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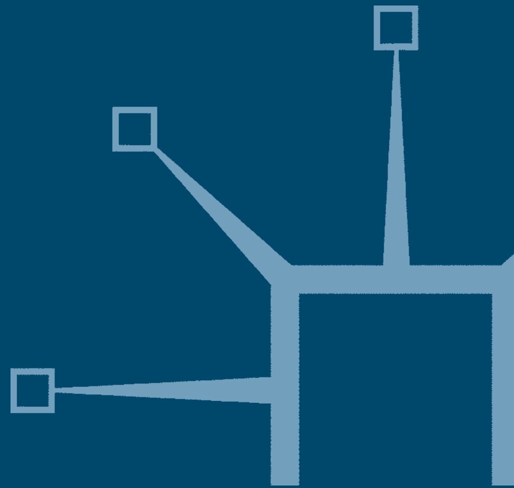
Satyajit Ray's The Chess Players and Postcolonial Theory

Culture, Labour and the Value of Alterity

Reena Dube



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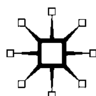

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First published 2005 by
PALGRAVE MACMILLAN
Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG21 6XS and
175 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10010
Companies and representatives throughout the world

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ISBN-13: 978–1–4039–4629–9 hardback
ISBN-10: 1–4039–4629–9 hardback

This book is printed on paper suitable for recycling and made from fully managed and sustained forest sources.

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Dube, Reena, 1961–
Satyajit Ray's The chess players and postcolonial theory : culture, labour and the value of alterity / Reena Dube.
p. cm. — (Language, discourse, society)
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 1–4039–4629–9 (cloth)
1. âátaraäja ke khilåòå (Motion picture) 2. Ray, Satyajit, 1921–1992—Criticism and interpretation. 3. India—Social conditions—1947– I. Title. II. Language, discourse, society (Palgrave Macmillan (Firm))

PN1997.S1784D83 2005
791.4302′33′092—dc22

2004058340

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
14 13 12 11 10 09 08 07 06 05

Printed and bound in Great Britain by
Antony Rowe Ltd, Chippenham and Eastbourne

For My Parents
Jagdish Prasad Dube and Saroj Rani Dube

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Contents

Foreword viii

Preface xi

1 The Discourse of Colonial Enterprise and Its Representation of the Other Through the Expanded Cultural Critique 1

2 Childhood: Work, Play, and Shame Friendship in the Discourse of Enterprise 41

3 Towards a Theory of Subaltern and Nationalist Genres: The Post-1857 Lakhnavi Tall Tales and Their Nationalist Appropriation in Premchand's "The Chess Players" (1924) 85

4 Comic Representations of Indigenous Enterprise in Daniel Mann's *The Teahouse of the August Moon* (1956) and Satyajit Ray's *The Chess Players* (1977) 130

5 Refuting the Expanded Cultural Critique: The Construction of Wajid Ali Shah's Alterity 169

Notes 199

Bibliography 236

Filmography 243

Index 246

Foreword

One of the greatest problems facing the development of human knowledge today is the problem of specialisation. Specialisation is always necessary in order to attain a detailed understanding of the cultural object under examination but that necessary specialization becomes an obstacle when it prevents the placing of that object in the wider social contexts, which allow of real illumination.

This general problem is particularly acute in the case of film studies. Film studies constituted itself as a discipline around a detailed understanding of the formal structure of film, the specific articulation of sound and image, which differentiates each film. This study became a reproducible pedagogy when the technological advance of videotape allowed every student and teacher to enjoy a relation to the image, which in earlier decades had been the preserve of the editor and the director. In many institutions the birth of film studies saw this study of film bureaucratically separated from both the humanities and the social sciences. Such separation could find some justification in the specific formal articulation of film. However, it ignored the centrality of film to twentieth-century history, a centrality often commented in the intensely political role of film in both Soviet Russia and Nazi Germany but just as central to the history of the United States where both the Hays Code and the use of blacklisting in Hollywood after the war are best understood as deliberate attempts to limit the social force of the image. As important, this separation ignored how the wider culture surfaced within the film text, as adaptation, as music, as performance. Reena Dube's brilliant analysis of Satyajit Ray's *The Chess Players* ignores the separations which impoverish much film analysis. Dube is determined to situate this film both within the social forces of its moment of production (1977) and also in the complex presence in *The Chess Players* of a whole variety of textual and cultural histories. Dube locates the film as part of the thinking which produced the collective of *Subaltern Studies* historians and their influential analyses. The subalternists argued that the movement of national liberation which had produced the independent India of 1947 had been fatally flawed in that it had copied the colonial oppressor both in the form of the state it adopted and in the notion of citizenship it espoused – both ignored the reality and complexity of Indian history and experience. In class terms the native bourgeoisie had conceived

the national liberation struggle in terms of their own production of citizen subjects worthy of participation in a modern nation. But these new citizen subjects, modelled on British politics, ruled the subaltern classes with as little attention to their experience as the former masters of the days of the Raj.

The subalternist's analysis grew out of the disillusion with the society of post-Independence India and particularly the catastrophe of Indira Gandhi's declaration of a state of emergency in 1975. Although the film-maker Satyajit Ray had no direct, *documented* contact with the subalternists, he worked and lived in the same Bengal society as did the majority of the radical historians. Dube argues that his film *The Chess Players* should be read from the same perspective. Ray's film, however, has resources not available, to the historians, the resources of cinema. A theoretical weakness of the subalternists was that their analysis of the inadequacy of the national bourgeoisie's model of both subject and state and its erasure of subaltern experience could not produce an alternative model – that had to come from the subaltern classes themselves. The mistake which had been made once could not be made twice. In many ways this mistake was the mistake of a Marxism which was then understood as fatally linked to the particular developments of capitalism in Western Europe. Marx's announcement in the Communist Manifesto that capitalism's great gift to humanity had been its release from "the idiocy of the village" increasingly seemed a simple repetition of bourgeois norms of modernity which were as dangerous in their environmental as in their cultural consequences. But the risk of refusing to speak for the subaltern, of refusing to offer an inadequate discourse to represent an experience which was not directly understood, was that the subaltern might not speak at all. The subalternist intellectual was left attending a potentially evermore radical voice in an evermore actually vacuous political position.

Dube shows how Ray avoids this fate by anchoring his film in the one medium where the subaltern does speak – in the form of popular jokes. Ray doesn't choose just any popular jokes; he chooses the tall tales of the city of Lucknow and in particular a joke which tells of the fall of the city and its kingdom of Awadh. The joke attributes the fall of the kingdom to an indolent ruling class too busy playing chess to notice what the British were up to. Ray comes to this story through the nationalist fiction of Premchand but Ray does not accept the typical nationalist tale that Premchand tells, which castigates the decadent aristocracy for not being earnestly bourgeois enough to fight the English and be worthy of statehood. Rather Ray goes back to the ambivalent subaltern version

which both mocks and admires an aristocracy which refuses to submit to the clock time and work ethic of the imperial Raj. It is impossible to summarise the extraordinarily delicate web that Dube weaves in her analysis of the extraordinarily delicate web that is Ray's film. What can be said is that even if all the specific linearities were to be challenged, and the force of the book means that it will certainly have challengers, any future analysis will need to rival the scope and range of this book as it moves from Indian history to Robinson Crusoe, from neo-realism to contemporary Hollywood.

What lies at the centre of this book is a passion, a passion for the city of Lucknow and its vanished past, the kingdom which had abandoned the Persian language of its conquerors for a society in which Hindi and Urdu were both validated and in which Hindu and Muslim could live together. It is this heritage that Ray sketches in his film; it is this heritage that Dube promotes in her analysis. Its relevance to a time of Hindu and Muslim fundamentalism is obvious. It may be that Dube like others who have found a value in aristocracy from Coleridge and Carlyle to T. S. Eliot can be accused of wishful thinking, of valorizing a society that never actually existed. But even when every historical fact has been challenged we will be left with the simplest of Lakhnawi tall tales: the two nawabs who meet on a station platform and who when the train arrives are so busy saying "After you" that that the train leaves without them. For Indian nationalism the joke is on the nawabs unable to board the train of modernization but no one can read this book without considering that perhaps the joke is on the world of timetables and anger and not on the leisurely courtesy of the nawabs.

Colin MacCabe
Pittsburgh, January 2005

Preface

This book began with two dream projects in mind. First, I wished to interrogate how the colonial and postcolonial gendered worker is ideologically interpellated and discursively inserted into the grand narrative of global capitalism. My second dream project was to execute the first project through thick descriptions of postcolonial cinematic texts. It is in the conjunctures and conflicts between these two projects that this book takes shape: I try to understand how discourse mediates labour and its value, and how language and the conventions of discourse virtually determine the signification we attach to each labouring activity. Films are cultural texts that can provide us with the sediments and traces of dominant, popular, and critical discourses about labour and its value.

Meditating and thinking through how to analyze, represent, and write about postcolonial cultural production is not simply the functionalist work I had to do to clear a path for my substantive thesis on labour; rather, cultural labour is a central and inextricable part of my examination of the discourses of labour. It is not enough to study, as the Subaltern historian Dipesh Chakrabarty does with considerable brilliance, the history of the jute workers of Calcutta, or the painstakingly researched histories of industrial workers' strikes, the unions or peasant rebellions. The history of labour in colonial India – whether it be the subhuman conditions in which indentured labourers were procured, transported, and worked to early death, or the bonded labour that continue to serve the feudal landlord and moneylender for generation after generation, or the exploitation and dispossession of the tribals – is a dispiriting example of the overt and subterranean accommodations between British colonial capitalism and the feudal practices of domination in India. It may seem callous and unfeeling to suggest, as this book does in fact suggest, that the normed subject of the discourses of colonial labour is the political-military-economic labours of the indigenous elite in the colonized country.

Thus in the broadest sense this book is about the discourses of labour in colonial and postcolonial conditions. More specifically it investigates

the discourse of "colonial enterprise," a term I borrow and expand from the text of Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719). I examine how the colonial administrators, officers, and historians represented their task of the colonial takeover of India and the ways in which the labour of the colonized populace was inserted into the official discourse of colonial enterprise. I argue that the binary half of colonial enterprise is the "expanded cultural critique," a term I use to refer to the ways in which indigenous culture, work, and play practices were discursively mapped by colonial enterprise. I elaborate this term, which is critical to my work, fully in Chapter 1. Here I briefly note that it is a term that signifies the discursive devaluation of native labour and culture. This devaluation makes possible, among other things, the supra-valuation of colonial enterprise.

My interest has been in exploring how the male worker (elite as well as subaltern) is inserted into the discourse of capitalist colonialist enterprise. How this discursive formation is inherited and further reproduced and elaborated by the nation state and the discourse of nationalism. My interest lay in doing detailed analysis of how labour is characterized and/or stigmatized as productive and unproductive. How the cultural practices of a specific time in history – Bengal in 1793, and Awadh in 1856 – are recorded and memorialized in terms of valueless, primitive play versus useful nation-building work. In other words how culture is mapped onto the terrain of work under specific conditions of colonialism and in nationalist discourse.

One of my central arguments is that the discourse of enterprise is not merely a colonial phenomenon. The discourse of enterprise continues to be re-invented at disparate sites in our own times: in Hollywood films, American television serials, Indian films and literature, diaspora literature, and in children's literature. Therefore any study or investigation of the continuing pervasiveness, persuasiveness, and relevance of the discourse of enterprise has to aggressively traverse disciplinary boundaries of film and literature, as well as national boundaries, and analyze texts across cultures and centuries, mapping the distance between "First" and "Third" world cultural production. The axis of this work is centre and the periphery, colonial and indigenous, and elite as well as subaltern discourses of labour. The proper subject of the discourse of enterprise is the straight, white man of property and the proper subject of the expanded cultural critique is the elite, brown man of property. I have deliberately refrained from including woman as a kind of supplemental category with a chapter devoted to the subject. Women are either absent from the discourse of enterprise (note the aggressive

exclusion of women in Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*) or make their token appearance as proof of an argument. The discourses of colonial women's labour would generate a booklength argument, which I hope to work on in the future.

My thesis about colonial enterprise and the expanded cultural critique would not be adequate if I did not engage with the question of how historians, scholars, and cultural workers (film makers) have resisted the totalizing impulse of colonial enterprise. Therefore approximately half of my book is devoted to the question of resistance, specifically cultural and discursive resistance. I investigate how historically Awadh and the culture of Awadh, folklore, and the popular oral history surrounding the annexation of Awadh resisted the broad characterizations of colonialist and nationalist discourses and offered a different understanding of the defeat of Awadh's values and culture. The question that haunts all historical and cultural writing about Awadh is: how could such an evolved, self-reflective, and vibrant culture be defeated and erased by the British and consigned to failure of excess by the nationalists? I do not explore the question of armed resistance that ensued in Awadh in 1857–1858 against British rule. The results of that moment of resistance are well known in terms of British massacre of the resistance fighters and the British campaign of violent suppression and erasure of the Muslim population and culture. Whereas in 1857–1858 Hindus and Muslims fought against the British together, a hundred years later Independence was inaugurated in the subcontinent with the partition of India and the horrific violence between Hindus and Muslims.

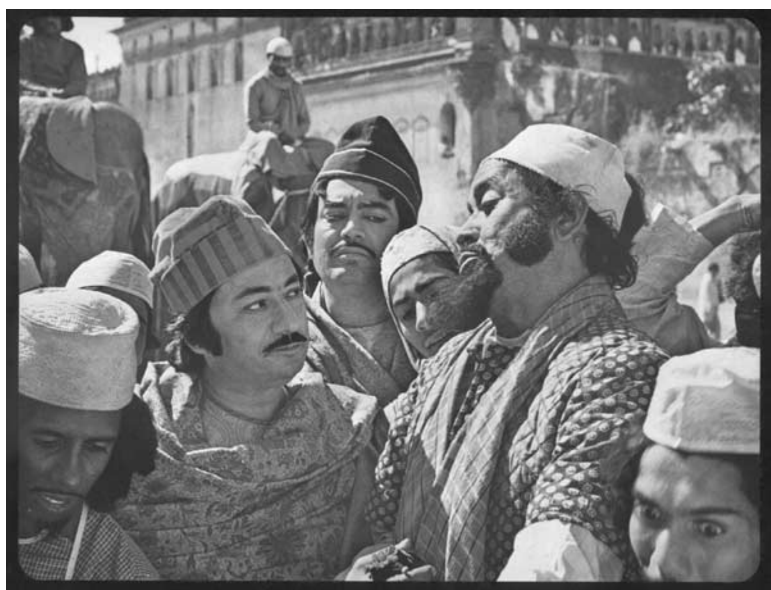
Far from generalizing and universalizing the indigenous elite male, I construct a bounded and delimited framework to examine colonialist and nationalist discourses that name and characterize elite male labour. In bracketing the indigenous elite male as the subject of the colonial discourse of the expanded cultural critique, I disavow the privileging of the indigenous elite. Often postcolonial theory falls prey to the tendency to generalize from the perspective of the postcolonial metropolitan elite. There is a hegemonizing tendency in this impulse. The metropolitan elite may claim to speak on behalf of the rest of the population, but that claim is suspect. By foregrounding the indigenous elite male and the discourses that map his abilities and his right to govern, I confront the discourses and cultural texts that were most seductive and emotionally compelling for me as a postcolonial subject, namely the discourses and literary tropes of Indian nationalism.

The fragmentation of Ray's *The Chess Players* in different chapters of the book requires explanation. This structural device began as a necessity:

there were levels and levels of historical explanation required to make the film intelligible. In the process I found that this device allowed me to suggest that I was not invested in the blind admiration of Satyajit Ray, or the fetishizing of the film text. The theoretical argument took precedence over textual interpretation. I also asked myself why I had chosen this particular Ray film, *The Chess Players*. The reason is that this is the only film of Ray that demonstrates that he was not simply a regionalist intellectual. There is a popular nativist critical approach to Satyajit Ray's cinema that tends to make him Bengal-centric. The implicit theory of this approach is that the normative postcolonial cultural worker is one who is close to his regional culture, and has an organic relation to his language, his people, and his homeland. The telos of this critical approach is to suggest that only the Bengali movie viewer truly understands the inflexions and nuances of a Ray film. There is no doubt that Ray lived and breathed his regional culture in a way that enriched his art. But Ray's political vision was freed of regionalist associations when he travelled out of Bengal and dared to make a film about a place that was not his birthplace, in a Hindi–Urdu language that was not as familiar to him as the Bengali language, in tribute to a writer (Premchand) who was not part of the Bengali intelligentsia. Ray could make this cultural bridge because he approached another provincial culture with love, and he understood that culture with love and appreciation. It seems to me that there is a parable for cultural work in postcolonial India here.

In the present climate of racism and Hindu fundamentalism in postcolonial India where the Indian Muslims are being targeted and marginalized by the hegemonic Hindu fundamentalist discourses, critical engagement with an older Hindu and Muslim assimilative culture is called for. Uttar Pradesh, the state of which Lucknow is the capital, has long been viewed as part of the Hindi–Urdu belt, other states included in this are Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, and Rajasthan. This region has been seen as a formidable zone of power in Indian politics and has defined the socio-political agenda of the country for many decades. The agitation against the Mandal Commission, and the destruction of Babri Masjid (which took place in Ayodhya, a few miles from Lucknow) are just two of the most recent divisive events that have taken place in this region and that have defined the political climate of the country. My work tries to evoke, remember, and re-enact the synthesis of Hindu and Muslim cultures in nineteenth-century Awadh and work against the amnesia about the Hindu–Muslim past in postcolonial India.

I wish to thank Jonathan Arac for his support, encouragement, and warm friendship, and his critical engagement with my work. I also owe thanks to John Beverley, Steve Carr, and James Knapp. Colin MacCabe has been a wonderful and generous reader, I greatly appreciate his help and support. I am grateful to Dilip Basu for his generosity and help in providing me with the film stills for this book and the Satyajit Ray Film & Study Collection at University of California, Santa Cruz and Sandip Ray for giving me permission to use his stills. I wish to express my gratitude and thanks to Rashmi Dube Bhatnagar for all her generous help and support. Renu Dube's warm and wonderful friendship is a continual source of joy and support, a life source for me, this work could not have been imagined and executed without her.



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1

The Discourse of Colonial Enterprise and Its Representation of the Other Through the Expanded Cultural Critique

Within colonial capitalism it is not just wealth, raw materials, and trade balance that shifts from the periphery to the centre. This shift is preceded, accompanied, and followed by a powerful and pervasive discourse event. I name this discourse event "British colonial enterprise" and its binary half "the discursive devaluation of native labour and culture."[1] Colonial historiography and literature mark this discourse event by inscribing into language the supra-valuation of British colonial enterprise and the devaluation of native culture and work practices. The supra-valuation of enterprise is made possible through making indigenous work and play appear inherently unproductive and valueless. Enterprise depends on the following binary oppositions: colonial enterprise names the industriousness and productive labour of empire building; it is a discourse that represents itself as primarily oriented towards work, even play within enterprise is oriented towards work and is a means of learning the rules of work; the binary half of the discourse is indigenous work and play, described as wasteful and unproductive exercises in valueless activity. The discourse of enterprise designates indigenous work habits, cast of mind, physiognomy, habits of work and play as primitive, childish, and pre-modern.[2]

I do not mean to suggest that the discourse of enterprise emerges exclusively at the site of the colonial encounter between empire and colony, Britain and India. So far as the discourse of enterprise can be historically and discursively located, it emerges out of post-Enlightenment ideas and rhetoric. One of the sites at which the discourse of British enterprise emerges is Daniel Defoe's 1719 fictional travelogue *Robinson Crusoe*. *Robinson Crusoe*'s influence can be gauged by the fact that

post-Enlightenment thinkers and philosophers like Marx, Thoreau, Macaulay, Dickens, J. S. Mill, and James Joyce have engaged with its presuppositions.[3] Moreover the narrative of *Crusoe* is continually re-invented and re-invested in our own times within popular culture and within the category of literature.[4]

The persuasiveness of enterprise requires certain foreclosures, and it is worth examining in some detail how these foreclosures operate in the agricultural and ecological narratives in Defoe's text. In order to represent the island as the empty space which is made productive by the Englishman's labours, the text describes a parable-like incident. Crusoe discovers corn growing magically by the side of his dwelling. At first he attributes the "miracle" to the agency of God. He says, "God had miraculously caus'd this Grain to grow without any Help of seed sown, and it was directed purely for my Sustenance, on that wild miserable Place."[5] Later the reasonable and rational Crusoe realizes that it was indeed he who had thrown the few grains of corn at the side of his dwelling. Even though the island's climate was unsuitable for growing corn, the place where Crusoe absent-mindedly throws the husks was in the "Shade of a high Rock" so it "sprang up immediately; whereas, if I had thrown it anywhere else, at that time, it had been burnt up, and destroy'd."[6] In order for the discourse of Crusoe's enterprise to come into being, land has to be depopulated, the natives depicted as savage cannibals, and nature has to be represented as inexhaustible.[7] Enterprise signifies a coercive rather than harmonious relation to nature, land as nature must bear the imprint of the Englishman's will. Crusoe says, "But all I could make use of was, All that was valuable."[8] Land, water, plants, and trees have to be freely available but are valueless, unless harnessed to Crusoe's one-man economy of individualism.

The rest of the corn-growing episode reproduces for the reader the colonial narrative of the magicalized labour of the enterprising Englishman. Crusoe's enterprise lies in single-handedly starting corn cultivation in spite of the absence of tools. He is a self-sufficient farmer who grows enough to feed himself, Friday, and the other savages. In the corn episode Defoe distorts the history of the human evolution of the specialized and skilled practices of agriculture, irrigation, harvesting, and food production. The discourse of enterprise enables Defoe's Crusoe to replicate and foreshorten the social labour-time necessary for agriculture. Furthermore, the Enlightenment discourse allows Defoe to telescope and replicate thousands of years of intergenerational knowledge possessed by peasants and cultivators. Nature magically assists the enterprising Englishman in his efforts. In itself Defoe's story would be a theoretical

and literary fiction if it was not sustained by the binary opposition between Crusoe's labours and Friday's servitude. The enterprising nature of Crusoe's labours on the island is sustained by the figure who is at the margins of the text, the figure of the unenterprising native who has neither the capacity nor the will to transform land through his enterprising labour.

