (Kayman 49). To exemplify, he exhibits the characteristic Indian middle-class aversion to owning automobiles in “Bishupal Badh” (Bandyopadhyay, *Byomkesh* 971). Even though he perceptively accepts the Orientalist division of people into four colours – White, Yellow, Brown and Black – based on their complexion, Bandyopadhyay successfully demonstrates how his brown investigator counters every aspect of Holmes’s omnipotence through his native intelligence and investigative excellence. The causes for Bakshi’s extraordinariness and popularity lie in his being an ordinary representative of the Indian subaltern populace in every aspect of life, while eschewing Holmes’s eccentricity or Poirot’s French mannerisms. Saradindu Bandyopadhyay’s Byomkesh Bakshi narratives have thus remained representative Oriental postcolonial texts which would continue to counteract the perceived uniqueness and qualitative superiority of Arthur Conan Doyle’s Sherlock Holmes stories.

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