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, *Satyajiter* 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 suffer [1]. 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 buy 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 America[2]. On the other hand, amethyst is Latin American in origin (*Britannica I* 77). 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 haling 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 September1914 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 Scowrers in Vermissa, the corruption of law keepers like McGinty, the barbaric custom of branding the Scowrers (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 owe 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, Fucho, 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 gemstone[3]. 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 Horner 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[uire], 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 Leverton, 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 Burnwell. 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" – Thorneycroft Huxtable, M.A., Ph.D, and Baron Beverly, the Sixth Duke of Holdernesse, 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-back 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 cader 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 Mallows 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 pf 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 modem 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 Llasha 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 is 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 adorned 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 leapers 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 same 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 Musgráve 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-make 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 *bigha*-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 ironic depicts the diamond's stealth in spite of elaborate security arrangements.

Sir Digindra Narayan Roy has bee 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 vermillion 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 imperil 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 street (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 <u>A Study in Scarlet</u> 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 imperil 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 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 out rightly 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 century[6]. 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", "sparking 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 the 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 replie[s], '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 Netai 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 *sloka* 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 Bhola has been depicted as the ideal Indian servant. Ajit Bandyopadhyay observes,

> "Physically Bhola 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 Maharastra. The author himself resided in Maharastra between 1952 and 1970, until his death on 22 September. The narrative beings in an epistolary mode with two letters: one from the inquisitor to his associate and vice versa, and Bakshi beings 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 Sates 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 Scowrers*. 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 Scowrers*.

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 livid 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, attains 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 Maharastra 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 bee 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", "Shaiÿlo 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 <u>The Mahabharata</u> (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 June1967-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 invertus*, 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 Mukherkjees 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 Rakhal 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 perspective[7].

NOTES:

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