Crusoe's colonial enterprise on the island: The constructedness of his claim to land, enterprise, and liberty

This section examines key features of British enterprise as it is discursively mapped by Defoe's text, particularly the constructedness of Crusoe's claim to the island as private property. The text begins with a crisis-laden scene concerning the shift of values from father to son. According to Crusoe's father, the land as signifying nation and family ("My father's house and my native country") should be conjoined to labour in the sense of personal endeavour ("raising my fortune by application and industry") in order to yield economic and moral profit in the "middle station of life [which] was calculated for all kinds of virtues."[9] Crusoe's father describes the colonial capitalist discourse of labour, "He told me it was for men of desperate fortunes...who went abroad upon adventures, to rise by Enterprise."[10] Robinson Crusoe's father calls the new, chimerical, and uncertain discourse of labour enterprise.[11]

Trade cannot by itself generate enterprise, the material practices of trade must be discursively conjoined to the image of the liberty-loving Englishman. Crusoe's first forays into trading goods invoke "great labor and hazard" and generate profit, yet his trade does not as yet generate the supra-valuation of enterprise.[12] It is only when Crusoe is made a slave and contrives to regain his liberty that Defoe shows us the value-making discursive relation between enterprise and liberty. This discursive relation marks the distinction between the liberty-loving Englishman and slaves who have a slavish mentality. Crusoe does not have an automatic entitlement to superiority until he works for his freedom by opportune action, planning, and decisiveness. Most importantly, Crusoe's actions fulfill the central criterion of enterprise when he regretfully sells the devoted slave Xury and shows that his dedication to his own liberty does not logically extend to his commitment to "the poor boy's liberty."[13] This distinction is necessary, for the discourse of English enterprise is predicated on the incommensurable distance between English liberty and labour versus the liberty and labour of the Moorish slave.

The discourse formation of English enterprise requires that the Englishman seize and monopolize the eighteenth-century trade that maximizes surplus value, the slave trade. As a planter Crusoe ponders the rate of profit that is available to him, "I had more than four times the value of my first cargo."[14] Crusoe's thoughts dwell on how to secure more than four times the value of his labour, a desire which he describes as "a rash and immoderate desire of rising faster than the nature of the thing admitted."[15] The means for "rising faster" is not Crusoe's Brazilian plantation, which can only generate a certain amount of profit. Defoe explicitly suggests that the slave trade offers the maximum opportunity for profit to Crusoe, even though the buying of slaves under the terms of the Spanish–Portuguese monopoly under the Asiento Treaty is "excessive dear."[16] Thus Defoe's narrative fantasizes that Englishmen like Crusoe dictate the terms for valuing their labour by seizing slaves on their own without intermediaries, a fantasy that would be fulfilled in 1726 with England's monopoly of the slave trade.

In this textual reference to the eighteenth-century slave trade, Crusoe as an individual entrepreneur is identified with England. Thus Crusoe's journey to the African coast is presented by the text as an enterprising expedition within which the individual Englishman is identical in purpose with the English nation. Both the state and the individual must be enterprising in order to defeat European competitors like Spain and Portugal. Therefore enterprise is a type of competitive labour in which individual competitiveness automatically doubles as value-making patriotic service to the nation. Crusoe's work can only secure him the contentment of the "middle-state" in England.[17] Even in Brazil, Crusoe's toil produces a limited level of profit. It is only within the relation to the island that Crusoe's labour signifies much more than it does outside that relation. The island has to be depopulated so that it can facilitate a particular colonial relation between land and labour, which Ranajit Guha calls the rule of property, and which I call the new value of enterprising labour.[18]

In order to understand the constructedness of Crusoe's claim to the island, I investigate the sources of pleasure in the text.[19] Defoe makes the discourse of enterprise persuasive to us through narrative pleasure. The text performs this task by stripping Crusoe of everything that is known and familiar to him. The narrative pleasure is inaugurated by the displeasure of the dream-like shipwreck, all the better to focus readerly attention on every task performed by Crusoe. Crusoe uses his physical and mental powers, and as he does so he also describes each task in meticulous detail, dwelling on the "great deal of labor and pain" and

the great "labor and difficulty" of each task.[20] Crusoe insistently calls attention to the fact that the performance of the simplest task is labour-intensive, for "it cost me much labor" and it was "very laborious and tedious work."[21]

In this paean to work, the narrative pleasure is composed with such dexterity that when the scenario of complete destruction is modified – bit by bit the ship yields tools and gunpowder and necessary goods to Crusoe – the reader is persuaded that this is the magical reward for Crusoe's labours, the enhancement due to the resourceful and hard-working Crusoe. The land has to be depopulated and barren, and the ship of goods has to be first wrecked and then partially recovered in order that the "personal virtue" of Crusoe comes to the fore. The island virtually rocks to the rhythm of the Englishman's labour: Crusoe notes that the rock "yielded easily to the labour I bestow'd on it."[22] Both land and labour transform each other magically; if one were to remove the narrative of labour in the text, it would not be possible to arrive at the value equation of enterprise within which Crusoe lays claim to the island as "my own meer property; so that I had an undoubted right of dominion."[23]

In order to study the constructedness of this discursive logic, we need to ask what is missing from the definition of labour and what are the distinctive characteristics of this conception of labour. Enterprise does not refer to the values of communal and co-operative labour. The text nowhere indicates that the pleasure-giving and value-enhancing quality of human labour lies in a sense of interdependent community. The text holds the social character of Crusoe's labour in abeyance to emphasize that enterprise aligns the individual labouring man to the rational abstraction of the nation, but not the ideal of interdependent community. The colonial enterprise not only depopulates the land and erases the labour and livelihood of the natives, it also erases community and the intricate relations of inter-dependence that exist within a community.

The discourse of enterprise is premised on the notion, rather the acceptance of the notion that in the context of empire and land-as-colony, the Englishman's labour of making a table and chair is equal to the superior civilizational value of reason in action. This mode of reasoning is used by the nineteenth-century English governor of Hong Kong who observed of the indolent Filipino, "he wants no clock to tell him of the flight of time – no table, nor chairs, nor plates, nor cutlery, to assist him at his meals."[24] The discursive logic of this remark is that while the lazy native makes no attempt to transform his living conditions by the products of his labour, the Englishman redoubles his strenuous efforts to re-make

the savage land with the symbols of a civilized way of life. It will not do for Robinson Crusoe to use a fallen tree log as a table, he justifies the labour of making a table in terms of enjoyment and necessity, he must "apply" himself to making to "necessary" things which would enable him "to enjoy the few comforts I had in the world" of writing and eating like an Englishman.

Crusoe's table and chair mark an important moment in the new value formation in the text. If Crusoe made the same table and chair in England or Brazil, with or without the necessary tools, its exchange value would be unremarkable. It is only *within the relation to the island* that Crusoe's labour in the table and chair becomes the paradigmatic example of how "every man" can become rational man "by stating and squaring everything by reason, and by making the most rational judgment of things." Enterprising man is both master of nature, and "master of every mechanick art." It is the one form of labour through which man comes to realize, "I wanted nothing but I could have made it" and so his own labour makes him master of his destiny.[25]

Crusoe's table and chair offer us the fiction of self-determining labour. At the same time the text makes it clear that English enterprise is not autonomous at all but is completely dependent on the island-as-empire for its enhancement of value. The enterprising qualities of daring and initiative may be admirable in themselves, nevertheless there is no natural and inevitable logic by which those qualities will have an exchange value that is equal to ownership of property. It is only within the relation to the island that Crusoe's enterprise signifies the abbreviated stages of human history (Crusoe moves from hunting to farming to tools to production beyond subsistence goods) and civilizational value (the table and chair). Furthermore, the fiction of self-determining labour represented by the table and chair also includes the fiction of hegemony. There is no way that Crusoe can demonstrate that the labour of making a table and chair has an *inherent* significance as superior civilizational value, although Defoe's text depends on persuading readers that it is so. Thus there are three key elements to Defoe's resolution of the problem of value. The first element is persuasion: his resolution works only if we are persuaded of Crusoe's superior civilizational labour in making a table and chair. Second, it is only in relation to the island-space that the superior value of the Englishman's labour can be asserted. Third, it is only the table and chair that can signify this superior value, not any alternative activity like the composition of a poem or music.

Hollywood's cinematic conventions for representing enterprising labour

We can gauge the continuing significance of Crusoe's chair in Hollywood films made in the late twentieth century. *The Barbarian and the Geisha* (1958) re-narrativizes the magical enhancement of Crusoe's chair in the context of the historic 1854 expedition sent to open Japan to American trade. The expedition resulted in a treaty which gave the Americans access to two Japanese ports. The American ambassador (John Wayne) persuades the Japanese that he is not a "barbarian" and that both countries would benefit if the Japanese Shogun permitted trade with the United States. The focus of the film is the rhetorical strategies by which the Japanese can be persuaded to trade, indeed persuasion of the non-Western Other is the keynote of the film. *The Barbarian and the Geisha* shows the ways in which the American ambassador and his interpreter-scholar assistant persuade the Japanese to support him and help him secure an interview with the Shogun. The ambassador first secures the Geisha's support, thereafter he proceeds to win over the common people, who in turn persuade the Japanese authorities to help the American.

The centre-piece of the dramatic encounter between the American ambassador and the boy Shogun consists of a prolonged sequence concerning Wayne's gift of a Western-style chair to the Shogun. Viewers are prepared for this scene by earlier scenes in which we see the American ambassador's distress that he does not have an appropriately lavish gift to impress the Shogun. Therefore the film represents the gift of the chair as a comical example of American resourcefulness, successful bravado, and sheer bluster. The joke depends on the cinematic audience appreciating Japanese naiveté in accepting an ordinary wooden chair as a gift fit for royalty. The camera focuses on the boy Shogun's fascinated gaze at the alien object of the chair. Viewers are made aware that the Shogun and his courtiers sit cross-legged on cushions and do not understand the concept of the chair. The Shogun looks around at all his councillors for guidance, while the American ambassador and his Japanese supporters hold their breath in suspense. Finally the Shogun walks up to the chair, gingerly touches it, and sits down on it. The camera provides a back view of the Japanese monarch, panning down to his feet wiggling in discomfort to show that he does not know where to place his feet once he sits on the chair.

Once the Shogun accepts the gift of the chair and agrees to trade relations with United States, the film reasserts the value equation signified by Crusoe's chair and table on the island. Back in his homeland the

American ambassador's chair would have an exchange value that represents the labour expended on it and the value that is socially determined as the money price of that labour. It is only in the context of the American–Japanese trade relations that the American ambassador's chair acquires an enhanced significance that is out of all proportion to the human labour expended on it. The film's emphasis on persuasion indicates that the magically enhanced civilizational value of the American ambassador's chair depends on the Japanese being persuaded that it is so.

The Mosquito Coast (1986) performs a significant reading of the Crusoe narrative that is poised between critique and recuperation.[26] In *The Mosquito Coast* the hero is the good American (Harrison Ford) with pioneer values, who feels betrayed by modern American society and, like Robinson Crusoe, turns his back on his homeland in order to find a new colony in Nicaragua.[27] Ford's colony is premised on the old-fashioned American virtues of organic and self-reliant community – eat what you grow, invent what you need, practice extremes of austerity for the sake of higher ideals. The patriarchal ordering in Ford's colony is signalled by calling his wife "Mother" and expecting her to cook and sew clothes while he labours outside the home. The film makes condensed references to the tropes and conventions associated with the American frontier, and re-associates them with the colonialist Crusoe figure.

The film presents enterprising American labour as a vigorous aspiration of modern right-wing white male Americans. The film begins with the hero, Allie Fox, articulating right-wing resentment and grievances as he parades before his son and grumbles about not being able to lead his life as an independent inventor/entrepreneur. At this level the film director, Peter Weir, suggests that the Crusoe impulse is alive and well in modern United States. While the film is unambiguous in suggesting a continuity between Robinson Crusoe's island and Peter Weir's *Mosquito Coast*, the interpretations of the director and the actor are ambivalent concerning the value-creating possibilities of the labour of the new American Robinson Crusoe. The entire episode of the American Crusoe inventing an ice-making machine in the heart of the jungle is laden with absurdity.

The film is clearly fascinated by the energy and creativity of the Crusoe figure; however, the film also clearly suggests that the directions those energies take are doomed and destructive. Ford/Crusoe's colonialist utopian project is threatened by the evils of commercial-minded villains from without, and it is also threatened from within by the estrangement of his wife and children. The hero attempts to solve the problem of value, not on American soil, but by resurrecting pioneer values on the

Mosquito Coast. He uses the labour of the natives and his family. His own labour is superior because he is white, male, a born leader, and a successful inventor/entrepreneur. Yet by the end of the movie, those values are rejected by the hero's son who has idolized his father until he is forced to confront the lived reality of his father's discourse of enterprise.

Hollywood's cinematic conventions for the Crusoe narrative can accommodate a politically conservative film like *The Barbarian and the Geisha* as well as a more ambivalent film text like *The Mosquito Coast* at the other end of the political spectrum. The resilience of these literary-cinematic conventions can be gauged by the fact that they can be redeployed to present the perspective of the other. For example *Out of Paradise* (1990) is a Hollywood film that is openly sympathetic to Japanese-Americans and sets out a revisionist history of a historical event in American history that is generally erased and hurriedly glossed over, namely the 1942–1945 internment of Japanese-Americans. As a cinematic symbol of enterprise, Crusoe's chair is a significant trope in the diasporic imagination of the Japanese who migrate to the United States. *Out of Paradise* (1990) sympathetically documents the 1942–1945 internment of Japanese-Americans in the wave of paranoia that swept over America in the aftermath of the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor in the Second World War.

In the film the heroine's father makes a chair before he dies. The making of the chair is his single statement to his family. He is a first-generation immigrant who came to the United States and prospered, and the making of the chair symbolizes his hopes and dreams of sharing in the enhanced civilizational value of Crusoe's chair. However, the fact that he makes the chair and sits on it every day outside his internment camp dwelling underscores the fact that the enhanced value of Crusoe's chair does not extend to the Japanese immigrant. The supra-valuation of Crusoe's chair is restricted to the white male Robinson Crusoe and the American ambassador in *The Barbarian and the Geisha*. In *Out of Paradise* when the family leaves the internment camp, the camera lingers over the father's chair covered with snow. The daughter's voice on the sound track notes that the father died a broken and silent man, estranged from everyone, an object of suspicion due to his prolonged questioning by US authorities, shunned by his own community, and estranged from his family. The film suggests that the making of the chair is the father's statement concerning his aspirations for value, and the failure of that aspiration, in his life as an immigrant to America.

Enterprise involves a level-headedness in crisis. Crusoe displays his level-headedness after the shipwreck, as he reflects: "It was in vain to sit

still and wish for what was not to be had, and this extremity rous'd my application." Enterprise also connotes stretching the limits of human endurance, or in Crusoe's words "to go beyond what I should have been able to have done upon another occasion."[28] Crusoe describes his crisis-management, "then I call'd a council, that is to say, in my thoughts."[29] The religio-moral dimension of colonial capitalism follows from these human qualities. Mr Englishman's labour becomes an ever-renewable source of moral growth and spiritual reflection, generating his fitful communion with God, peopling his solitude, affording a variety to his life in the diversity of tasks he performs, and averting the dangers of despair and madness.

Enterprising labour involves a particular combination of resolution, resourcefulness, and daring. The cinematic convention used by Hollywood action films and science fiction films to indicate enterprising labour is the paradigmatic scene of the hero or heroine who plans, takes all the elements of a perilous situation into account, gives each other one last look, raises his/her gun and leaps into action. The goal of enterprising action is variously defined as defeating the "Jap" or savage or alien monster-opponents of the enterprising protagonist who lack the ability to deal with a crisis by planning and executing the plan into action. In the 1993 Hollywood film *In the Line of Fire*, the main character Frank is haunted by his past failure. He was one of the presidential bodyguards in the 1963 assassination of President Kennedy. Frank feels that he failed to demonstrate the enterprising action that could have saved the president's life. Frank is given an opportunity to redeem himself when Leary, a would-be presidential assassin, contacts him. From then on the film becomes a contest between Frank's enterprise and Leary's criminal endeavour. The distinguishing characteristic of Frank's enterprise is that he never stops working. The enterprising hero is obsessed with work, even after he is dismissed from his assignment because his boss feels that Frank's meticulous attention to detail borders on paranoia and causes public embarrassment to the president. Ultimately Frank's enterprise wins out. He is able to outwit the assassin because the second time around, he displays the American colonialist's level-headedness in crisis.

The expanded cultural critique: The persuasive aspect of colonial appropriations of land

In British India, colonial labour discourse did not focus on the peasant, the artisan, or the industrial worker; instead it challenged the labour of

the indigenous ruling elites. The labour of the peasant, artisan, and industrial worker was taken for granted; conversely the onus was put on the indigenous elite to prove that they were competent for the superior labour of political, military, and economic leadership. The analysis of the discourses of labour in conditions of colonial domination has to pose the axiomatic question, should the conditions of labour determine the productivity of labour or should there be an absolute, abstract, trans-historical criterion of efficiency in judging labour productivity? The answer to this question is provided by colonial enterprise. Enterprising labour triumphs over inhospitable material conditions of production: put Mr Englishman (the name given to Crusoe by the Portuguese captain) on an island and he will master the conditions of alien geography, unsuitable climate, unknown soil, and hostile cannibals. The enterprising hero magically asserts a level of productivity that would make an English yeoman proud.

Colonialist enterprise is embellished and rejuvenated by stories of Englishmen valiantly trudging over rain forests and crocodile-infested swamps in Africa and Asia and sustaining an increased level of efficient production in the building of railways, roads, telegraph lines, and revenue collection. The colonialist fiction of condition-free absolute productivity displayed by colonial enterprise does not take cognizance of the array of resources – cheap labour, economic domination, and military coercion – that undergird the colonizer's labour. The roads and railways of British India were built by the natives whose labour was marshalled by the British officials, often it was forced labour, yet the native was perceived as lazy and the official as enterprising. Therefore condition-free enterprise actually meant ignoring the condition of domination, coercion, and exploitation. In colonial literatures and discourses these conditions of colonial domination masqueraded as the liberation of the dormant labour-power of the poor.[30]

So far my focus has been on the literary-cinematic representation of the colonizer's labour. I turn my attention to the land and labour issues underlying representations of the indigenous elite in the colony. The discourse of British colonial enterprise constructs its representation of the Other through two discursive strategies. The first strategy consists of generalizing the productivity and industriousness of Indian labour and cultural practices by using the labour of the elite Indian male as representative of all native labour and cultural practices. This has the effect of evacuating the expertise, industry, history, and work practices of Indian peasants and artisans who brought Indian agriculture and Indian handicrafts and textiles to a high level of productivity. Following

from the first stratagem, the second discursive strategy I name *the expanded cultural critique*. The term requires explanation: British colonial enterprise, through its representatives (the British colonial officials and administrators) constructs an expanded critique of Indian culture and habits of work and play by means of generalization. The protocols of this generalization are to collect data on a particular aspect of the colonized culture, often this aspect of indigenous culture is fabricated and fabulated. With this cultural information as the basis, colonialist discourse formulates a general commentary characterizing an entire culture and different classes of people within that culture. The expanded cultural critique extends both vertically and horizontally to encompass the entire culture. One aspect of a culture signifies the entire culture, labour practices, and habits of work and play.

For instance, the figure of the oriental despot functions to signify the entire culture, people, and place. Ranajit Guha describes the popularity, persuasiveness, and currency of the term "Oriental despot" and "despotism" thus:

> For (Montesquieu) despotism was almost exclusively an Oriental phenomenon, the strange fruit which grew only in the fertile soil of the East and matured only in its burning sun. The constitution and characteristics of despotism were illustrated by him from the histories of a wide range of countries from Peking to Persia. The "laws" of despotic government as defined by him were regarded by almost all subsequent writers of the century as providing a master model universally valid for all historical interpretation of the East. The end product of it all was the making of a Western myth about an undifferentiated Orient characterized by the rectilinear simplicity of its social structure, the immutability of its laws and customs, the primitive innocence of its people; a myth taken over from the *philosophes* and imaginatively enriched by the nineteenth-century romantics, and uncritically absorbed into much of later Oriental research in the form of nostalgic nonsense about the glory that was.[31]

In the colonial discourse of the expanded cultural critique Oriental despotism becomes the lens through which every aspect of the culture is explainable. Thus, for instance, Oriental despotism explains climate, fertility of soil, the non-martial nature of the natives, foreign invasions, the "indolence and ease" as well as "the languor occasioned by the hot climate of India." Alexander Dow, one of the architects of the East India Company's land revenue settlement called the Permanent Settlement of

Bengal, describes the explanatory power of Oriental despotism in these words:

> The seeds of despotism, which the nature of the climate and fertility of the soil had sown in India, were . . . reared to perfect growth by the Mohommedan faith, so that the faith of Mahommed . . . is peculiarly calculated for despotism, and it is one of the greatest causes which must fix for ever the duration of that species of government in the East.[32]

It would seem that in Dow's view all the religions practised by the colonized populace are equally conducive to the habits of mind characterized by Oriental despotism. About Hinduism Dow believed that it was "productive, from its principles, of the greatest degree of subordination to authority," and "prepares mankind for the government of foreign lords."[33] Note the function of the notion of despotism in the expanded cultural critique in the two instances given above, Oriental despotism serves as both cause and effect. It allows the elite Indian male (the ruler or his representative) to stand in as representative of the entire populace (male, female, the rich as well as the poor). The cultural critique expands both vertically and horizontally to include all aspects of Indian culture including the two major religions, history, work habits, and "characteristic" nature of the people. The slavish Hindu majority are ruled because that is in the nature of their religion, conversely Muslims rule tyrannically because that is in the nature of their religious faith. Despotism as a catch-all concept links the highest (the ruling classes) with the lowest (the labouring classes) and connects one religion with another through a network of dependency on the despot. In the expanded cultural critique the populace of the colony are contemptuously characterized as displaying an irrational love for, and dependency on, the Oriental despot.

Two historical sites for the making of colonial discourse, and a brief look at Ranajit Guha's "rule of property" and Samir Amin's analysis of the colonialist preoccupation with private property

I have chosen two historical moments as the sites where the expanded colonial cultural critique is inscribed into discourse. We encounter variants of the figure of the despot in the reconstructed Bengali landlord or *zemindar* and the historical figure, Nawab Wajid Ali Shah, who was the last Muslim ruler of Awadh.[34] The Bengal province is an important

site for historical as well as political reasons. Bengal, specifically Calcutta, was the first East India Company possession in India; the British presence started there as early as 1690 when they built a factory at Sutanati. After the 1757 Battle of Plassey where Robert Clive defeated the Nawab of Bengal, Siraj-ud-daula, the Company began the process of taking territorial control starting with the Diwani of Bengal, Bihar, and Orissa. The first step in this process was the defeat and removal of Siraj-ud-daula and the establishment of Mir Jafar as the puppet ruler of Bengal. The second site I have chosen is Awadh in 1856. Independent Awadh was the last territory to be annexed by the East India Company before the Crown took over the colony from the East India Company in 1858.[35] These two historical sites mark the beginning and, in a sense, the culmination of the discourse of empire building. My periodization is based on the fact that after 1857 British discourses of empire building revealed that the British colonialists had abandoned all efforts aimed at persuasion, reform, and consensus building to legitimate the British presence in India. After this period the British administrator-scholars confined their efforts to policing the subject population and extracting revenue. Therefore this intermediate period from 1758 to 1857 is significant in discursive terms. It is in the 1758–1857 period that the East India Company officials and British writers construct the discourses of British enterprise and the expanded cultural critique of the native cultures of India.

The twin discourses of British enterprise and the expanded cultural critique function as the persuasive part of the otherwise coercive colonial takeover. I provide a brief glimpse of the revisionist historical interpretations of the Permanent Settlement by the historians of the Subaltern Studies collective, in order to illuminate the historical debates, controversies, and agendas that are activated in postcolonial cultural production of the figure of the feudal landlord in Satyajit Ray's *The Music Room* (1958). In Bengal the violent takeover of the Diwani in 1765 was followed by the vexing problem of administering an alien territory. The administrative problem that emerged for the East India Company was the acquisition of knowledge about the intricate and baffling structure of land laws and revenue in order that the question – who owns land and according to what principle – could be satisfactorily answered. James Mill describes the problem of historical interpretation, "The very nature of land-tenure was not understood. The rights of the different orders of people, who cultivated the soil, and divided the produce, formed a complicated mystery."[36] In determining these questions, the British administrator and Company official, in Ranajit Guha's view, began in effect to write and rewrite the history of Indian feudalism.[37]

The making of empire required the rewriting of the history of Indian feudalism. This historiographical project was undertaken by colonialist writers under pressure, they had to demonstrate the private ownership of land in India's feudal past.[38] Part of the problem lay in British inability to comprehend the complicated structure of land property laws of the Mughals and the system of power relations that had accumulated over time. Some English writers argued that the Mughal emperor was the only true proprietor of the soil and therefore the *zemindar* was merely a tax-collector of the land revenues with no further claim on the land. Guha notes that this interpretation of Indian history was particularly self-serving for the colonial historian-administrator, for this historiographical narrative paved the way for the argument that the Company was the only true proprietor of the soil and did not have to acknowledge the rights and claims of the landed gentry. Other Englishmen offered a rival version of history; the *zemindar* was given land as reward for military service; in feudal Bengal this reward was conceived of as inheritable property which entailed the duties of military service, care of the tenants as well as political rights. This version of history facilitated the notion that the East India Company should construct its own form of land-value in services by creating a class of landlords in the image of the English squire who improves his estate and heeds the welfare of his tenants because he has a proprietary pride in his land.

The outcome of such historiographical projects was to provide legal and administrative support for legitimating British rule in the subcontinent as a rule of property. The spurious continuity in the notion of land as property passing from Mughal to British hands covered over the "total rupture brought about by the intervention of a European power in the structure of landed property in South Asia."[39] British colonial historiography was mobilized in order to understand and map land as property.[40] Guha notes that the debates among colonial administrators about the Permanent Settlement of revenues of the Diwani are conducted to explain why, within 30-odd years of colonial rule, the enterprising British had beggared Bengal.[41]

In order to understand the full significance of the British desire to designate cultivable land as private property and to privatize common resources such as wasteland, forests, and rivers, we have to understand the role land as private property played in the rise of capitalism in England and in Europe.[42] Samir Amin's intervention in Marxist theory provides a corrective to the "West as Subject" and history as the progressive narrative of the evolution of capitalism in the West.[43] His work provides an understanding of the historic rise of capitalism in the West

and the subsequent advent of colonial capitalism and growth of peripheral capitalism in the colonies. Following from Amin's analysis we can understand why the introduction of colonial capitalism via the British did not create the conditions for capitalist growth in British India, instead it pauperized the prosperous peasantry, ruined internal and external trade, and led to large-scale famine.

I draw attention to two features of Amin's analysis of the rise of capitalism in England and Europe, first the proletarianization of the peasantry in Europe due to their being driven off the land by the landowning classes. The chief means for driving out the peasantry was through the privatizing of the commons or the English enclosures which ensured that grazing land was unavailable to the poor.[44] Second, Amin draws attention to the fact that the migration of the disempowered peasantry to the city centres made cheap-wage labour available for the merchants and the industrialists. Amin argues that the transformation of potential capital (accumulation) into actual capital, caused by the labour of the proletarianized peasant, is made possible because of one key feature and that is the absolute private ownership of land. Private ownership of land allowed the landlords to drive away excess population off their lands.

Guha's analysis of British debates about land revenue settlement in Bengal and Amin's account of the important role played by the privatization of land in the shift from feudalism to colonial capitalism in Britain help to illuminate two key phrases in the discourse of enterprise and the expanded cultural critique. These two phrases, "oriental despotism" and "native misrule" condensed powerful explanations and historiographical narratives that sutured the clash between two opposing forces; on one side were traditional Indian agricultural practices and land structure, rent as tribute; on the other side the view of land as property, rent as cash leading to colonial capitalist accumulation at the centre. I would like to briefly address the land structures in feudal India that underlay the British colonial discourses.

Guha and Amin are part of a long line of Marxist theorists to grapple with the fact that land as private property was not a prevalent concept in pre-British India. This meant that absolute power did not rest with the landlord. Power was shared in a highly evolved system by the village community, the peasantry, the Mughal revenue collector as well as the *ryot* (landless labourer). The power of the Mughal ruler lay in dispensing land revenue collection as reward for services to the King.[45] Recent studies have shown that the village community's responsibility towards land, and freedom to exercise power over the land and water resources led to

ecologically sound practices of water management, conservation of soil fertility, and the preservation of bio-diversity.[46] The fact that the peasant had a close relationship with the land meant that he/she understood the intricate and reciprocal nature of climate, water conservation, forests, and soil fertility, far better than the revenue collector who was generally an outsider.[47]

It may be only too obvious that British revenue officers did not have knowledge of the agricultural practices the peasantry had evolved over hundreds of years. It is, however, less obvious that the colonial discourse about the mismanagement of the land by the Oriental despot and landlord in feudal India covered over, discredited, and erased indigenous practices of agricultural productivity and eco-friendly traditions. Because the peasant in feudal India produced for his own consumption (with a part going to pay taxes in kind), he could use his agricultural expertise to carry out crop rotation and other eco-friendly measures that ensured soil fertility and maximum productivity. The distortion and deforming in colonial conception of enterprising labour begins right here, for increased productivity under colonial capitalism referred only to increased revenue extortion. British colonial enterprise consisted of experiments with reconfiguring land as private property, this discursive and material project was justified by the argument that private property made the individual responsible. In the colonial discourse about land, responsible farming did not denote a system of crop rotation that revitalized the soil and maintained an ecological balance, nor did responsible farming mean providing enough food; rather the responsible individual landowner was one who efficiently paid revenues to the East India Company.

The discursive reconfiguration of land in terms of revenue involved the East India Company in different tactics in separate parts of the country. The common factor in the colonial practices of land management was severe and excessive taxation and frequent turnover of estates due to the fact that landowners could not fulfill their tax obligations. It was in this way that British revenue collection caused severe destabilization of the community structure and peasant–land relationship. This disconnection between the tiller of the soil and the demands of colonial revenue collection proved detrimental for agriculture. The long-term effects were devastating for the ecological balance between water availability and the preservation of soil fertility.

Despite the fact that the British tried to justify their mismanagement of land through the twin discourses of enterprise and the expanded cultural critique, they did not achieve total ideological success. Historically this

success was denied to them because the discursive reconfiguration of land and land-management shifts, spills over, and is displaced on to the terrain of culture and cultural values. A cultural battle is waged for the hearts and minds of the subjugated populace wherein the separatist and racist colonial values of enterprise compete with the values and ideals of the pre-British Hindu–Muslim assimilationist culture. The next section of this chapter examines how Satyajit Ray essays a re-evaluation of the British discourse of the expanded cultural critique in his film *The Music Room* through examining the historical figure of the *zemindar* in terms of the cultural aspirations of the colonized.

Ray's alternate proposition regarding value: *Jalsaghar* (*The Music Room*)

Ray's films are read more productively when they are not ghettoized by an exclusively Indian or Bengali cultural frame of reference. The critical biographies of Marie Seton and Andrew Robinson are a case in point, their wealth of documentation is marred by the notion that the only frame of reference for Ray's films is the obligatory turn to Tagore, the Brahmo Samaj, Ray's family ancestry, and so on.[48] I argue that a Ray film demands to be read at the cross-roads of First World film and literature *and* Indian film and literature, not only because Ray was influenced by the West but also because postcolonial cultural production cannot or should not be theorized in the ghetto of Third-Worldism.

As a step in that direction, I highlight the discourses, literary and cinematic conventions, and popular tropes through which postcolonial films allude to the ur-narrative of Robinson Crusoe. In *The Music Room* (1958) the hidden figure in the text is the enterprising Englishman; his constructed industriousness is opposed to the constructed idleness of the Indian landlord after the Permanent Settlement. While the fictional Crusoe toils and labours on his island, the landlord of Bengal is a motionless figure stripped of his productive capacities, blamed for his lack of initiative and his disinclination to improve his property. The energy of the former requires the listless apathy of the latter.

Ray essays an alternative proposition of value in *The Music Room*. He transforms the island-space of enterprise into the cultural space of Bishwambhar's music room. The enterprising activity of making a table and chair is implicitly contrasted to the indigenous elite's intellectual and cultural labour. Persuasion is at the centre of Ray's counter enterprise. In bringing together Defoe's text and Ray's films, my intention is not to stage a simple opposition between manual and intellectual labour.

Rather I explore the signifying function of labour activity as well as the discursivity of the discourses of labour. In *The Music Room* Ray evacuates speech as a vehicle to express resistance and uses silence, music, and the space of the music room to construct a critique of colonialist and nationalist discourses regarding the passive, idle and decadent landlord of Bengal.

Ray experiments with the aesthetic-political problem of how to designate value in the historical figure of the much despised idle Bengali zemindar.[49] *Jalsaghar* or *The Music Room* in this reading becomes one of the first of Ray's films in which he struggles to confront the discourse of the expanded cultural critique in the form of the decadent idle landlord of Bengal. Ray does not counter the English discourse of labour with a competing discourse of labour, instead Ray's film focuses on the re-routing of value. Ray proposes to us that in the context of empire, the landlord's appreciation, patronage and/or composition of a classical raga or thumri and the allied arts of Kathak dance can signify, in opposition to Crusoe's labour of making a table and chair, the value of an alternative and highly developed civilization.

In making the film, Ray was encountering two distinct but inter-related propositions regarding the zemindar. The colonialist proposition concerning the zemindar of Bengal was the following; zemindars were a rural aristocracy who were lazy and debauched, the proof was that most zemindars expended their labour, time, and money on amusing themselves in lavish and wasteful ways instead of labouring to improve their estates. Therefore the zemindars were unfit to govern, consequently the English were better fitted to govern India. The discourse of the decadent and indolent zemindar was contradictory; on the one hand through the Permanent Settlement the British hoped to create a class of pro-British loyalists who could further British interests and create a favourable consensus for the British rule; on the other hand the Permanent Settlement had taken away the entrepreneurial and political power of the zemindars. Thus the discourse that critiqued the zemindars for indolence created the very conditions of stagnation.[50]

The other proposition concerning the zemindar was nationalist. Nationalist portrayals of the Bengali zemindar were based on the knowledge that the specific landlord system imposed by the British was imported from England, and therefore not suitable or responsive to indigenous structures of co-operation, obligations, and dependencies. Secondly, the nationalists perceived the zemindar class as having betrayed the country by furthering their own interest and identifying their own interests with British interests. The nationalist portrait of the

zemindars was that they were wasteful and cruel in extracting from the tenants as much as they could in the form of rents and taxes.[51]

Given the colonialist and nationalist critique of the zemindari class, the challenge before Ray was how to represent a historical figure which was overinscribed in colonialist and nationalist historiography as well as popular memory. It seemed impossible to wrench this figure out of the clutches of these two mighty discourses. It is important to note how Ray resolves his problem, in effect how he situates Bishwambhar Ray, the protagonist of *The Music Room*. In the film Ray does not present us with a fully worked out refutation of the expanded cultural critique as he does in *The Chess Players*. The film maps resistance through the figure of Bishwambhar Ray, particularly through his passion for music as an alternate register of cultural value.

After the box office failure of *Aparajito* (*The Unvanquished*) in 1956, Ray wished to make a popular film. So in *Jalsaghar* he chose a subject that offered "legitimate scope for music and dancing," which he knew to be key ingredients in popular Indian films.[52] However, Ray conceded later that in the writing of the screenplay the film became a "fairly serious study of feudalism," a "brooding drama."[53] Ray based his film on Tarashanker Banerji's short story "The Music Room."[54] Since Banerji portrays Bishwambhar as an indolent and obsessive man incapable of improving his estate or affairs, the literary text participates in the nationalist critique of the Bengali zemindars. At the same time Banerji suggests that Bishwambhar's excessive behaviour is caused by a strain of madness that runs through the family.[55] The suggestion of madness sentimentalizes and psychologizes Bishwambhar as a man not fully responsible for his actions.

In the film Bishwambhar is a landlord who has lost his land. In response to his manager's accusation that if Bishwambhar had been more vigilant about his zemindari things would not have come to such a pass, Bishwambhar responds, "Zamindari-landlord, where is the land?" Some of his land is eroded by the river Padma, most of it is forfeit because of his debts and lack of a living heir. Throughout the film Bishwambhar is characterized by loss – loss of land, political power, family and heir, and loss of desire. Therefore Ray had to struggle with the problem of how to designate/invest value in the figure of Bishwambhar in the absence of land. The expanded cultural critique displaces and remaps the question of land use, land control, and revenue collection onto the terrain of culture, with the following proposition – indigenous culture makes the native unfit to self-govern, therefore the native needs to be subjugated to the British mode of land improvement.

Ray confronts head on the remapping of land in the expanded cultural critique. He poses his own question of value in *The Music Room*. Ray's question is oriented towards cultural aspiration and leadership. Who designates value in cultural pursuits and on what basis? I suggest that Ray resolved the problem of value through his cinematic representations of music in *Jalsaghar*. Bishwambhar's passion for music opens the film up to an alternate register of value. We learn through Ray's use of flashback that the only moments of plenitude in Bishwambhar's otherwise stagnant and purposeless life are the *jalsas* (musical soirees) that he organized. The ostensible occasion for the first *jalsa* is the celebration of his son's sacred thread ceremony, the second musical concert celebrates the Bengali new year. In the third and last one Bishwambhar drinks himself insensible, goes out riding, takes a fall and dies.

In *Jalsaghar* Ray's protagonist is not invested with a language of resistance. Bishwambhar does not say anything significant in the film that could help the viewer understand or appreciate his motivation or point of view. Throughout the film Bishwambhar seems a motionless body trapped in space, a body occupying space without transforming it with language or speech. When we first see Bishwambhar in the film, he has retired to the upper chambers of his palace. Gradually the viewer learns that Bishwambhar has been in this state for some time. He asks his old servant "What month is it?" and the tone of his question conveys the sense that he lives outside time. Ray does not offer us a psychological portrait. As viewers we are not given access to Bishwambhar's interiority, but only his actions.

When Ray made *Jalsaghar* in 1958 he did not imagine it would have success outside of India. In later years he told his biographer Andrew Robinson, "I didn't think it would export at all." The film's screening in Paris in 1981 was part of the French reassessment of Ray's films. American and British critics described *Jalsaghar* as Ray's "most perfect film," a film "of unique delicacy and refinement."[56] Ben Nyce attributes the film's "universal" appeal to "the fairly common idea that often the greatest art is created in that space of time just before the processes of disintegration take over."[57] Nyce's words encapsulate the general reaction to *Jalsaghar* and may well explain why this film enjoys a minor cult status in the West. If we take seriously Ray's judgment that the film would not translate "at all" outside its specific Indian context, then we are forced to ask what makes *Jalsaghar* one of Ray's most culturally intriguing films, and what accounts for the cult status of this film in the West. The answer to both questions can be sought in the burden of meaning Ray brings to bear on music in *Jalsaghar*, and the function of music in this film.[58] Nyce's

statement suggests that by universalizing music as great art, it is possible for viewers to consume the musical soirees in *Jalsaghar*. Contrary to Nyce I suggest that Ray's purpose in the film is to map resistance through the visual deployment of Bishwambhar as body without speech. Bishwambhar does not refute or explain any constructions about him. Ray essays an aural and visual critique of the colonialist/nationalist discourses about the idle landlord class. The aural critique is established through the way music is structured in the narrative and through the supervaluation of music. The visual critique is presented through the use of the large, framed mirror that dominates the music room.

Each *jalsa* is preceded and framed by the landlord/patron's paucity of funds. In order to pay for the first *jalsa* Bishwambhar mortgages his wife's jewellery. For the second concert he uses his last bag of money. For the final *jalsa*, Bishwambhar draws on the last of his wife's jewellery. Each musical soiree is narratively and structurally framed through alienating devices. The viewer is never allowed to be in a secure place and position from which to gaze at the scene and pleasurably enjoy the music or dance. For example, the first *jalsa* is a flashback and therefore functions as a reminder of happier times when Bishwambhar's life was not totally denuded. Ray frames the musical event with a series of alienating devices. There is a dissonance between the sublime grandeur of the first *jalsa*, performed on screen by the famous vocalist Begum Akhtar herself, and earlier scenes of a band playing a Western tune with minimal competence. The gap between the beauty and coherence of Akhtar's singing and the unmusical band suggests that culture is fractured due to the legacy of colonialism. The *jalsa* itself is followed by a scene that alienates the viewer by underlining the toll taken by this cultural pursuit: Bishwambhar's angry, tearful wife accuses him of excessive expenditure on his obsession with music and requests him to close the *jalsaghar* before all her jewellery is mortgaged.

The second *jalsa* fuses music, time, and the stormy weather in Salamat Khan's rainy season raag. As viewers we know, unlike the members of the concert audience, that Bishwambhar has ordered his wife and son back in the stormy weather and their journey by boat puts their lives in jeopardy. Therefore the viewer cannot share the *jalsa* audience's enjoyment, the music is framed by a sense of impending doom. A sense of premonition passes over Bishwambhar's face. The sense of abrupt discontinuity culminates in Bishwambhar's gesture, he disrupts the *jalsa* by leaving mid-way, unable to sit and enjoy the music. Disruption of viewer pleasure is also suggested by Ray through other visual cues, such as the carved boat on the mantelpiece turning over and the insect drowning in the

glass. The sequence ends with Bishwambhar looking on as his dead son's body is brought ashore.

Ray's film steadily breaks the connection between culture and the viewer/spectator's pleasure. The third and final *jalsa* is framed by Bishwambhar's history of loss and his despairing recklessness in selling the last piece of jewellery. The *jalsa* ends with Ganguli's attempt to humiliate Bishwambhar by pre-empting his reward to the performer with a larger sum of money, thereby emphasizing Bishwambhar's decline in money and status. Ganguli is not an indigenous entrepreneur but a profiteer of British colonialism. As a moneylender Ganguli has prospered and branched out into other economic activities like quarrying sand. Ganguli is a subtle reminder that the services and professions available to upwardly mobile Indians were comprador economic activity which made them part of the colonial infrastructure and aided the colonial government in the exploitation of natural and human resources. However Ganguli is not content to be the nouveau riche, he wishes to accumulate cultural authority by boasting to Bishwambhar that he has lived in Lucknow and learnt to appreciate music and even play "some little" tabla.

Ray interweaves displeasure into those very parts of the film that he characterizes as containing the "sweetness and greatness" of the northern Indian classical music composed for the film by Vilayat Khan. In *The Music Room* to enter into the pleasure of the music is also to be inserted into the film. Viewers are interpellated not through identification but through struggle, the struggle to understand Bishwambhar's historical predicament, his lack of options, his lack of desire to master his predicament, and his reckless disregard for consequences in the pursuit of his passion for music. It is only in and through this struggle that Ray allows the viewer to question the value and function of music.

The Music Room rejects the notion that there is an organic and unmediated access to culture and cultural value. As viewers we do not have direct access to music the way Bishwambhar does. Ray makes this proposition explicit in a scene before the last *jalsa*. Bishwambhar has refused to accept Ganguli's invitation to attend his rival *jalsa*. Ray's camera captures a motionless Bishwambhar sitting, as the hours pass, in the same pose and on the same couch in which he received Ganguli. The camera moves into a slow medium close-up of Bishwambhar, on the soundtrack we hear the music of a *jalsa*. This music is not coming from Ganguli's residence, it is used by Ray as internal diegetic sound. These musical sounds can only be heard by Bishwambhar and viewers. A fine, low shot of Bishwambhar shows him lifting a finger to mark, with impeccable accuracy, the rhythm of the music. This scene mirrors the

first scene of the film where we first saw the motionless Bishwambhar impelled to speech and movement in response to the *shehnai* music. This intertextuality suggests that for Bishwambhar music functions as memory. Yet music as memory only recalls for Bishwambhar memories of other music, suggesting that for the protagonist and perhaps for the director, music is its own identity.

Systematically Ray alienates us from the illusion of direct access to music or culture. He does this by foregrounding the relationship of music to time. In the beginning of the film Bishwambhar's attempt to live outside time is disrupted with the sonorous sound of the *shehnai* music coming from Ganguli's house. The function of the music is to make us aware that while Bishwambhar has lost power and prestige, Ganguli's prestige has been on the rise. Before the last *jalsa*, the re-opening of the music room is accompanied by music from Vilayat and Imrat Khan playing a south Indian raag. Ray describes this musical duet as "bright-sounding."

Ray's bright-sounding music signifies a resistance to historical time. At the point in the film when we are fully aware of Bishwambhar's doom, his refusal to lie down and passively die, his reckless abandon in arranging one last *jalsa*, and even the excitement of his manservant, all signal the colonial subject's defiance of historical time. This resistance to colonial/national history has to be understood in social, not personal terms. Often critics like Seton and Nyce have tended to interpret Bishwambhar in an individualistic manner, as a feudal landlord obsessed with music. To take this view is to overlook the fact that Bishwambhar (whatever the state of his lands and affairs) *is* a cultural leader. He is a patron of music and dance, and a practising artist in his own right (in an extended sequence early in the film we see him playing the esraj and instructing his son in vocal classical music). Therefore Bishwambhar is positioned historically and culturally as the representative of culture, and as the self-image of a culture. I will explore this issue in greater detail when I discuss Ray's use of the mirror as a disruptive device.

The relationship between music and time in *The Music Room* is indicated in Ray's comments in a 1980 interview. Ray says:

> When you are controlling time, trying to hold real time, chronological time, I would say the less music there is, the better, and sound effects can help a lot. When time is broken up, music helps to preserve a linear flow.[59]

At first glance it would seem that in the above extract Ray refers to the lack of relationship between time and music. A closer look at the comment

suggests that in fact for Ray, music has to be eliminated or kept to a minimum in order to control time because music as it were "messes up" time. Conversely when the linear flow of time is interrupted, as in *The Music Room*, then music establishes a continuity. In the film Ray fully exploits the absence and presence of music to remake time. For instance, the scene where Bishwambhar plays on the esraj while his son practises his musical exercises lasts for less than two minutes on the screen. Yet it appears to be longer because it bears the burden of suggesting the continuity and tradition of seven generations of fathers instructing their sons in the Bishwambhar family. The sequence also gestures to the guru/disciple relationship that exists between father and son and that lies at the heart of Indian classical musical tradition. Ray thickens time by making present other times through the juxtaposition of different kinds of music. In the scene where Bishwambhar re-enters the music room after four years and sees it as it was left on the night of his wife and son's death, snatches of music from the other *jalsas* play in the background. The effect of this mosaic of music from other *jalsas* is to layer the music room with memories of other times, other *jalsas*.

Elsewhere in the film Ray uses the disruption of music to signal the inexorable passing of time. Before the second *jalsa* Bishwambhar sits with his eyes closed in the gallery, enjoying the Ustad playing on the sarod. The sound of the electric generator from Ganguli's house disrupts the music and takes over the film's soundtrack. In yet another instance, when Bishwambhar walks out of the house for the first time after the death of his wife and son, it is a moment of renewed life as he inspects his horse and elephant. On the soundtrack we hear the theme music composed by Vilayat Khan, which Ray characterized as possessing sweetness and greatness. The theme music is interrupted aurally and visually by the sound of a dust-spewing truck. The truck, bearing the name of Ganguli, crosses Bishwambhar's line of vision, disrupting the music and obscuring his vision. Displeasured, Bishwambhar turns away. In the last *jalsa* Ray uses the fast-paced music and the energetic visual rhythm of Kathak dance to telescope time. As the music and sensual dance with its rhythm of coition reach a climax, it seems as if music is trying to catch up with time. Time finally catches up with Bishwambhar. Thereafter we hear no more music on the soundtrack, there are only sound effects that culminate with Bishwambhar's death.

Till this point I have focused exclusively on the music-centred aural critique in the film. Ray also constructs a visual critique of the colonialist and nationalist proposition regarding the *zemindari* class. This visual

critique is essayed through the use of the large ornate mirror in the music room. The mirror is the focus of this pillared room lined with large framed portraits of Bishwambhar's ancestors. The first time we see the music room, it is being prepared for the first concert. The camera follows Bishwambhar as he strolls around the room and comes to a stop in front of the mirror. He glances up at his great-grandfather's portrait mounted above the mirror. Then his eyes travel down, he stares at himself and postures before the mirror. The audience watches Bishwambhar watching himself.

Next Bishwambhar makes a half-turn and sits down facing the mirror. For a brief moment Bishwambhar is framed as a self-constructed portrait in the mirror. We watch in the mirror as Ganguli, the moneylender, enters the room along with the servant. As they come to a stand-still, they re-frame him in the classic pose of the *zemindar* with his servant and petitioner. Throughout this scene Bishwambhar has his back to the camera and the film audience. The scene builds up the suggestion that for Bishwambhar, the mirror performs an essential function, it helps him understand the significance of the events that transpire in the music room. The mirror reflects Bishwambhar's role as the cultural leader. Bishwambhar's image in the mirror and the placement of the mirror in the music room both suggest that music signifies the irresistible necessity for cultural aspiration and cultural identity. The cinematic trope of the mirror does not allude to Bishwambhar's personal vanity, or his personal consumption of the arts or his "obsessions" or superior "aesthetic(s)."[60] In the absence of value-anchored land, Ray re-routes value as value-laden music in the music room.

The signifying function of the mirror is reinforced in each of the three concerts. In each concert the musicians and singer/dancer sit with their backs to the mirror, facing the audience. The audience watching the performance faces the mirror and Ray's camera is most often placed behind the audience. Thus the camera records the audience of each *jalsa* watching the performance. Simultaneously the audience sees itself imaged in the mirror, and the mirror reflects the audience's gestures of appreciation of the performance. This doubling back of the image of the audience within the film for the viewers outside the film, strongly suggests that the *jalsa* is the place where Bishwambhar and the audience experience their cultural identity and self-proximity. By placing the mirror in the middle of the *mise en scène*, Ray makes the mirror return the camera's gaze. Even as the mirror enhances and magnifies the space of the music room, it resists the full consumption of this space by becoming the point beyond which the camera cannot penetrate. Thus the mirror in *Jalsaghar* reflects back the probing look of the camera.

The relationship between audience, music, and mirror is made explicit in a crucial scene near the end of the film, just before the final concert. Ganguli has built a rival music room in his new mansion and is hosting a *jalsa* to celebrate the completion of his house, thereby announcing his aspiration as the new cultural leader. However, Ganguli cannot become the new cultural leader without public acknowledgement from Bishwambhar. Cultural leadership is based on consensual persuasion and Ganguli has not yet acquired the power that Bishwambhar's family has accumulated for seven generations. Therefore he comes personally to invite Bishwambhar who refuses the invitation, and a disappointed Ganguli leaves. At this point in the film's plot Bishwambhar expresses a desire to revisit the music room that has been locked up since the death of his wife and son.

Bishwambhar's re-entry into the music room recalls the first glimpse we receive of the room at the outset of the film. Ray uses this simple repetition to mark the distance and the ravages of time. As viewers we experience the music room as an emptied and ravaged space, for previously the camera has entered the music room only when there is a concert in progress or the bustle and preparation for one. To register the difference, Ray chooses a close up of Bishwambhar's face as he looks up at the chandelier and then looks off camera, lost in memories. Music from other *jalsas* that we as viewers cannot identify because we have not been present at those concerts, overlays the soundtrack. The camera pans to the mirror, then pans around the room. It pulls back to show a Bishwambhar overwhelmed with memories, crouching on the floor of the music room like a supplicant.

The music fades, and in the silence we hear a dog's wail. The camera is now positioned behind Bishwambhar, we see him struggling to his feet. The camera cuts to the mirror and we see Bishwambhar in the mirror, staggering closer towards it. He peers into it, wipes the dust off it with his sleeve, and peers again. We see him stroking his face in the mirror, a face which registers shock, disbelief, and horror at the ravages of time evident on his drawn and haggard face. In the mirror he seems to register the fact that his cultural leadership is not only threatened but almost lost. In Ganguli's presence he was withdrawn and uninterested, in the space of the music room the loss of his cultural leadership is unbearable. We watch as he looks down, staggers back from the mirror a few steps, and leans on his walking stick. He looks up at the mirror again and facing it, he informs his manager (who has come in earlier and watches him disapprovingly) of his decision to host a final *jalsa*.

With this defiant action Ray brings together in one final powerful image the three elements of his alternate proposition of value: the mirror, the music, and Bishwambhar's cultural leadership. The power of the

music room lies in Ray's crafting a film space and bit by bit endowing that space with meaning. The spatiality of the music room signifies alternate value in the context of British colonialism. The image of the mirror is magnified in the next few shots. The servant, in preparation for the last *jalsa*, cleans and polishes the mirror, and then another smaller mirror outside the music room. Within the room the chandelier, the portraits, the glasses, bottles, Bishwambhar's seal, all become reflective shiny surfaces echoing the centrality of the mirror image.

In the absence of land, all imaging of land is absent from the film. The music room bears the burden of signifying the magical enhancement of value. However, the music room signifies the enhancement of this value only as a place-holder. This place-holder constitutes a disruption of the totalizing impulse of colonialist/nationalist histories. Ray's Bishwambhar resists this totalizing impulse through his silence and his music. In the final instance Bishwambhar belongs to a class that is not historically recuperable, nevertheless he and his music function as a place-holder to mark an alternate possibility and the tragic waste of that possibility. We can never fully know what these possibilities could have been because Ray evacuates speech as a vehicle of resistance in this film. In *Jalsaghar* we as viewers are left with the image of the mirror reflecting us back to ourselves.

Questions concerning labour entail the discourses of labour. In *The Music Room* Ray does not undertake the positivist project of locating the reality behind the discourse of the idle landlord. Nor does Ray vindicate Bishwambhar and his class of feudal landlords. Moreover Ray does not directly address how the Bengali *zemindar*'s idleness was constructed by the Permanent Settlement. Instead Ray's film wrenches open a value-bearing space in the spatiality of the music room. This spatial metaphor is organized so that the discourse of the indolent and debauched feudal landlord is resituated both in relation to questions concerning culture and cultural authority. Consequently the essential determinant of value becomes not only who labours for whom in exchange for what, the criteria of exchange value and surplus value. In Satyajit Ray's films the essential determinants of value also include another equally compelling problematic; who determines the value of intellectual, cultural, and manual labour and according to what cultural and economic principle.

Expanded cultural critique: The case of Awadh

The 1856 annexation of Awadh posed difficulties for the British that were different from the problems they faced in Bengal. In the case of

Awadh the British had to justify why they had violated their own treaties of friendship with the nawabs of Awadh, why they had deposed a popular King and seized the territories of independent Awadh. In Awadh as in Bengal the East India Company was no longer satisfied with collecting part of the revenue and taxes as tribute, the Company wanted direct ownership of the land. In Awadh the Company wanted to exert direct control over its rich agricultural land and produce, including extensive land-areas and forests designated as wasteland, in order to generate further revenues for the East India Company. Despite the Company's propaganda that the Permanent Settlement of Bengal was a marvellous success, it is curious that in Awadh the British argued against the introduction of the Permanent Settlement of land revenue and instead wanted direct contact with the peasant cultivator class by eliminating the landlord class.[61]

Ray's film *The Chess Players* (1977) is a period film that re-creates the historical moment of the annexation of Awadh in 1856. On so doing Ray confronts the fact that Awadh and its last Muslim ruler Wajid Ali Shah are deeply inscribed sites of the expanded cultural critique in colonialist discourse. Nineteenth-century Awadh is the place of shame in nationalist discourses. This section analyzes two scenes from *The Chess Players* in order to interrogate how the expanded cultural critique functions in colonialist discourse. Colonialist discourses foreclose and disallow the possibility of alternate understandings of the work/play binary, other than the binary of enterprise as work and native culture as unproductive play. By 1856, the year of Awadh's takeover by the British, the colonialist expanded cultural critique evolved into a full-fledged discourse. The expanded cultural critique of Awadh was based on scholarship and hearsay by British administrator-scholars who did extensive research into Awadh, only in order to condemn various aspects of the culture such as dance, poetry, music, all forms of popular entertainments like kite flying, cock-fighting, gambling as well as Hindu and Muslim practices of dress, food, and religion.[62]

In the opening sequence of *The Chess Players* Ray delineates the colonial expanded cultural critique. The narrator introduces viewers to the two central characters Mirza Sajjad Ali and Meer Roshan Ali by ironically referring to the aristocratic chess players as "mighty generals" engaged in battle on the chessboard. Right away we are introduced to the notion of unproductive play. The narrator reinforces the visual by explaining that the two are "only playing at warfare. You may ask: Have they no work to do? Of course not!" Succeeding shots establish Lucknow's Muslim architecture and popular pastimes like pigeon-flying, kite-flying, and

cock-fighting. In an ironic, self-mocking Awadhi drawl the narrator tells us that after the fall of the Mughals in Delhi, Lucknow became the bastion of Muslim culture.

While we watch the common people of Awadh flying kites and fighting each other's kites in the sky, the narrator informs us that the Awadhi aesthetes consider the expenditure of money their only job. The series of montage shots is followed by a shot of Wajid Ali Shah's empty throne. The narrator informs us that in this realm full of aesthetes the ruler is Nawab Wajid Ali Shah, a king who has "other interests." These other interests include dressing up as a Hindu god, beating the drum at Mohurrum and relaxing with his harem. Once in a while, the narrator states, Wajid also likes to grace his court. Ray's montage characterizes all of the ruler's interests as *shauk* or aesthetic pleasure. Even religious practices and prayer are characterized as *shauk*.

The entire sequence in the prologue of *The Chess Players* establishes the colonialist and nationalist critique that the nobility, the commoners, and the king in nineteenth-century Awadh were exclusively involved in play. The narrator identifies this unproductive play with the Muslim culture of Awadh by referring to Awadh as the last bastion of Muslim culture. We are invited to associate Awadhi culture not with work, but with play. The absence of valued time in this culture is deliberately underlined in the case of Wajid through the close-up of the empty throne. It is noteworthy that Ray's delineation of the colonialist critique of Awadhi culture and its passion for play is unlike nationalist representation principally because he goes on to show the binary opposite of that colonialist discourse in British enterprise. In the next scene he represents English enterprise via the character of General Outram (played by Sir Richard Attenborough). In an extended conversation with his aide Weston, Ray's Outram demonstrates that British enterprise relies on extensive documentation and denigration of other cultures. In Ray's screenplay Outram comments on Wajid's work and play by analysing a report submitted by his spies concerning an "hour-by-hour-account" of a day in Wajid's life.

In the pages of Indian history General Outram was the English Resident at the Awadh court; he is mainly remembered for annexing independent Awadh for the East India Company and deposing and exiling its ruler. The pressures facing Outram were considerable. The East India Company had to find grounds to justify the conquest of Oudh to a British press that was, to a large extent, critical of pro-annexation policies of the monopoly trading company.[63] Awadh presented a discursive problem. As P. D. Reeves notes, the highest official of the East India Company,

Lord Dalhousie, found that Awadh's political loyalty gave him no cause for complaint.[64] Therefore the Company could not change their policy from friendship treaties with a political ally to robbing the friend by annexing Awadh without appearing like an opportunist and rapacious trading company. From the standpoint of colonial discourses Awadh was a peculiarly difficult case because Awadh could not be characterized as cowardly and lacking in valour. The fact of the matter was that Awadh served as the largest recruiting ground for the Company's bravest Indian sepoys.

A number of British travelers had said of Lucknow that "this is in fact the most polished and splendid court at present in India" and "Lucknow has more resemblance to some of the smaller European capitals."[65] Thus East India Company ideologues had to contend with the fact that it was widely known in the British press and parliament that Awadh was not a primitive society but a highly evolved civilization. Moreover Awadh could not be condemned as a bigoted, fanatical Islamic regime. Awadhi culture was known as an extraordinarily secular culture, consequently the Company could not factionalize the populace and the ruling elites on sectarian lines. Nor could Company officials represent the province as insular and technologically backward. Awadh's architecture showed technological innovation and many of its nawabs learnt English and commissioned the translation of rare and important books to promote cultural cross-fertilization. Instead of displaying signs of intellectual apathy and laziness, Awadh was in fact experiencing a cultural renaissance.[66] The flowering of Awadhi culture is one of those paradoxes of cultural production in conditions of colonialism, Awadh's cultural renaissance was in spite the fact that its land, revenue, and military capacity had been stripped by the Company.

In Ray's *The Chess Players* we witness the discursive strategies by which a sophisticated, tolerant, brave and innovative indigenous culture is damned by British empire-builders. General Outram's opening remarks in the film characterize the unfit ruler of Awadh in terms of "an hour-by-hour account of the King's activities."[67] In effect this is a scene of Orientalist scholarship at the service of empire. Ray sets up the scene as a lengthy dialogue between Outram and Weston. Weston is the Oriental scholar who translates, and provides Outram with cultural information regarding Awadh.

Ray's screenplay outlines how colonial discourse permits a narrow range of terms and disallows true inquiry. Throughout the scene Outram asks Weston a series of questions about the activities and passions of Wajid. However, Weston's culturally informed answers are rejected by

Outram as dissatisfactory. It is gradually borne out that Outram knows the answers to his own questions. In fact he deliberately phrases his questions in such a fashion as to pre-determine the answer. Ray's Weston is a somewhat naive and ardent student of the native culture and language, for this reason he is unable to fully follow Outram's conversational lead. Outram has then perforce to articulate for Weston's benefit the premises and rules of colonial enterprise and the expanded cultural critique.

At the end of the conversation viewers are reminded of the coercion that underlies the powerful discourse. In the film Outram appeals to Weston's careerism, telling him that he wants to recommend him for a higher position once the Company takes over Awadh. Any suggestion that Weston holds sympathy for Wajid, warns Outram, will ruin the junior officer's chances for promotion. Weston's sympathetic understanding of Wajid therefore functions as a stand-in for the possibility of cross-cultural awareness of an alternative conception of time. In the struggle that is staged between Outram's discourse and Weston's dissent, we find that Ray the screen-writer and director exploits and underlines the fissures in the discourse of enterprise. It is instructive to recall that Richard Attenborough wanted to play the character of Outram broadly, but Ray disagreed and insisted that he play Outram with a degree of subtlety, so that the film could explore the range of the discourse of enterprise in all its flexibility and inflexibility.

The hour-by-hour account is introduced by the discussion of an oddity, Outram reads aloud the report's reference to the royal penchant for breeding "a pigeon that has one black and one white wing." The introduction of the oddity illustrates the colonialist/nationalist critique that in Wajid's court it is oddities like these that are rewarded, rather than useful technological or scientific inventions. In the film the rhetorical effect of the oddity is to render all subsequent references to the activities of the Awadh ruler in the same light as useless eccentricities. When next Outram alludes to Wajid's habit of praying five times a day, the activity appears to be estranged from its function of signifying a devout man. The Islamic conception of the everyday as punctuated by prayer is deprivileged, Wajid's religious practices do not denote an alternative ordering of the everyday, instead it appears in the form of an excess. In Outram's discourse Wajid's prayers are neither normal ("all Muslims don't pray five times a day?"), nor necessary. Outram will not countenance the suggestion that it is normal for the member of another culture, even though Weston explains, "Five is the number prescribed by the Koran."

Outram unfolds the hour-by-hour account of the King's activities in such a way that a certain logic emerges from his data, comments, and questions. He associates listening to a new singer, reciting a newly composed poem in a *mushiara* (a gathering of poets where each poet recites their latest poem) with flying kites, sleeping, and prayer. The discursive effect of this list is to create a series of equivalencies between diverse culturally encoded activities. The overall effect of Outram's disclosure of the "revealing document" of the hour-by-hour account of the king's activities is of sameness. Instead of a rich and variegated ethnography whereby we gain insight into the alterity of Wajid Ali Shah, the report is reductively characterized as a list of activities which carry no cultural resonance and are reduced to sameness as variants of play and pleasure-seeking.

As the scene between Outram and Weston proceeds, Ray suggests that this expanded cultural critique identifies all native forms of labour all too easily in terms of play and pleasure. In Ray's screenplay Outram poses questions to Weston which are predicated on the fact that Weston is the Oriental scholar who speaks the native languages and knows the regional culture. Outram asks: "What kind of a king do you think all this makes him, Weston?" The query is a token one, for Outram has already set out a fully elaborated critique of the "bad king" whom he describes as "A frivolous, effeminate, irresponsible, worthless king." However Weston takes the question literally and replies, "Rather a special kind, Sir, I should think."[68] This answer does not please Outram, and it moves him to set out the protocols of colonial information retrieval and scholarship. Outram explains that the insights, observations and judgments of Orientalist scholars are always at the service of and subservient to the political interests and agendas of the Empire's administrators like Lord Dalhousie and General Outram.

In his indictment of Awadh's ruler as a decadent Oriental despot, Outram mentions Wajid's *muta* wives. Through the word Ray suggests an alternate conception of time that is unassimilable to the time ordered by colonial enterprise. Outram asks Weston to explain the system of "muta" wives:

Outram: What the hell are *muta* wives?
Weston: "*Muta*" wives, sir? They're temporary wives.
Outram: *Temporary* wives?
Weston: Yes, sir. A "muta" marriage can last for three days, or three months or three years. "Muta" is an Arabic word.
Outram: And it means temporary?

Weston: No, Sir.
Outram: No?
Weston: It means – er, enjoyment.[69]

This exchange between the soldier-administrator and the Orientalist scholar-officer refers not only to Awadhi sexuality, but also to an ordering of time that is shocking in its difference. The notion that marriage can be mapped out on an economy of enjoyment rather than advantage or utility or even fidelity suggests that Awadhi culture is attuned to other rhythms, other ways of life.[70] Outram's objective is to make all of this jumble of information serve as political proof, his skepticism concerning Wajid's political-administrative competence as ruler is evident in his question, "And what kind of a king do you think all this makes him, Weston?" This question is the climax of the scene, the entire conversation has been steered by the British administrator towards this question.

Earlier I suggested that Ray sets up the question concerning Wajid's competence to rule in such a way as to pre-determine the answer. I would like to complicate that by examining how Ray holds this question in tension with Outram's first query: "What kind of a poet is the King?" Outram questions Wajid's cultural leadership and the quality of his poetic compositions before he interrogates Wajid's political leadership and administration. Through this ordering of the conversation Ray suggests that culture and its place and value in national life is subsumed within the binary of work and play in colonialist enterprise and unproductive native culture. Outram invites Weston to give his judgement regarding the King as a poet. In response to Weston's reply that the King is "rather good," he asks Weston to recite a poem written by the King. Outram asks Weston to recite Urdu poetry in a space that is hostile to the ambiance of the *mushiara*. Both actors in the scene emphasize this through their verbal and non-verbal gestures. Outram impatiently hurries Weston: "Well, go on man, out with it!" adding that he hopes the poem is not long. We see a Weston who is disconcerted by Outram's request, ill at ease and quiet.

Ray uses Weston's obvious discomfort to gesture at the impossibility of the alternate space of the *mushiara* unfolding in a space constructed and controlled by Outram's discourse of enterprise. Despite these impossible and hostile conditions, Weston's recitation interrupts Outram's constructions of space. Tom Alter, the actor playing Weston, suggests another time, another space; he looks uneasy, hesitates, takes a moment to compose himself, puts his hand up to his mouth, looks downwards; finally Weston looks up at Outram although his eyes seem to be turned

inwards. In a husky tone, at a slowed pace, imitating the *lehza* (the Urdu word for a combination of pronunciation, accent, delivery, style, and timing in reading a poem) and hand gestures, Weston recites the poem in chaste Urdu and then translates it in English:

> Wound not my bleeding body
> Throw flowers gently on my grave.
> Though mingled with the earth, I rose up to the skies,
> People mistook my rising dust for the heavens.

Weston qualifies his translation by saying that the stanza doesn't translate well. Here Ray is playing with the viewer's level of knowledge – those who understand and appreciate Urdu poetry (this does not include all Indian viewers) and those who can only appreciate it in translation. Urdu poetry does not translate well, as a language Urdu has the potential to maintain heterogeneous meanings and possibilities simultaneously at play. The couplet plays with time, with political time as opposed to human time. Simultaneously it keeps alive the heterogeneous identities of Wajid: Wajid the king, the poet, the ordinary mortal and the desiring subject.

Through a combination of irony and self-deprecation the couplet plays at separating Wajid the mocking and wise poet from Wajid the vainglorious king. In the first line of the couplet, Wajid the poet mocks Wajid the king with the notion of death and vanity of desire after death. The poet refers to the King as mere body – a broken, bleeding body. In the second line of the couplet the poet-king plays with exaggeration and hyperbole. He lays claim to the wish that after death his body (even though it is an insensate body) may not experience the trauma (*sadma*) of flowers thrown carelessly and hastily. Instead he requests that flowers be placed slowly, gently (*aahista*) on his grave. As the poet plays at humility and pity by calling attention to his wounded body, he also plays with the vanity of the king who expects respect and love in the form of flowers after his death.

In the last two lines of the couplet the poet and king become one in the conceit of the dust rising from the grave, which is mistaken for the heavens for a brief moment. The poet adopts a tone of mock-humility by admitting that although made from the earth, he rose to heights of fame and fortune and the people mistook the rising dust for the heavens. Concurrently the poet also keeps alive the sense that at the moment of death – when all appeared to be lost, turned to ashes (*khaak*), everything changed with the illusion (*dhoka*) of heavens created by his rising

dust – the poet is rescued from the ignominy of death that makes all equals and makes all time the same. The couplet plays with the notion of the king returning to dust like all mortals, in spite of the momentary illusion that he is above mortality.

Outram's response is: "Is that all? Well, it certainly has the virtue of brevity. What the hell does it mean, if anything? It's nothing obscene, I hope? Doesn't strike me as a great flight of fancy."[71] Outram is self-confessedly "not a poetry man." More importantly he will not allow his political judgment of the "bad king" to be mediated by the cultural achievements of the gifted poet king. The discourse of enterprise colonizes the conditions of knowledge and thereby pre-determines the discursive space of this scene between Outram and Weston. Nevertheless Ray does not allow the diegetic space to be subsumed by Outram's discourse. Wajid's poem holds open the suggestion of alternative space and time by interrupting Outram's formulations concerning time/work/play. In Ray's cinematic economy even as this alternative conception of space and time functions as a condensed refutation of Outram's work/play thesis, it is not consumable just as the music in *Jalsaghar* is made non-consumable through Ray's alienation devices. The couplet signifies the erasure of alterity, a king's premonition of his own demise, a great civilization witnessing its own downfall.

The principal feature of the expanded cultural critique is that culture of the colonized operates as political proof. The extract below can give an idea of how Outram uses cultural data about Awadh and its ruler to build a political argument:

Outram: And what about his songs? He's something of a composer, I understand? Are they any good, these songs?

Weston: They keep running in your head, sir. I find them quite attractive. Some of them.

Outram: I see.

Weston: He's really quite gifted, sir. He's also fond of dancing, sir.

Outram: Yes, so I understand. With bells on his feet, like nautch-girls. Also dresses up as a Hindu god, I am told.

Weston: You're right, sir. He also composes his own operas . . . .

Outram: Eunuchs, fiddlers, nautch-girls and "muta" wives and God knows what else. He can't rule, he has no wish to rule, and therefore he has no business to rule.

This is not a random conversation, these cultural references are the East India Company's political proofs for the annexation of Awadh. Outram's

proofs do not pertain to the spheres of politics and administration, for example, Outram never refers to the administering of law, revenue, agriculture and trade, war or foreign policy. Ray's Outram does not offer one single proof of maladministration and evidence of corruption at the court of Oudh. Instead Outram's empirical proofs to corroborate his conclusion that "He [Wajid] can't rule" are gleaned exclusively from a set of caricatured prejudices about the native ruler's culture. This is a move that even as it is illogical and arbitrary, is so carefully calibrated and influential that we have to slow down and categorize the set of proofs offered by Outram. The political conclusion, "He can't rule," cannot be arrived at through political proofs because the conditions of domination cannot be acknowledged as the material conditions of labour by colonialist discourse. The economic depredations and the stripping of Awadh of its military power, the condition of being-stripped and being-disempowered must appear as the native ruler's inherent unworthiness, his incapacity for governance and political self-determination. How is Outram to marshal evidence to prove this at the eve of annexation? Ray's Outram enumerates the native ruler's daily activities in order to demonstrate that here is a ruler whose every action and every activity is within the rubric of meaningless and frivolous play, rather than meaningful and responsible work. In Outram's portrait the Oriental or Asiatic ruler does not comprehend the notion of work or work-ethic, he only understands play. This play-effect is generated by a series of equivalencies within which Outram's derisive and disrespectful reference to the native ruler's mode of worship, "Did you know that the King prayed five times a day?" is equivalent to the native's artistic pursuits, "His Majesty listened to a new singer." Both the time of prayer and the time of art are debased by association with kite-flying. All are equally useless ways of expending labour and labour-time. All these activities are supposedly ex-centric to the native ruler's task of responsible governance.

In this political deployment of cultural evidence the keystone is mocking the native ruler's masculinity. Ray's Outram chooses not to offer a single instance of political oppression, tyranny or miscarriage of justice, political corruption and nepotism, the mismanaging of finance or war, or any evidence that Wajid lacks political sagacity. Indeed what Outram offers plentifully is cultural evidence that the native ruler does not conform to the ideal masculinity of colonial enterprise – Robinson Crusoe as celibate, self-denying man practicing sexual self-restraint. Ray's Outram refers contemptuously to Wajid's lack of political ability by calling him unmanly and even emasculated, "Eunuchs, fiddlers, nautch-girls and 'muta' wives and God knows what else."[72] In a curious

self-contradiction Outram suggests that the ruler's mode of endless play deprives him of both his sexual powers and his political abilities, "Doesn't leave him much time for his concubines, not to speak of the affairs of state." In this colonialist portrait the Oriental ruler is both sexually profligate and paradoxically sexually impotent. The insidious suggestion by Outram is that the ruler's sexual impotence imbues all his abilities with a psychic-symbolic emasculation. This mode of argumentation functions as the expanded cultural critique within which a constellation of cultural observations function as political proofs.

Ray's dialogue for Outram in this scene is a fictionalized account of a celebrated passage from a book that came to represent the East India Company's cultural portrait of the despotic Awadhi ruler's "native misrule": W. H. Sleeman's *A Journey Through the Kingdom of Oudh in 1849–50* (1858). Sleeman indicts the Awadh ruler for being unfit to execute his role as arbiter of justice. As Sleeman builds his argument, he invokes a curious melange of cultural proofs derived from Wajid's supposed effeminacy and his frivolity in his artistic pursuits:

> The present sovereign never hears a complaint, or reads a petition, or report of any kind. He is entirely taken up in the pursuit of his personal gratifications...He lives, exclusively, in the society of fiddlers, eunuchs, and women – he has done so since his childhood, and is likely to do so to the last. His disrelish for any other society has become inveterate – he cannot keep awake in any other. In spite of average natural capacity, and more than average facility in the cultivation of light literature...his understanding has become so emasculated, that he is altogether unfit for the conduct of his domestic much less his public affairs... He sometimes admits a few poets or poetasters, to hear and praise his verses...his own silly comedies; but any one who presumes to approach him – even in his rides and drives – with a petition for justice, is instantly clapped into prison, or, otherwise, severely punished.[73]

This passage from Sleeman's journal is the source for Ray's script. The evidence is that Outram's description of Wajid's activities, "Eunuchs, fiddlers, nautch girls and 'muta' wives and God knows what else" echoes Sleeman's influential and widely quoted indictment of Wajid, "He lives, exclusively in the society of fiddlers, eunuchs, and women." This grouping of artists, women and eunuchs contains an unexamined misogyny as well as a fear of Wajid's androgynous sexuality. Sleeman displays an automatic assumption that the masculinity of the Asiatic Other is suspect. The above passage also exhibits the British contempt for Indian

art and British incomprehension, hatred and prejudice against an Asiatic political economy within which the art of rule includes the rule of art. Sleeman's passage allows us to judge the fact that Ray's Outram makes a historically resonant formulation that is neither fictional nor exaggerated. We are concerned with this formulation because here lies the key to the colonial discourse of Awadh and the paradigmatic figure of despotism in that discourse – Wajid Ali Shah, the last and most compelling Muslim ruler of Oudh.

The passage makes a political indictment based on what appears as appropriate evidence, Wajid is an unfit king because he does not perform his duties of administering justice. In the very next sentence Sleeman's scrutiny of Wajid's political duties veers off into a subjective opinion that the Asiatic ruler spends his time in "personal gratifications" and not in disinterested duty. Awadh's cultural renaissance in this period, and Wajid's reputation as an extraordinarily accomplished poet/composer – these facts appear in the grid of Sleeman's perception as the classic symptoms of Asiatic decadence. The ruler's love of art is interpreted as his sleepy laziness, "he cannot keep awake in any other." In Ray's *The Chess Players* Outram expresses anxiety about the impending interview with the King of Awadh, because he will have to suffer the customary embrace. The smell of the King's perfume nauseates him and will not wash out of his clothes even after three months. Ray's Outram says derisively that the King "should be in purdah like his women folk." Ray's Outram is representative of colonial administrators' frequent use of the trope of male impotence. The overriding suggestion in Sleeman's description is that the Asiatic mode of rule is executed by men who are sexually impotent. That impotence extends to the Asiatic ruler's mind and morality, in Sleeman's words "his understanding has become so emasculated." The suggestion in Sleeman's prose and Ray's Outram is of an unsubstantiated and widely diffused impotence.

The East India Company could not make a political argument through political proofs. Wajid was a remarkably popular ruler. Sleeman could not prove the charge of maladministration by giving evidence of popular disaffection. In the expanded cultural critique the colonialist makes diffused innuendoes through loose, intuitive, and irrational association; this is combined with allegations about the ruler's masculinity and a contempt for "his own silly comedies" and his brilliance as a poet; thus an all pervasive suggestion of excess is constructed discursively; all of this masquerades as political evidence. The expanded cultural critique proved nothing and yet seemed effectively to stigmatize Awadhi culture, it was masculinist in its orientation, the political-military-scientific

abilities of the ruling elite's male members were the focus of the colonial discourse. The enterprise of the native elite was decried. Awadh's political and moral decadence was proven through a series of intuitive generalizations on the displaced sites of cultural practices of the colonized. The linkages and generalizations *expand* the cultural critique vertically and horizontally to include all the classes in Awadh society and encompass the entire culture of Awadh.

2
Childhood: Work, Play, and Shame Friendship in the Discourse of Enterprise

This chapter examines the work/play thesis in the discourse of colonial enterprise in the Enlightenment narrative of *Robinson Crusoe* (1719), Italian neo-realism, postcolonial cinema, and Hollywood cinema. Through the inclusion of a Hollywood film, Penny Marshall's *Big* (1988), this chapter demonstrates the productive alliances that can be made between the study of Hollywood cinema and postcolonial cinema. I juxtapose the critical responses to the colonial capitalist narratives and fantasies about enterprise as pleasurable play by a Hollywood woman filmmaker and a postcolonial male director, in order to demonstrate that postcolonial theory is a richly suggestive theoretical apparatus for studying mainstream cultural production in relation to the margins. I investigate Ray's aesthetic and political projects in delineating childhood as the source of difference, creativity, humour, and curiosity in his critique of colonial enterprise in the prologue of *The Chess Players* (1977), and his ten-minute documentary for the US public television series *Two* (1964).

I focus on the element of childhood in the discourses and narratives of enterprise, because I wish to stress the contemporary literary and rhetorical reinventions of the discourse of enterprise. I argue against the comfortable illusion that colonial enterprise operated in conditions of colonialism, and the expanded cultural critique is a thing of the past. Under globalism colonial capitalist enterprise re-invents itself in disparate sites. The incorporation of enchanting narratives of childhood is one of the most dangerous and insidious ways in which colonial capitalist enterprise rejuvenates itself. These enchanting narratives may belong to the spate of postcolonial novels about childhood, or to First World cultural production like Hollywood's *Home Alone* and *Home Alone 2*, but in either case their relation is directly to the global logic of capitalism.[1]

The trope of childhood has a politically conservative function in the cultural narratives of imperialism and capitalism.[2] Referring to Rudyard Kipling's *Kim* (1901) Edward Said notes with acute perspicuity that the "boyish pleasures" of Kim's "passion for tricks, pranks, clever wordplay, resourcefulness" confirm rather than subvert "the overall political purpose of British control over India and Britain's other overseas dominions."[3] The relation between Kipling's celebration of boyhood and justification of British imperialism is, in Said's words, "that service [to the empire] is more enjoyable when thought of less like a story – linear, continuous, temporal – and more like a playing field – many-dimensional, discontinuous, spatial."[4] Said's important insight is that within the narratives of imperialist enterprise the activities of colonial domination are, at its most serious and high-minded, as pleasurable as children's play.

Having gained this insight into the work/play thesis of British colonialism, Said tends to close down the full political implications of his insight by reducing it to the neglected aesthetics of colonial literatures. In Said's words, "*pleasure*, whose steady presence in many forms of imperial-colonial writing as well as figurative and musical art is often left undiscussed, is an undeniable component of *Kim*."[5] Undoubtedly the sources of narrative pleasure in colonial literatures, Orientalist research, and travelogues is an important area, for the pleasures that we are trained to receive as readers determine our political practices far more than our conscious political credo. Said's explanation that the child in the imperial text is the site where the text explores and affirms the pleasures of imperialism is a good one, but it bears further investigation.

I argue that one of the central dichotomies of Western thought is the dichotomy between work and play, time of work and time of play. The imperial narrative reorganizes this dichotomy by suggesting that the imperialist gains maximum productivity by approaching his work, to use Kipling's phrase for colonial intelligence services, as The Great Game. The questions that remain unanswered in Said's critical interpretation of *Kim* are the following: why does the imperial narrative draw on the specific pleasures of child's play? what are the cultural consequences of this narrative strategy beyond the aesthetics of pleasure? what are the cultural consequences of the discursive reconfiguration of childhood and the child through this narrative strategy in imperial literatures? moreover what are the cultural consequences of the colonialist conception of work and play for colonizer and colonized? Said touches on one part of the full thesis about work and play in imperial narratives, namely that imperial service is more enjoyable when conceived of as a playing field, but he neglects the binary half of the work/play thesis concerning the colonized.

In broad sympathy with Said's analysis, I suggest that colonialist narratives return obsessively to the trope of childhood in order to celebrate, confirm and justify the colonial capitalist conception of work and play, and condemn the native's mode of work as unproductive play. Having established the binary of unproductive play and work versus productive work and play, the discourse of enterprise names its own form of work and play on a heightened register. The all-important distinction between devalued labour of colonized people versus the supra-valuation of colonial work of conquest and domination must be maintained. At the same time the discourse of enterprise finds it necessary, as the pre-requisite of its self-representation, to image itself in terms of the other, for the other provides the basis for the supra-valuation of enterprising labour.

The other that takes the place of the discredited work/play rhythms of colonized people is childhood. Enterprise renews, rejuvenates, and re-invents its work and play by drawing on two key concepts associated with childhood: the profound absorption, seriousness, and concentration that children bring to play; and the unconditional acceptance of the friend's needs that is only possible in childhood friendships. Imperial enterprise draws on childhood to construct narratives and fantasies in which the work of conquest, domination, and government *is* pleasurable play. The corollary narrative of colonial enterprise is that the colonized native is as profoundly inscribed by the colonizer as the child is psychically inscribed by the parent, so that the slave is the infantilized and faithful friend of the master without jeopardizing the master–slave dialectic.

The cinematic function of the child in Italian neo-realism and Ray's films

While Said's observations about the function of the child in the pleasures of imperialism are specifically devoted to imperial literatures, the debate in film theory about the function of the child in Italian neo-realist cinema is particularly relevant to Ray's cinema. Andre Bazin's passionate and moving essay on Vittorio De Sica's *Ladri di Biciclette* (*The Bicycle Thief*, 1949) formulates an influential theory about the role of the child in Italian neo-realist films:

> It is the child who gives to the workman's adventure its ethical dimension and fashions, from an individual moral standpoint, a drama that might well have been social. Remove the boy, and the story remains much the same. The proof: a resume of it would not differ in

> detail. In fact, the boy's part is confined to trotting along beside his father. But he is the intimate witness of the tragedy, its private chorus.[6]

According to Bazin, the visually compelling scenes in the film consisted of the child walking through Rome with the father in their dispiriting search for the stolen bicycle. Bazin tried to understand why these scenes were visually and emotionally compelling. In Bazin's view the child is irrelevant to the Marxist theme of the worker's dispossession through the loss of his means of production, the father cannot stay employed without a means of transport. Nevertheless the child is central to the viewer's total experience of the film. The plausible answer that Bazin came up with to reconcile the Marxist thematic and the aesthetic dimension of the film is that the child "is the intimate witness" of the actions, providing the private-familial and ethical dimension to the social theme of workers' oppression.

My problem with this interpretation is that it is not sufficiently attentive to the social distortions implied in the film's insertion of the little child in the realm of work. De Sica's film positions the child in the adult world of work, anxiety, fruitless search for the bicycle, and eventual failure. After all we can well imagine as viewers that the little boy in *The Bicycle Thief* would have much preferred, like any other child of his age, to have spent the day playing rather than walking the streets of Rome with his father in search of a bicycle. In this adult world of work the child's emotions and imagination are colonized: he witnesses the father's failure; the child intuitively understands his father's intentions to steal the bicycle; they cry together as they walk on the streets of Rome; in the final scene the child slips his hand in his father's hand, thus the child brings all his sympathy to bear on his father in order to help him reconcile himself to his condition.

Bazin reads these scenes in the religio-moral framework of the post-lapsarian world in which "they despair over a paradise lost" and father–son become equal. This part of Bazin's interpretation seems more wishful than true. Such an experience would be emotionally traumatic for any child, it may well bring him closer to his parent but at the cost of feeling protective and anxious about the parent. Thus the child's function as witness, in De Sica's brilliant and evocative film, is at the cost of the child's affective and psychological growth; as the witness of and the witness to the depredations of the adult world, he cathects emotionally to the anxieties and pains of the parent and loses his own sense of self. In effect *The Bicycle Thief* tracks the ways in which the childhood of the working-class child is colonized, a tragedy no less significant than the

adult worker's oppression. I return to this theme of the colonization of the working-class child under global capitalism towards the end of this chapter, although the text in question is the colonization of a working-class child in the New York suburbs in Penny Marshall's film *Big* (1988).

Gilles Deleuze recalls Bazin's analysis of the child's function in Italian neo-realism in the observation that "the role of the child in neo-realism has been pointed out, notably in De Sica (and later in France with Truffaut)." In Deleuze's view "this is because, in the adult world, the child is affected by a certain motor helplessness, but one which makes him all the more capable of seeing and hearing."[7] Much of Deleuze's film theory extends Bazin's path-breaking criticism, through his disagreements or by pushing at the implications of Bazin's insights. In this case Deleuze not only agrees with Bazin's notion of the child as witness, he extends the idea further by suggesting that the child's eyes and ears, in other words his capacity for seeing and hearing without being able to act on or change what he sees and hears, constitutes his significance in European cinema.

I mark the difference between the political function of the child in Italian neo-realism and Ray's postcolonial cinema as the difference between the child as witness and the child as agent. Satyajit Ray has spoken of the influence Vittorio De Sica's *The Bicycle Thief* had on him. Ray said that the film "gored" him when he saw it in 1950, at a time when he had not made a single film and yet was putting together and defining his own sense of his future work.[8] Ray took from Italian neo-realism the political possibilities of the child's seeing and hearing on a heightened register. However, the aesthetic and political framework within which the child is situated in the Ray film is markedly different from the neo-realists. I name the aesthetic and political function of the child in Ray films the Apu motif, named after the child Apu in the Apu trilogy of films. Ray does not dwell excessively on the child's witnessing of the adult's tragedy, there is none of the patriarchal oedipalized relation between child and father in Ray's films that gives the emotive content to De Sica's film. In fact the child in the Ray film is not tied by invisible strings to the adult world or to his parents, instead children occupy an autonomous realm of play within which the emotive tie is between children, or siblings, like the unforgettable and haunting duo of Apu and his sister Durga in *Pather Panchali* (1955).

Ray shows that a child's embryonic sense of agency is possible only if the camera's eye situates him in the realm of play rather than work. By play I do not mean that Ray's child characters have been granted an idyllic world of toys and endless uninterrupted entertainment. Hypothetically the same scenario of a worker in search of his bicycle in a Ray film

would have been marked by the child's imaginative engagement with all the sights and sounds of the city of Rome, as well as with the human interactions that happen on the way. The worker's child in a Ray film would not have been the passive (Bazin calls him complicit with his father) witness of his father's tragedy. In Ray's films the theme of autonomy is made possible through the director's positioning of the child in the realm of play rather than in work.

It would be too simple to demarcate the difference between the child in *The Bicycle Thief* and Ray's Apu as class difference, the former a working-class child and the latter middle-class children. Apu in *Pather Panchali* (1955) may be the son of a priest by caste, in class terms his indigent family is at the bottom of the social ladder in the village; they slip further and further into subsistence living, and after the father's departure Apu's family is close to starvation. In *Aparajito* (1956) the father's death signals a loss of livelihood and social status, Apu's mother becomes a domestic servant, and Apu is in danger of becoming a servant himself. Therefore the difference between *The Bicycle Thief* and the Apu trilogy is located elsewhere. De Sica cannot see any escape from the colonization of working-class childhood, except through the love between father and son. Ray refuses to see the child's play as wholly determined by his/her class status, even though he shows the steady inroads made into Apu and Durga's play through poverty and death. Ray's child characters do not derive their agency from transcendent innocence or supernatural or magical powers; they remain children dependent on adults. The child in the Ray film gains access to a sense of agency through his curiosity and humour, through the uncolonized imagination activated through play. Apu's imagination and curiosity transforms the world around him and begins the process of making him an agent in the adult world rather than a witness of the adult world.

The trope of childhood and work/play in *Robinson Crusoe*

The work/play thesis of colonial enterprise is realized with stunning success by one of the master narratives of the English Enlightenment and British imperialism, Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719). The popular legacy of Defoe's text lies in the perennial cross-cultural parlour game – if you were marooned in an island, what would you take with you? This question decodes the child's fantasy in the Defoe text. It is a fantasy in which shipwreck signifies the inaugural movement of make-believe within which the solitary male child is divested or divests himself of all the bearings of the adult and known world. The normative image of

childhood in the discourse of enterprise is emphatically male and individualist. The inclusion of women is unthinkable within the parameters set by the text, Englishwomen or native women from Friday's village would jeopardize the level of fantasy by introducing issues of heterosexuality and procreation. The inclusion of other sailors who survived the shipwreck would considerably diminish the glory of Robinson's heroic individualism and steer the narrative towards the consideration of community and the problems and pleasures of communal living and sharing, which diminishes the image of the lone conqueror. Therefore the only kind of childhood that fits Defoe's allegory for imperialism is the solitary male child whose greatest pleasure lies in possession, accumulation, and domination.

The element of child's play begins with the shipwreck, which symbolizes the child's fantasy of being magically rid of, or ridding himself of, the adult world. Yet the inaugural movement of shipwreck is barely established in the text, when the second movement of compensation takes over through the reassuring fantasy that the ship and its goods are still there for the hero to raid.[9] Crusoe states:

> I resolv'd, if possible, to get to the ship . . . for you may be sure my first work was to search and to see what was spoil'd and what was free; and first I found that all the ship's provisions were dry and untouch'd by the water, and being very well disposed to eat, I went to the bread-room and fill'd my pockets with bisket, and eat it as I went about other things, for I had no time to lose.[10]

One can hardly miss in this passage the image of the hungry child who is so absorbed in play that he must play as he eats, Crusoe states: "I went to the bread-room and fill'd my pockets with bisket, and eat it as I went about other things, for I had no time to lose." The child's fantasy is that the rejection of the adult world, signified in the violence of the shipwreck, can be controlled and compensated by the magical discovery that the ship is still there, its goods are dry, and the hero can pick and choose from the ship's plentiful goods to furbish the child's play in the space of the island.

In children's play the box of tools that Crusoe recovers from the ship's wreck constitutes the place of magical fantasy. The child has simply to close his eyes and imagine all those objects that he needs to master, civilize, and own his fantasy island. As if by magic the text provides objects like nails, a hammer, and gunpowder. Defoe's fictional travelogue describes the magical fantasy in these words:

> My raft was strong enough to bear any reasonable weight, my next care was what to load it with ... I first got three of the seamen's chests ... the first of these I fill'd with provisions ... I had other things which my eye was more upon, as first tools to work with on shore, and it was after long searching that I found out the carpenter's chest, which was indeed a very useful prize to me ... My next care was for some ammunition and arms ... I now began to consider, that I might yet get a great many things out of the ship, which would be useful to me ... I had the biggest maggazin of all kinds now that ever were laid up, I believe, for one man, but I was not satisfy'd still; for while the ship sat upright in that posture, I thought I ought to get every thing out of her that I could ... I believe verily, had the calm weather held, I should have brought away the whole ship piece by piece.[11]

Defoe's text beguiles the reader into the notion that this magical repossession, the child giving back to himself bits and pieces of the adult world he has thrown away, constitutes the pleasurable play at the heart of colonial enterprise. Defoe describes this compensatory movement as an illustration of the hero's enterprising labour, reflecting his resourcefulness, deliberation, and capacity for hard work in crisis. Therefore the work/play thesis at the heart of colonial enterprise is simply this, the greater the danger and challenge in work, the greater is the ingredient of play enterprise. In effect the work of colonization *is* pleasurable play. Thus the supra-valuation of Crusoe's labour, signified in the proposition that Crusoe formulates that his exertions on the island give him the right of ownership of the island, depends in great measure on the work/play thesis in the discourse of enterprise.

One of the fundamental premises of children's make-believe is that in the realm of play, the child is at par with the adult. The child constructs a parallel universe in the make-believe world which replicates the adult world in every element, with the exception that the child has autonomy. In Defoe's text the child's fantasy of autonomy is carried to extreme limits, Crusoe makes an uncontested claim to overlordship of the island, its natural resources, and its inhabitants. Crusoe's labours on the island replicate key features of the adult world of imperial England in the early part of the eighteenth century. Crusoe builds a fortress and refers frequently in the text to his paranoid belief that the only way to be secure is to make short forays into the outside world and quickly retreat into the fortress like "castle."[12] Crusoe gazes out at the landscape from his fortifications and barricades, he expends much thought and labour on hiding his gunpowder in different places, and securing his granary and orchard.

The fortress mentality of Crusoe forecasts the ways the British empire constructed cantonments in every major city, town, and hill resort in India to barricade Englishmen and Englishwomen from the native part of the town. The architecture, roads, greenery, and facilities in the British cantonment part of the colonial Indian city differed widely from the native part of the town, and reassured the English residents of the city that in the case of a popular insurrection they would have time to prepare their barricades. Defoe's text naturalizes this paranoia, this fearful and suspicious way of inhabiting space, by evoking the pleasures of the child's "survival games" in which the child has a survival kit, barricades himself against an imaginary enemy, and hones his survival skills. It is important to note that a paranoid view of the world in Defoe's text is not a sign of Crusoe's permanent state of fearfulness. There is a pleasurable game that Crusoe plays over and over again, in which he imagines the enemy and sets up odds only in order to demolish them and reconfirm his supremacy over the island.

The text steers the reader away from contemplating the limitations of this type of child's play and this mode of knowing and relating to the world. The notion of play in Defoe's text lacks the curiosity and creativity of a child discovering the secrets of nature, the mystery and beauty of animals and all living things, and the games of a curious child who studies birds, animals, or plants and learns about them. Crusoe does not fulfill his affective needs on the island by making a friend of a bird or animal, because he has no time left from his enterprise of conquering, hiding, and barricading his possessions.[13] Crusoe derives endless pleasure from his pursuits on the island but little joy. His project of discovery, akin to the European discoveries of continents and sea-routes, lacks the essential creative impulse of wonder in the imaginative child.

There has been considerable critical attention paid to the Crusoe–Friday relationship; my own intervention into this debate focuses on the way the Crusoe–Friday relationship draws on the notion of the child.[14] It is all too simple to dismiss the Crusoe–Friday relationship as obviously racist and imperialist. Defoe's portrayal of this relationship has entered the English language in the common phrase, "man Friday" and "girl Friday"; these phrases have to be decoded in order to understand why it is acceptable to refer to the Crusoe–Friday relationship to denote the relationship between master and domestic servant or valet, employer and employee, male boss and female subordinate or secretary. I suggest that the Crusoe–Friday relationship elaborates a style of domination that is continually redeployed and re-invented under global capitalism. I name Crusoe's relationship to Friday "shame friendship," my coinage of this

term will become intelligible as the analysis proceeds. First, however, I would like to address some of the reasons that the popular phrase "man Friday" is an acceptable part of human interaction. We must return to Defoe's text in order to examine the seemingly natural and unobtrusive way in which the Crusoe–Friday relationship is made acceptable and pleasurable, to use Said's notion of the pleasures of imperialism, through its reference to the child.

The pleasures of community and sharing are singularly absent from the child's play imaged in Defoe's text. The only community that imperial enterprise permits is the unequal and unnatural hierarchy of Crusoe as master and Friday as servant. The location of childhood in this master–servant relation is of considerable import. Just when the reader of Defoe's text is accustomed to the solitude in Crusoe's life on the island, the narrative stirs up the reader's memories of the enormous loneliness children can feel. With the entry of Friday the reader is led to believe that the child's game that will unfold in the text is the lonely child bonding with the newcomer, sharing, learning, and reciprocating with warmth and generosity of spirit. The text, however, modulates readerly expectations, Crusoe's extraordinary anxiety, and paranoia about the human footprint sets into motion the enterprising work of outwitting and mastering the alien newcomer. The child is evoked and resituated in a deformed context of the master–servant relation:

> But I needed none of all this precaution; for never man had a more faithful, loving, sincere servant, than Friday was to me; without passions, sullenness or designs, perfectly oblig'd and engag'd; his very affections were ty'd to me, like those of a child to a father; and I dare say, he would have sacrific'd his life for the saving mine upon any occasion, whatsoever, the many testimonies he gave me of this, put it out of doubt, and soon convinc'd me, that I needed to use no precautions as to my safety on his account.[15]

Crusoe reflects on Friday's natural inclination for servitude to his English master, his reflections are similar to the anthropological accounts that contrasted the freedom-loving European to the Oriental and African races who are naturally inclined to servitude. Crusoe defines the perfect servant: one who is "faithful, loving, sincere," the good servant does not betray the merest hint of resentment "without passions, sullenness and designs, perfect'ly oblig'd and engag'd," the perfect servant is willing to sacrifice his life for his master. Yet this recipe of the perfect servant is not enough for the paranoid Crusoe, he suspects that Friday is plotting

to steal his gunpowder and kill him, because those would be his own actions if he was in Friday's place.

Within the fantasy narrative of colonial domination it is not enough for the subjugated people to display perfect obedience. Friday must be psychically and affectively inscribed by his master to such an extent that his emotions, his very being and his existence, depend on and takes their life from his master. That psychic inscription is only possible in a parent's relationship to the child, partly because the child depends on the parent for the means of survival, and partly because the child's consciousness is shaped by the knowledge that he has been given life by his parent. Crusoe says "his very affections were ty'd to me, like those of a child to a father." This is the telos of perfect servitude, the relation between Crusoe and Friday is imaged as parent and child, the former occupying the paternalistic relation of the father, the latter occupying the subject-position of the infantilized not-child who is so simple-minded, primitive and eager to please that he must be treated as a child. The function of Defoe's reference to the child is to naturalize the unnatural hierarchy in the Crusoe–Friday relation. The deforming impulse of colonialism, whereby two equals are made unequal, is naturalized and harmonized with reference to the natural subordination of the child to the parent.

Paternalism in the discourses and narratives of colonialism and patriarchy, both its benevolent aspect as well as the stern and punitive face of paternalistic colonialism, are well known.[16] My objective is not to reinvent the wheel but to track the location of the child in the paternalistic narratives of imperialism. How and why will Friday comply with this paternalistic hierarchy of father-like master and child-like servant? Defoe's text resolves the problem of compliance, for he delineates the processes by which the other will be made to accept the subject position of the child in the economy of paternalism. The text makes it clear that the material realities of domination will not suffice in permanently inscribing the colonized servant with the psychology of servitude. This is where the function of shame friendship comes into play in the economy of paternalism; the other must be shamed and infantilized so completely and successfully that he accepts his subordination.

The encoded place of shame is cannibalism. Carol Houlihan Flynn states that "the cannibal provides a convenient benchmark of civilization... at the same time the cannibal has long been used as an index of the barbarity of its civilized observer."[17] I focus on the function of cannibalism in the processes of shame friendship in *Robinson Crusoe*. In Defoe's text cannibalism refers to the social character of enterprising labour because

it is in the context of cannibalism that Defoe chooses to introduce Crusoe's relationship with other possible inhabitants/claimants to the island. The social character of Crusoe's labour is temporarily in abeyance on the island, and it is made visible in the text when land and enterprising labour are put in relation to Friday. The discourse of enterprise produces its other in the figure of the uncivilized native. If Crusoe had discovered a village of natives living peacefully in some part of the island, the value equation of the text would be seriously jeopardized, for Crusoe would have to acknowledge that the indigenous natives have as much right to live on the island as he does. Therefore the other appears in the text bearing the irrefutable signs of savagery, he must appear as the cannibal-victim who is being "brought out for the slaughter" and is rescued by Crusoe.[18] Defoe's text constructs a proposition: the other is a cannibal, therefore Friday is naturally inferior, therefore it is logical that the morally superior Crusoe will dominate.[19]

The rhetorical function of the reference to cannibalism in colonial literatures is to induce shame in the colonized in order that they acknowledge their cultural inferiority to the colonizer. Crusoe compels Friday to acknowledge the sin of cannibalism, disavow that practice and by so doing, confess to his barbarism. Friday's entry into Crusoe's world begins with Crusoe's first establishing gesture as a master, which is to construct the "place" of shame, "for I had by some means let him know, that I would kill him if he offer'd it."[20] Crusoe's first task, much before the thematic of language and the division of labour is addressed by the text, is to make Friday revisit the "place" of the cannibal feast and disavow his former life by promising never to eat human flesh or Crusoe would kill him. "The place" Crusoe says, "was Covered with humane bones, the ground dy'd with their blood, great pieces of flesh left here and there half-eaten, mangl'd and scorched."[21] This is the "place" of shame, inscribed and re-inscribed in the discourse of enterprise, and this place of shame marks the entry of the other.

Crusoe is faced with the perennial problem of the dominant classes, how to ensure that the subaltern never rises in revolt against them. Crusoe confesses to wondering what thoughts were running through Friday's head, whether he still had "the relish of a Cannibal's Stomach" and was he planning to "make a feast upon me."[22] Defoe describes Crusoe's question and Friday's answer, Crusoe says, "would you turn wild again, eat men's flesh again, and be a savage as you were before?" and Friday answers in pidgin English, "no eat man again."[23] Friday's disavowal implies his acceptance that his culture is barbaric, therefore he must be shamed into stripping himself of his cultural identity, and this process

of stripping prepares him for the infantilized position of the child vis-à-vis Crusoe.

Thus the fictional resolution for Crusoe's paranoia is provided by the motif of cannibalism. Friday is shamed into accepting his inferiority, at the same time Crusoe contracts a deformed friendship with the reformed savage. It is the processes that are involved in this dual process of shaming and contracting a deformed friendship that I call shame friendship. In shame friendship the shaming of the colonized disguises rapacious claims as the claims of friendship. The discourse of enterprise invites the Other to servitude under the promise of friendship, typified in the Crusoe–Friday friendship. Nevertheless a friendly servitude does not constitute the final negotiation with power, instead friendly servitude is the start of the discursive and material processes of colonial domination.

Despite the fact that the character of play in Crusoe's island is joyless, solitary, and repetitively mechanical, Defoe's narrative became part of the collective imagination of Europe and entered the English language. For example, nineteenth-century British readers like Macaulay, who were involved in the colonial enterprise in the Indian colony, recalled the formative experience of reading Defoe's fictional travelogue as "that strange union of comfort, plenty, and security with the misery of loneliness – [which] was my delight before I was five years old, and has been the delight of hundreds and thousands of boys."[24] Crusoe marooned on the island, Crusoe's salvaging objects from the shipwreck, his labours on the island and the Crusoe–Friday relationship became a popular children's game. Crusoe became the prototype of enterprising work that is as pleasurable as children's play, and as heroic as enterprising English colonizers like Robert Clive, T. E. Lawrence, and W. H. Sleeman.

Witness or agent: The political function of the child or the Apu motif in Ray's films

At the inception of this chapter I suggested that the aesthetic and political framework within which the child in the Ray film sees and hears the adult world around him is markedly different from the framework of Italian neo-realism. I should now like to demonstrate that point through a brief examination of a number of Ray films. In a later film *Pikoo* (1980) the central character is a boy-child named Pikoo who plays a game in which he shouts "Hush" and, as if by magic, the adults stop arguing behind the door. Pikoo is vaguely aware of the dysfunction in his family. Through this invented game and imaginary power Pikoo crosses over from the sense of helplessness that a child feels, as he sees and hears the

family discord, to imagining a sense of agency through play. In the Ray film the child's activities of seeing and hearing are marked, not by the motor helplessness and paralysis of action that Deleuze suggests is characteristic of the child in Italian neo-realism, but by a magical agency. The child's activities of seeing and hearing are invested with the profound significance Ray accords children's creativity and curiosity, these activities can and do magically transform the world around the child.[25]

The postcolonial artist has to dismantle the colonial discursive association between the colonized native, servitude, and his childlike nature. *Pather Panchali* broke the mould when it was first screened in New York at the Museum of Modern Art (MOMA) in April 1955. As Marie Seton put it, "No portents heralded *Pather Panchali*. It was suddenly there to create a surprise."[26] From that point on the cinematic grammar of the Ray film depended in great part on the political-creative function he accords the curiosity and play of the child. The Ray film does not dwell on the transcendent innocence of the child, but on the imaginative and curious child. Humour, curiosity, and play are not only the sources of creativity and regeneration in several Ray films, they have a political function, for they are the resources by which the characters in the film, especially the children in the film, triumph over class oppression. For instance, in *Aparajito* (1956) Apu's curiosity about the performing monkey occurs just after the scene of servitude. The scene of servitude is presented through the female gaze. Apu's mother notes with anger and sorrow that her child is being trained into a servant. It is in this context that the succeeding sequence of Apu's curiosity symbolizes and presages his escape from servitude through his education and his quest to become a writer.

The most significant influence on Ray's films lies in an unexpected quarter, children's literature. The family's printing press and the children's magazine *Sandesh* begun by Ray's father, Sukumar Roy, and revived by Ray as a parallel career to his film-making, are significant as symbols and traditions. It is only after *Sandesh* became a popular children's magazine in Bengal that Ray achieved minimal financial security, which was not possible from his shoe-string budget films. In an interview in the late 1970s Ray explained his vision of the political function of his children's stories and children's films:

> You must have noticed this trend with me of spending all my time outside cinema for children, writing for them, illustrating for them. This has now gone on for twenty years. Our *Sandesh* is twenty years old...My work for children, which surfaced in the cinema for the

> first time in *Goopy Gyne Bagha Byne*, I enjoy immensely. In fact I have been feeling this other need more and more over the years . . . to reach a larger audience . . . Making films for children that could work at several levels, as in *Goopy Gyne*, and as definitely in *Heerak Rajar Deshey*, could be an answer. That way I could entertain the children, give the more intelligent and sophisticated adult spectators something to respond to with appeals at several levels. It's worthwhile to carry on with experiments in that direction.[27]

In Ray's words children's films not only create a constituency for a readership of children, they "reach a larger audience" than his adult films. Ray also experimented with children's films that "could work at several levels" and that "appeal at several levels" without manipulating or talking down to its primary constituency of children. The children's stories and sketches by Sukumar Roy and the stories, cartoons, and films for children by Satyajit Ray are enormously popular in Bengal and represent a recognizable tradition. They signify the dream possibility for the postcolonial artist that his cultural production becomes as much part of the national and regional unconscious as folk and subaltern genres.

The political dimension of the cinematic text in Ray's case is inextricable from the creativity, curiosity, and play of the child. There is a political symbolism in Ray's children's films, children's magazine *Sandesh*, and his widely acclaimed cinematic portraits of children. For Ray, children's literature and children's films are not politically lightweight, for instance, Ray's children's film *The Kingdom of Diamonds* (*Hirok Rajar Deshe*, 1980) is an unambiguous critique of state repression in the Emergency years. In Henry Wilson's documentary on the making of Martin Scorsese's *Kundun* (1997), titled *In Search of Kundun with Martin Scorsese* (1998), Scorsese said that he was trying to achieve the look of the child in Ray's *Pather Panchali*. Scorsese did not simply make a functional reference to Ray's technique, he alluded to the political symbolism of the look of the child in the Ray film. *Kundun* was Scorsese's political statement in support of Buddhist culture and the political necessity for non-violence (Martin Scorsese's self-confessed political agenda is film preservation and the filmic preservation of a vanishing Buddhist culture). In the context of filming *Kundun*, Scorsese was drawn to the look of the child in Ray's films.

The child's perspective also informs the camera's gaze at the female protagonist in many Ray films. In the widely acclaimed opening scene of *Charulata* (1964) the directorial eye is explicitly oriented to the perspective of the curious child. The restrictions on upper-class married women in nineteenth-century Bengal force a certain infantilization on

Charu, despite the fact that her husband belongs to the progressive reform movement in nineteenth-century Bengal. Ray's film critiques the patriarchal infantilizing of Charu and reminds the viewer that both by age and due to her confined life, Charu retains the curiosity and lively imagination of the girl-child. In an extraordinarily subversive and politically significant move, Ray's camera forges a relationship between the gaze of the male director and the female subject of the gaze by creating a common ground in a bored and highly imaginative child's curiosity. Ray's camera tracks Charulata as she uses her lorgnette to gaze at passers-by on the street, presaging Charu's use of these everyday materials in her writing.

Ray celebrates the curious child or the Apu in himself and others. Apu is not judgemental, and his ability to look without pre-conceptions functions subversively in a number of Ray films. Apu enjoys human interactions and watches how human beings react to situations. The Apu motif in Ray's films symbolizes the investigation of history and culture by searching out the sources of human creativity, by looking for the ordinary materials of life that make for extraordinary, wonderful art.

The Apu motif as a satiric technique: Ray's critique of colonial enterprise in the prologue of *The Chess Players*, or the confessions of an English cannibal

There is no child on the screen in the prologue of *The Chess Players*, nevertheless the camera's eye approaches the history of British enterprise in Awadh with the playful and lively curiosity of an imaginative child. It is a well-known satiric technique to use the gaze of the innocent child to unmask the corruptions of the adult world. Ray's satiric use of the child does not sentimentalize or dwell excessively on the child's innocence, he is much more interested in the transformative possibilities of the imaginative child. The filmic audience is not immediately aware of the child's perspective in *The Chess Players* because the Apu motif is mediated through the lens of Urdu wit enunciated by the film's narrator.[28] Ray's narrator tells an unflattering story about Awadh culture, concerning the vanity of the nineteenth-century ruler of Awadh, Wajid Ali Shah, in sending his jewelled crown for display to London. In telling this story Ray moves away from the tonalities of Premchand's nationalist satire. Ray's story about the crown of the Awadh ruler is told, not in the satirist's tones of savage indignation, but gentle self-mockery. In Ray's film Wajid's display of his bejewelled crown denotes not Oriental luxury and opulence, but Wajid's personal vanity as well as his anxiety to ally

himself as friend to the East India Company which had put him on the throne as a puppet ruler in the first place.

The protocols of self-mockery in Urdu wit are distinct from the self-flagellation typical of nationalist genres. In *The Chess Players* the Awadhi narrator's self-deprecation activates a complex strategy of subversion of the opponent, through an infinitesimal switching of the satiric target to include British empire builders and their discourse of enterprise. In Ray's satire the focus switches from Wajid's vanity in displaying his crown, to the responses of British spectators at the London exhibition. During the year that Ray spent researching the archives in London, Calcutta, and Lucknow he assembled a set of minor historical texts that would be considered incidental trivia by the professional historian, but are brought forward from the margins to centre stage by Ray. These texts concern an exhibition, a crown, and a letter. It is from these three historical objects that Ray crafts his own satire of British enterprise.

The setting of Ray's satire is London in 1851, indicating that for Ray the political processes by which a trading company annexed Awadh had its roots in the imperial centre. There is a political audaciousness in Ray's choice of setting. Ray located the encounter between two cultures on the terrain of the 1851 London exhibition. These nineteenth-century exhibitions were important cultural sites, for they allowed European countries to display the artefacts of technological innovation as well as display prized objects from their colonies. Ray seizes on the telling cultural gesture, by focusing on spectatorship as a culturally encoded activity rather than lingering over the fetishized cultural objects of the exhibition. He dwells on how British spectators viewed the exotic exhibition objects from the colonies. In Ray's view the telling cultural gesture which condenses upper-class British cultural attitudes to Awadhi culture is contained in the Englishman's letter recounting his visit to the exhibition and his responses to Wajid's crown. As the writer and filmmaker of children's literature and films, Ray is interested in how people make meaning from viewing a cultural object belonging to an alien culture. In short Ray has a childlike curiosity about the human activity of curiosity itself.

In the course of his research Ray was delighted by the discovery of this nineteenth-century letter for it allowed him to bring together disparate elements – the crown, the exhibition, and the letter – to metonymically represent Awadhi and British cultures. At one level the letter fulfilled the scholarly criteria for historical satire, the letter constituted unimpeachable historical evidence from the correspondence of a nineteenth-century Englishman. At another level the three artefacts of

the crown, the exhibition, and the letter gesture to folk idioms. In the morphology of the folktale the vanity of the rich man who displays his wealth invites the envy of the covetous man who steals the rich man's jewels. In the animation sequence of the prologue, a voice with an upper-class British accent reads out a paragraph from the letter:

> The wretch at Lucknow who has sent his crown to the Exhibition would have done his people and us a great service if he had sent his head in it – and he would never have missed it. That is a cherry which will drop into our mouths one day.

The satiric target switches from Wajid's vanity to the covetousness of Wajid's English patron, The East India Company. The Englishman makes a shocking confession that he desires the Indian wretch's head. He would like to see the Awadh ruler's head displayed in the exhibition. He judges the Oriental ruler's sending his crown for display as an instance of the ruler's stupidity, his contempt is evident in the witticism that the "wretch at Lucknow" would not even know it if his head was severed from his body. He ends by promising himself that the Indian ruler's head, crown, and kingdom are the fruit that will "drop into our mouths one day." Ray's satire creatively exploits what another reader might dismiss as a tasteless English joke and nothing more. The joke is treated as the literal intent of the letter-writer in order to foreground the reference to cannibalism in the Englishman's metonymy of crown-head-cherry.

Earlier in the chapter I argued that cannibalism functions discursively in colonial literature, anthropology, and history as the mark of the non-European Other. My point is not to defend the indefensible practice of cannibalism, I am also not interested in contesting the empirical evidence that cannibalism existed in many parts of the world. Instead I unpack the discursive associations between enterprise, cannibalism, and the non-European Other. Ray had a lifelong interest in the anthropological distinction between civilization and savagery. His interest culminated in his film about an Indian anthropologist who spends a lifetime travelling the world and, ironically enough, is treated as a suspicious outsider by his own niece and forced to give proofs of his family identity. Ray admits that the film *The Stranger* (*Agantuk*, 1991) was influenced by his reading of Claude Levi-Strauss.[29]

The Chess Players is earlier than *Agantuk*, but already one can discern Ray's interest in the post-Enlightenment binary between savagery and civilization, or the disregard for human life in non-European savage societies versus the reverence for human life characteristic of European

civilization. Although Ray could have used any of the documents pertaining to the Awadh annexation, he chose the nineteenth-century Englishman's letter precisely because its reference to cannibalism freed the Apu in him. The letter allowed him to comically destabilize the discourse of British enterprise which refers to the other as a cannibal, or savage because they are cannibals, and at the same time the colonial discourse obsessively plays with the theme of the Indian wretch's head, scalping and head-hunting.

Ray's Awadhi narrator does not react to the Englishman's confession by voicing sentiments generally associated with nationalism – ire, outrage, and censure. The filmic narrator merely repeats in a bemused tone, "The head of the Kingdom of Awadh to be eaten like a cherry?" It is as if the comic imagination of the child in Ray is caught by the playful possibilities of this strange adult who writes down his cannibalistic desires and mails them in a letter. The child in Ray is entranced by the ways in which adults reveal their childish envy and aggression in language. The adult in Ray notes the lapse of good taste in the letter; however, the child in Ray is gleefully unconcerned about the lack of civility in the letter, for it is in this display of cultural prejudice and bad manners that the adult letter-writer reveals himself and the elite members of his culture. Both aspects of Ray, the director of acclaimed historical films and the writer of children's literature, are imaginatively absorbed in the creative-comic possibilities of crown, head, and cherries.

Ray's cinematic satire seeks authorization from a nineteenth-century Englishman's correspondence. This pretended permission loosens the narrator/storyteller's tongue and allows him to metonymically substitute crown, head, and cherries for the dates, events, and players in Wajid Ali Shah's accession to the Awadh throne. The English sahib's letter is used as sanction but is not read through the traditional tools of history as a primary document for positivist evidence, instead the letter is misread as evidence that the English are a race of cannibals. The deliberate literalizing of the letter's buried reference to head-hunting is the place of poise between the creativity of the non-judgemental child and the stern judgement of the historically aware adult in Ray. Film montage exploits the split-second delay to make a point. In the infinitesimal delay that is possible in cinematic time, the narrator keeps the identity of the correspondent anonymous by saying "But listen to what an Englishman in India had to say about it." It is only after the voice-over reads out the letter that the narrator discloses the identity of the correspondent, "Alas, words penned by the Governor-General of India!" The point of this delayed disclosure is to produce what the Russian filmmaker and

film theorist Sergei Eisenstein calls a minor shock, jolting the viewer into judging the letter-writer's private thoughts without the automatic assent due to his power and prestige. Eisenstein calls montage shots composed of varied and differential movements the rhythmic method of montage. Ray exploits the discontinuities that are possible in rhythmic montage, those possibilities that Eisenstien describes in the following way, "montage must proceed by alterations, conflicts, resolutions, and resonances."[30] Take off the label and read the words, the narrator seems to say, and you will find the sentiments uncivilized, put back the label of Lord Dalhousie, the archetype of the enterprising Englishman in his role as Governor-General of India, and you will find yourself questioning the nationalist call for indigenous enterprise in Dalhousie's mould.

Filmic metaphor, metonymy, and cinematic satire are distinguished from satiric verse, prose, or vaudeville by the fact that the chief vehicle for filmic metaphor and satire is montage. Montage theorists like Pudovkin evoked, in the film *Mother* (1926), the smile of joy by interconnecting shots of the actor smiling, a brook, and sunbeams. Andre Bazin and Rudolf Arnheim questioned whether the figurative devices of film montage could be performed without violating the visual unity of the cinematic form. Ray's imaginative engagement with cinematic satire as a mode of analysis is evident in his assemblage of the aural-visual metaphor of the confessions of an English cannibal. With much gusto the Lakhnavi tall tale narrates the hundred years of British–Awadh history through the burgeoning and multiplying satiric metonymy of crown (object), human head (living being), and cherry (food) and the satirical amplification of this English quip. Ray's script clarifies the connection between colonial enterprise and cannibalistic appetites, "Animation showing crowned cherries with their crowns being knocked off by Dalhousie and the cherry being swallowed in one gulp."[31] In the background the narrator names the cherry-like territories gobbled up under the euphemism of British annexations, "Punjab, Burma, Nagpur, Sitara, Jhansi. The only one left is the cherry of Oudh." The litany of names evokes the flow of historical events. In textbook history the litany of names signifies the victory of colonial enterprise in seizing the Indian territories under the euphemism of British annexations. When Ray interrupts the flow of chronological historical time with the childlike cartoon of crowned cherries, the spectator is alienated from the progressivist narratives of colonialist and nationalist historiography.

Ray's cinematic satire suggests that capitalist–colonialist enterprise – both its history, its conception of useful labour of land-grabbing, and its conception of efficiently productive labour-time of military

annexation – is nothing more grand and meaningful than the endless, mechanical, repetitive, and ultimately futile activity of a Governor-General of British India ravenously consuming more and more Indian territories. The work of empire is treated irreverently as vicious play – crown-grabbing, children playing at scalping and head-hunting, and gobbling cherries. For Ray the inner truth of enterprise is not about the British ruling class's efficiency, punctuality, and rational order; enterprising labour is not devoted to creation but to the coveting and striving to possess a beautiful object (the jewelled crown) made by someone else. Ray's implied comment on the nationalists' adaptation of British-colonial models of enterprise is that the labour-time of enterprise is the time of insatiable appetite, endlessly circular and self-defeating. By laughing at the goals and achievements of English enterprise, the uncolonized imagination of the child in Ray's film exposes British enterprise far better than anything said by an adult.

The child's view in Ray's cartoons about shame friendship in *The Chess Players*

The postcolonial artist may describe the systemic humiliations and disenfranchisement of shame friendship in the adult mode of savage indignation; or he/she can adopt, as Ray does, the perspective of a child's cartoons to explain the logic of shame friendship. Childhood is a period of life marked by the possibility of friendship with siblings, schoolmates, or neighbourhood children. The extent to which the possibility of friendship comes to fruition marks the child in his or her future endeavours. The raptures and conflicts in childhood and the notion of play in children's games is composed of the activities of sharing, fighting, jockeying for power, making up, and negotiating with playmates. There is an implicit equality, directness, simplicity, and open longing that a child can display in his/her overtures of friendship that throws the inequality, duplicities, and sadism of shame friendship into sharp relief.

Ray's personal experiences of shame friendship and its opposite, his friendships with Englishmen, Englishwomen, and Americans that bridged cultural barriers, were plentiful.[32] His first job in a British advertising company, Keymer's, is a case in point. The company rewarded him with a brief posting in London, yet he found that in the London branch his British boss claimed credit for a poster Ray had made. Years later Ray recalled the incident as the only occasion in his life when he lost his self-control. In a letter to Marie Seton he described the experience, "I had always thought the English in England were better people than the

English who come to India."[33] Ray had imagined a distinction between the rapacious British who colonized and governed India and the civilized British in England. The experience taught Ray to shed his illusions about his subject-position at the centre and periphery.

Ray's personal experience is a microcosm of the psycho-social processes of shame friendship. Shame friendship appears as unusual generosity and friendliness, like the company's posting in London for Ray, and then strips the Indian employee of his work in a London setting where the Indian employee feels most isolated and most dependent on the Company. The employee experiences a loss of composure and dignity through the self-realization that he was never an equal of his British colleagues in the first place. Ray did not accept the position of the Indian employee whose work is stolen and who is rewarded for accepting his shamed and stripped status. He confronted his boss, quit, and fortunately found another job in a branch of the same company. The story is incomplete without the last telling detail, Ray's English boss in his Calcutta office wrote to him in London expressing his full support of Ray's resistance. I think the story encapsulates the double sense that Ray brings to his treatment of the historical friendship between the Awadh rulers and the East India Company. He had personally experienced the unpredictable ways in which Englishmen and Indians could and did form friendships. At the same time he garnered an intimate knowledge of the processes of shame friendship in his interactions with the corporate world, with the state officials of the Bengal government, and the bureaucracy at the centre in Delhi, as well as his interactions with Hollywood.[34]

Ray's dual view of British–Indian friendships informs his representation of the hundred years of British–Awadh friendship. The second satiric tale in the prologue of *The Chess Players* dramatizes the problems attendant on the postcolonial filmmaker's bid to represent the inner truth of a historical event. In his magazine essay on *The Chess Players*, Ray describes his growing sense that his film on Awadh's annexation, unlike his period films set in Bengal, could not rely on character, plot, dialogue, and setting to evoke the period. Ray felt that he had to play the historian in a more direct way than ever before because Awadh had been erased from national memory for the post-Independence generation of midnight's children. In the interview Ray said that the function of the animation sequence was to "telescope 100 years of Oudh–British relationship" that led up to the British annexation of Awadh.[35] In Ray's words:

> People just didn't know anything about the history of Lucknow and its nawabs. The present generation knows absolutely nothing about

> this and it applies to most people. They know vaguely about the annexation of Oudh but *nothing about what preceded it and the British–nawab relationship* [emphasis mine].[36]

In the extract above Ray stresses public ignorance about the processes of domination, in effect "what preceded" the defeat of Awadh. He makes a condensed reference to these processes in the phrase "the British–nawab relationship." Ray encountered three distinct interpretations of this historical relationship. W. H. Sleeman's eye-witness account of Awadh in *A Journey Through the Kingdom of Oude in 1849–50* (1858) describes the hundred years in terms of British magnanimity. British administrator-historians could not easily fit members of the sophisticated Awadh culture into the primitive category, nevertheless the colonial historiography of Awadh characterized the Awadh nawabs' overtures of friendship with the English as the childlike nature of the primitive other, symptomatic of a childlike race that desires to please. British historians described the hundred years of British–Awadh relations in terms of the symptoms of a civilization in decline, and a Muslim elite that lost its political will and aspired to a parasitic friendship with the dominant and vigorous English race.

Nationalist historiography describes the same period in terms of Awadhi servility, and nationalist literatures disavow the possibility of friendship between the colonizer/colonized. Nationalist writing concurs on this point with its avowed opponents, the British. According to nationalist historiography, the overtures of friendship between the defeated native elite and the victorious Company officials were doomed because it was a class-alliance founded on unequal exchange. Nationalists interpreted the desire of the colonized for friendship as the subjectivity of a nation which has internalized domination. The nationalist rhetoric for such political behaviour is "British toady," "sycophants," "servile," "supine," and an unmanly lack of national pride and self-respect. Nationalism mobilizes the masses by suggesting that enduring friendships and true community is possible only among politically conscious citizens who join the nationalist movement. By activating the binary of national shame/national pride, nationalist rhetoric situates British–Indian friendships within the shameful and sycophantic attributes of national identity.[37]

The literature and cultural production around the theme of colonialism displays a preoccupation with the rupture of the political text between dominant and subaltern classes and between the colonizer and colonized, through the human connectedness of friendship, love, sexuality, inter-racial children and so on. However, it is difficult for Indian or British

writers to eschew the binary of magnanimity/servility and focus instead on the fact that people of two complex and widely different civilizations had prolonged contact in Awadh. The artist's representation of transgressive friendships is fraught by the colonial and nationalist condemnation of such relationships. Ray inherited the nationalist condemnation of such friendships in the political sphere as comprador and collaborationist. Ray was also influenced by the Brahmo Samaj, a nineteenth-century movement, centred in Bengal that revolved around Ram Mohan Roy. As a reform movement the Brahmo Samaj articulated a rationalist critique of the superstitions and orthodoxies of Hindu religious sects, a critique that owed a great deal to the critique of religion as superstition by the European Enlightenment. Ray was the self-conscious heir of the Brahmo Samaj tradition which is anchored on a synthesis between British and Indian civilizations.[38]

Believing in the desire for friendship while acknowledging its impossibility, Ray had a profound conviction in the possibility of human connectedness and human bonding that escapes political formulas. Therefore he describes the inner truth of the hundred years of British–Awadh relations in terms of the impossible possibility of friendship, and the deforming of friendship under conditions of domination. Did the Awadh Nawabs desire friendship because they were servile sycophants or was this a manifestation of Awadh's culture of courtesy? Ray departs from the nationalist paradigm by taking seriously the Nawabs' desire for friendship. He seriously entertains the notion that the nawabs' gestures of friendship were part and parcel of an Awadhi conception of social and political relations of becoming equal by courtesy.

In the prologue Ray invites his viewers to use their historical imagination to speculate on the human interaction, as well as the deforming of human interaction, under the conditions of colonialism. Referring to the hundred year British–Oudh relations culminating in the 1856 annexation, Ray observed:

> According to all available evidence, this was marked throughout, right from Shuja down to Wajid, by an anxiety on the part of the Nawabs to maintain friendly relations with the Company, in spite of the fact that treaty after treaty progressively stripped them of their territory and their autonomy. (This can be construed as magnanimity or servility, or a mixture of both, depending on one's viewpoint.)[39]

Ray's cryptic words describe a style of domination through the psychosocial processes of shame friendship. Cultural shaming requires a level

of consent from the victim, and this consent is elicited through the "anxiety on the part of the Nawabs to maintain friendly relations with the Company." The Nawabs' anxiety that Ray describes is friendship-anxiety. It is a peculiar characteristic of British–Oudh relations that, unlike the Company's relations with other princely states or its Bengal territories, the political behaviour of the Oudh elite was marked, as Ray puts it in his magazine essay, by friendship-anxiety. Conversely the political behaviour of the East India Company was marked by shame friendship, a social relation between unequals within which the dominant group conducts friendship as a series of rapacious claims disguised as the claims of friendship. With considerable acuteness Ray notes that the Company's series of claims in the name of friendship "progressively stripped" Awadh's native elite of the material and political basis of that friendship by taking away "their territory and their autonomy."

The East India Company's rapacious claims appeared, both to themselves and to the Nawabs, as the colonizer's "magnanimity" and charity in accepting the tokens of friendship. Thus the East India Company's confident rapacity masquerades as the condescension of the superior race, a masquerade that depends on the Nawab's courtesy. In the steady attrition over a hundred years, the English friend's benevolence contains a steady increase in his claims. The Oudh Nawab puts together the tattered semblance of cordial relations, his state of being stripped appears as his own fault, bearing all the shameful features of political-moral indolence. The native friend has less and less to offer, and displays more and more anxiety about friendship. His inability to reciprocate, together with his stripped state, shames him into accepting that he is unworthy of the coequal equality of friendship. The pre-condition of cultural shaming is the close proximity of friendship, the state of being stripped is precisely the material-psychological effect of colonial domination.

The Awadhi narrator in the filmic prologue of *The Chess Players* describes the friendship between "Company Bahadur" or the East India Company and Awadh's Nawabs:

> The only one left is the cherry of Oudh whose friendship with Britain goes back to the reign of Nawab Shuja-ud-Daula. Nawab Shuja had been unwise to pit his forces against the British. No wonder he was defeated. But the British did not dethrone him. All that they did was to make him sign a treaty pledging eternal friendship and five million rupees in compensation. Ever since, the Nawabs of Oudh have maintained this friendship. When British campaigns needed money, the Nawabs opened their coffers.

Ray's camera returns twice to the close-up of clasped hands, while the narrator blandly recounts the extortion of money that accompanies the friendship. Step by step Ray draws out the connections between the coercive practices of cherry-eating, the technologies of persuasion, and the British construction of political and economic atrophy in Awadh. The discourse of enterprise invites the Other to servitude under the promise of friendship typified in the Crusoe–Friday friendship. Friendly servitude inaugurates the discursive and material process of documenting the culture of the colonized people of Awadh. The traffic between the East India Company and Awadh allows English administrators to study the native, document his pastimes and his mode of work and play. This documented evidence in Orientalist scholarship of the Awadhi native's degeneracy and lassitude is used to induce shame in him. Meanwhile the friendly extortions create the very conditions of political-military-administrative stagnation that British documentation of Awadh had hypothesized in the first place.

Ray constructs a series of cartoons to represent shame friendship. These cartoons are markedly at variance from the opening montage of chess/war metonymy, with its reference to Premchand's story and nationalist historiography of Awadh. Here are no shots of an idle city, no crowds of indolent natives at a cock-fight or kite-flying, and no chess players. Ray's cartoons offer a polemical account of the processes by which English historiography documents "Nawabi misrule" and nationalist historiography reproduces this view of Awadh's history and national identity:

Narrator: And whenever British wrath had been aroused by evidence of Nawabi misrule – (Animation: the Nawab asleep on the throne, a cake with the word "Oudh" on it beside him. Governor-General struts in from the right, looking daggers, taps sleeping Nawab on the shoulder. Nawab wakes up with a start, hangs his head in shame. Governor-General points peremptorily at "Oudh". Nawab takes out dagger, slices off a piece of "Oudh", hands it to Governor-General. Governor-General gulps piece, lifts top-hat to Nawab and struts away).[40]

Ray's cartoons are a pedagogic tool to describe the ways that the historical conditions for political misrule are created and then documented. The key phrase in this cartoon is "evidence of Nawabi misrule." In the colonial literature on nineteenth-century Awadh, most notably W. H. Sleeman's *A Journey Through the Kingdom of Oude in 1849–50* (1858), the charge of political misrule was used to justify the annexation of Awadh. The

cartoon of the "Nawab asleep on the throne" condenses the association between sleep, lassitude, cultural decadence, and political irresponsibility, and refers to the colonial explanation: the native elites were indolent, therefore the British had to annex Indian territories. The next cartoon shows the effects of this colonial explanation in the psycho-social processes of collective shaming, condensed in the interplay between "British wrath" and the significant phrase "the Nawab hangs his head in shame." The final cartoon shows the benefits of shame friendship for the colonizer, the inducing of shame facilitates the native ruler's offer of a piece of cake of Awadh territory to the Governor-General who "gulps piece" and struts out of the screen.

Ray received much criticism from friends, collaborators, critics, and viewers for the cartoon mode of history telling in the prologue of *The Chess Players*. Viewers' attention to Ray's technique obscured the point he was making, namely his insight into the psycho-social processes of shame friendship that are generated between the colonizer and colonized. Many Indian viewers recognized that Ray was departing from Premchand's satirical tropes of chess playing, but the departure was read as the stock critique of colonialism as loot and plunder. Some journalists dismissed the prologue as stock anti-colonial propaganda, forgetting that Ray has consistently stood apart from nationalist filmmakers in his insistence that English colonialism brought benefits as well as lasting evils, and that Ray had openly declared that the making of this film caused him to come to terms with his "ambivalence" about English colonialism.[41]

What dismayed other viewers were those parts of the animation sequence that were not subtle enough, namely the crude animations of crowned cherries, gulping Englishmen, the sleeping Nawab, and the cake labelled Oudh. For example, Ray's artistic collaborator and Urdu scholar Shama Zaidi (who worked with Ray on this film) said, "Manikda (Ray) should have done the sketches himself. They should have looked like Victorian cartoons of the period."[42] Zaidi's comments allude to the fact that animation has affinities with the graphic arts, she felt that the animation in *The Chess Players* should have elicited Ray's considerable talents as an illustrator, principally in drawing on the genre of the Victorian political cartoon.

My position on this debate is that the cartoons in the prologue of *The Chess Players* are artistically innovative; they demonstrate that the post-colonial artist's investigation of history cannot be executed through the tools and rhetorical modes of traditional historical argumentation. Ray crafts a mixed genre style of cartoons, close-up of a painting of the British–Awadh friendship treaty, quick intercutting of montage, combined

with the Awadhi narrator's voice over that accompanies these visuals. The use of Victorian cartoons would mislead spectators into viewing Ray's cartoons within the political rhetoric of nineteenth-century British satirical genres. Moreover, Ray could not refute nationalism by deploying an aesthetically pleasing time-image, for the simple reason that nationalism has a formidable arsenal of images of the glorious nation that are both aesthetically exquisite and emotionally compelling. Ray combines the pleasures and subtleties of the narrator's Urdu wit with the displeasure of the crude animation figures; the dissonance between aural and visual features of montage opens up the possibility for cinematic irony.

Ray finds a vantage point outside the British traditions of political rhetoric of the Victorian cartoon, one that is distinct from the powers and pleasures of Indian nationalist rhetoric, in the perspective of a child. It is from a child's perspective that the cartoons in *The Chess Players* tell a story about friendship in which one friend takes advantage of the other by progressively stripping the friend of all that he has. The betrayed friend is more and more anxious to maintain the friendship at any cost. Yet the more he gives away, the more his friend shames him for being stripped of his territory and his freedom. Every child who has faced the school bully knows that this is not friendship. The aggressive directness of the unadorned cartoons are effective in altering the nationalist question – why did the nawabs of Awadh spend their time playing chess instead of organizing anti-British resistance – to include consideration of the hundred years of British–Awadh shame friendship that created the conditions of unproductive play in Awadh.

Rejuvenating corporate America by colonizing the working-class male child's play in Penny Marshall's *Big*

In late capital the colonialist fantasy – that discovering, civilizing, and governing the colony and its savage inhabitants is as pleasurable as a brave, resourceful, and hard-working British boy's play – is re-invented in new cultural narratives. In Penny Marshall's *Big* (1988) the old imperialist narrative mutates into the twentieth-century fantasy of American corporate enterprise. In Marshall's film the 13-year-old Josh Baskin (David Moscow) magically metamorphoses into a 35-year-old male (Tom Hanks) and rejuvenates a toy company in New York.[43] Josh Baskin is the exemplary worker in the company: he can test and select the toys that will appeal to children, just by asking himself whether the toy in question appeals to his 13-year-old self: he can invent toys from a child's point of view and from a toy manufacturer's perspective. Josh

represents the telos of capitalism, namely the industrial worker whose productivity is redoubled and enhanced by putting the imaginative powers of child's play into service of the workplace.

The work/play thesis of late twentieth-century corporate America is elaborated in a scene of the film where the boy-man Josh Baskin participates in a board room meeting to discuss a new toy marketed by Macmillan Toys. In the screenplay by Gary Ross and Anne Spielberg, the conversation that ensues between Josh Baskin and Paul exemplifies a new approach to the conception, testing, and marketing of the toy industry:

Josh: I don't get it.
Paul: What exactly don't you get?
Josh: It turns from a building into a robot, right?
Paul: Right.
Josh: What's fun about that?

The question posed by Josh as the child consumer, "What's fun about that?" electrifies the meeting. The company executives do not know how to understand their products from the consumer's perspective, they cannot discern the "fun" in a successful toy from the lack of fun in an unsuccessful toy. They rely on marketing reports, polls, a simulated nursery where children play with the new toys and are watched through glass windows by company executives as well as cost-effective approaches to the manufacture and sale of toys. Josh can make the discrimination between the toy that is "fun" and the toy that is not fun, not because he is more discerning and better at his work than his fellow executives, but because he plays at the workplace. The dream possibility for corporate America is the proximity of play and work, leisure and employment, such that work approximates to play. In the capitalist logic if workers can be made to see work as play, perhaps they can work even at playtime and on weekends, then what is to prevent the ideal worker from working all the time?

Marshall's film pushes at and plays with the possibilities in the contiguity between work and play by imagining an ideal scenario in which work *becomes* play and is indistinguishable from play. In a subtly orchestrated scene Josh accidentally meets the owner (Robert Loggia) of the toy company in one of the largest toy stores in New York (FAO Schwarz). The two men are at cross purposes, the owner is thinking about work in terms of competition with other companies and Josh is intent on play. The owner is dissatisfied with the toys his company creates while the

worker is absorbed in playing with the toys. Seeing Josh play, the owner misrecognizes the activity as an especially conscientious and gifted worker's spending his free time in work.

Both of them pass by a giant keyboard built into the floor. Josh jumps on to the piano keys and begins to play Chopsticks with his feet. The boss joins him, the camera pulls back to include both of them within the frame. Both actors use their feet to perform what their hands have learnt to play on the piano keys. Loggia begins hesitantly and then dances with increasing assurance on the piano keys, while Josh has the serious and absorbed look of a child at play. Both men do not smile or laugh or even look at each other, however the pleasures of their serious absorption in play is unmistakable. The contrast in their dancing styles – Loggia dances with adult elegance while Josh's dance has the beauty of childlike abandon – only adds to the visual symbol of harmony.

This harmony between the two men, one of whom is the adult and the other is a child, should not be oversimplified into a replication of a favourite cinematic trope of Hollywood films, the coming together of two like-minded people. Nor can the piano scene be interpreted within cinematic images of male bonding between an older man who is in the subject position of father and the adolescent hero. The vocabulary of individualism is insufficient in this instance. The fact of the matter is that the relation between the two men is that of owner and worker. The piano scene is deliberately set up as the capitalist fantasy of total harmony between workers and owners, the end of all conflicts and antagonism between owners and workers, the end of unionization. Note that Josh as the new kind of worker does not even try to ingratiate himself with the boss.

The American viewer is pulled into the piano scene by remembering the piano exercises from his or her childhood, by humming along or tapping along with her feet or hands. This directorial effect of pulling the viewer into the scene is poised delicately between two alternatives: the viewer is inserted into consumerism by discovering the "fun" as Josh puts it of new and expensive toys, and thus becomes the consumer/viewer of children's toys: alternately the viewer is pulled into the piano scene by being reminded of the irresistible force of child's play, the piano scene can stir up half-forgotten snatches of childhood for the viewer. All these threads are gathered together in the dominant motif, which is that the piano scene is a benchmark for owner–worker relations. The common ground between owners and workers is located, not in the shared workplace or the rights of workers or the duties of owners, but in the innocuous piano exercises learnt in childhood. Class differences

melt away in this shared memory. Josh Baskin pleases the boss by simply being himself, he not only delights the boss but also rejuvenates him. The film recalls for the viewers' corporate schemes – the workforce playing sports with rival companies, working out at the company's health club, spending a paid vacation or attending a seminar at a scenic resort with the top management, daycare facilities at the company premises – to facilitate greater productivity and communication. In all its seductive spontaneity the piano scene addresses this corporate fantasy.

Big implies that the future direction of capitalist exploitation is to demand more from workers. It is no longer enough that the working class bring their labour-power, their physical endurance and stamina, their adult creativity, as well as the discipline and work habits that are inculcated from father to son. American capitalist enterprise can demand more from the worker, companies can promise dizzying upward mobility and quick promotions to the worker who, like Josh, can promise the rarest gift of all. This is a gift that is more coveted than any set of skills or management degree. This is a gift that cannot be written up in the job application. The gift consists of the working-class boy-child's powers of imagination, as well as the creativity and talent that he brings to play. This special aptitude in the worker can be recognized by the enterprising boss in Marshall's film. Note that the owner of Macmillan Toys is the only character in the film who displays no curiosity or puzzlement over Josh Baskin's oddly childlike behaviour, he accepts Josh without curiosity and recognizes and rewards his talent without trying to "figure" him out like Susan or Paul. The owner's enterprise lies in recognizing new trends, hiring and managing his workforce to suit those trends, and to use the metaphor afforded by the piano scene, to synchronize his management style to the new kind of worker.

I have delineated two possibilities, the boy-man's enormous success in testing and creating children's products, and the seemingly natural way in which he abolishes the class antagonism between owners and workers and inaugurates a new harmony between them. The film plays out yet another implication, a new work ethic of the worker who is both child and adult. Marshall's film devises a marvellously comical game of squash between Josh and his rival in work and for the affections of Susan. Both actors (Tom Hanks and John Heard) turn in a virtuoso performance of grown-up men acting childishly on the playing field. In a fit of temper Paul screams at his opponent, "Give me the goddam ball" and Josh yells "Cheater" while both men wrestle with each other on the field. Paul's character is imaged at two registers, in the game he reveals himself as the type every child encounters on the playing field, the ill-tempered

bully who cheats and covers over his cheating with a few punches. As an adult worker Paul represents a corporate work ethic that Josh has discredited and made old-fashioned and inefficient.

The following exchange between Josh and Susan, while she bandages his hurts after the game, illustrates the contrast between Paul's work ethic and Josh's work ethic. In the extract below the conversation about work is deliberately framed in sports metaphors for corporate competition:

Josh: He didn't have to punch me.
Susan: He's scared of you. You don't play his game. Everything's a fight with him. Everyone's his enemy. It's not a job it's a war.
Josh: How come you are so nice? You're one of the nicest people I've met.
Susan: How do you do it?

Within the new discourse about industrial work that Josh unwittingly inaugurates and Susan learns with amazing ease, work ethic is referred to in terms of the executive's ability to relate to people. In the old work ethic Paul "got ahead" through aggression. Susan deploys a series of substitutions to explain that for Paul, work is like a game and game is like a war. Paul approaches work through a Crusoe-like fear of other people (he's scared of you) and incomprehension of the other (you don't play his game). Just as Crusoe's paranoia is interwoven into his work ethic, Paul's fear and incomprehension combine to make him paranoid (everything's a fight with him, everyone's his enemy). In a brief but telling scene between Paul and Susan earlier in the film, Paul tries to shame Susan about her affairs with other men in order to browbeat her into staying with him, and the point seems to be that Paul treats his life and personal relationships in the same way as his work.

Susan ends her analysis with a surprising statement, "It's not a job [for Paul] it's a war." This phrase recalls and discredits the Hollywood films like *Wall Street* (1987) where the hero's enterprise lies in approaching his work on a war front, by treating his business rivals as his enemies, by imitating the ruthlessness of a Rupert Murdoch and all the corporate clichés about killing to win, a mean winner and so on.[44] As the disciple of the new work ethic Susan suggests that this corporate work ethic of blind aggression is obsolete. Josh's reply foregrounds the alternative approach to work, he tells her "How come you are so nice? You're one of the nicest people I've met." If work is all about making the crucial discrimination between the product that is fun and the product that is no fun, then the word "nice" encapsulates the new work ethic. The

workplace is defined as a place where people should be nice to each other, executives should be nice to each other and to subordinates.

In this conversation the film unfolds the contrast between the old and new work ethic. Work is referred to as play in which one does not try to "punch" the competitor but act "nice" towards him. Efficiency without the essential ingredient of creativity is seen as an outworn work ethic and is replaced by the creativity and concentration that children bring to play. Most importantly, competitiveness and hierarchy is replaced by co-operation. This partnership with one's fellow-executives may mellow into friendship, exemplified in the growing ease and affection between Josh and Susan as well as their working together on projects like the electronic comic book.

The systemic violence inherent in this narrative about colonizing the working-class male child's childhood is justified by its results. The corporate workplace is rejuvenated, the ennui, fatigue, "burn-out" and working-class resentment and antagonisms are washed away by the restorative powers of child's play. Everyone in the industrial workforce is a beneficiary, the worker is rewarded with quick raises and moves up to become Vice President in charge of Product Development. Class snobbery and racism are replaced by Josh's high fives with the African-American janitor.[45] Perhaps most magical of all, in this rejuvenated corporate world the worker's relation to the boss is transformed into just being your normal self and playing with the boss.

In the literary narratives of Charles Dickens's novel *Oliver Twist* (1838) and D. H. Lawrence's short fiction "The Rocking Horse Winner" (1933) the exploitation of child's play is recognized and named as nothing more or less than child labour. In the London underworld the children's nimbleness and quickness to learn is used to make them into thieves in *Oliver Twist*. Lawrence's story is, in many ways, more pitiless. No one directly tells the sensitive child in the middle-class English family to earn money. The child internalizes the family unhappiness and greed and uses his rocking horse to predict the winning numbers at the racecourse. Dickens is committed to positing hope despite the bleak conditions for child labour in nineteenth-century London, therefore the optimistic denouement of the novel in Oliver's escape from the London underworld into the comforts of bourgeois life. As the later working-class writer, Lawrence can only envision the child whose childhood has been stolen from him as hurtling, or to use the story's chilling metaphor, rocking to his death.

The dangerous ambivalence of the film *Big* lies in the notion that the dream possibility for global capitalism, the redoubled productivity of

the worker, *coincides with* the adolescent fantasy of the working-class child. The reason that Josh finds himself in the New York company is that he made a wish, in front of the Zoltan machine at the fair, that he should be tall enough and look grown up enough to date the girl he likes. One could argue that the child's wish to be big is simply the fantasy premise of the filmic narrative, and the viewer should not read more into the child's wish to be big than the fantastic premise with which good storytelling begins. Alternately the argument can be made that Josh's desire is simply every child's desire to possess the skills for autonomy in the adult world and equality with adults and older children. However, there are two reasons which argue against such an innocuous interpretation. The first reason consists of the gendered nature of the fantasy of crossing over from childhood into adulthood and recrossing back from temporary adulthood to childhood. Josh's metamorphosis is defined as a specifically male fantasy by the film. Secondly, the wish to be big would lack class-content if the filmic plot did not play out the possibility in corporate America.

The film's ambivalence lies in celebrating the coincidence between the new requirements of capitalism and working-class desire, while also warning against the theft of childhood. The big metaphor signifies the working-class desire and ambition for economic, social and political predominance. The film argues that this classed ambition can endanger the working-class boy-child precisely because his desire and his ability to cross and recross from boyhood to manhood makes him especially vulnerable to American capitalism. Just as the African-American man is prey to a range of social threats that the African-American woman is not subject to in the same degree, in an analogous manner the Gary Ross and Anne Spielberg screenplay suggests that the working-class boy's own desires and fantasies make him especially vulnerable to capitalist exploitation. There is a stage of adolescence when a boy can look and act like a grown-up man and a child. His very desire to grow up quickly can become the means for stealing his childhood from him. The sweetness, innocence, and joyousness that the working-class boy can bring to the realm of play (the same point is made in terms of the working-class male's joyousness in dance in *Saturday Night Fever* [1977]) can be siphoned off to regenerate the corporate structure.

How will the film retreat from the pleasures and perils of the working-class boy's fantasy of being bigger and better than anyone else? The answer lies in the crucial working-class lore about friendship. In Penny Marshall's films friendship between buddies is a powerfully imagined aspect of the working-class ethos, friendship is a survival strategy and

a constant source of self-renewal as well as a form of community. In her popular television comedy *Laverne and Shirley* many plot situations revolved around a conflict of interest between loyalty to a friend versus competing interests like a boyfriend or jealousy or money, and each time friendship prevailed.

In *Big* Josh is rescued by his buddy Billy. Throughout the film Billy takes care of Josh, finding him a place to stay, accompanying him to the job interview and consoling Josh's mother. It is the childhood friend who brings Josh back from the dangerous intoxications of corporate exploitation. Billy storms into Josh's office, and the screenplay unfolds the scene in terms of the work/play thesis of capitalist enterprise. There is an irony in the fact that Josh, who has received success at the workplace because he has the gift for play, becomes the spokesman for the ideology of enterprise, "I've got work to do. Can you understand that? This is important." Billy stops Josh dead in his tracks by delivering an impassioned piece of working-class wisdom, "I'm your best friend. What's more important than that? I'm three months older than you asshole."[46]

From that point on Josh is rocked back into the realization that his newfound work has only been a game that has become dangerous and outrun its value. The film disassembles the cathecting of working-class desire with the logic of capitalism. Josh has simply to say, "I wanna go home. I miss my family," and the evil spell of Macmillan Toys magically loses its hold on him. In *Capital*, Vol. 1 (1867) Marx suggested that the worker has to understand his place in the structure, and by understanding his structural position in capitalism the worker can become an agent through collectivization, organized resistance and the politicization of the proletariat. In *Big* friendship releases Josh into the realization, "I'm a child. I'm not ready for this. I changed into a grown up but I'm a kid."

I have delayed analysis of the gender issue in the film in order to keep the focus on the class analysis in *Big*. In many ways the gender analysis in the film derives from the creative partnership between the director Penny Marshall, the actor Tom Hanks and the Ross–Spielberg screenplay. The film marked a turning point in Tom Hank's career because it was the first of his American icon roles, till then no one had been able to or knew how to bring out Tom Hanks' special iconic gifts on the screen.[47] There is a distinguished tradition in Hollywood of the boy-man as a cinematic device for exploring American masculinity, for example the Jerry Lewis–Dean Martin comic team captured the anxieties and dilemmas of the 1950s in the tug of war between the suave Martin who is at ease with his masculinity, and Jerry who is not at ease with his masculinity.

The comedy often revolved around Martin's attempts at grooming the good-intentioned but manic Lewis, who keeps trying and failing to fit the image of a polished man.

The Marshall–Hanks team brought a new image of masculinity to the 1980s. Reviewers have tried to describe this new image in catchphrases like "an entrancing quality of innocence and playful awkwardness" and "hopelessly likable, American-dreaming screen personae" and "the guileless, rubbery-faced charm he brought to his characterization of a boy trapped in a man's body."[48] I should like to focus on one aspect of the Marshall–Hanks exploration of masculinity that is historically resonant for the 1980s, the woman filmmaker/viewer's gaze on the male object of her fantasy, the man who has not been socialized into woman hatred. No other contemporary American actor has been able to bring to the screen, in film after film, a boyishness that is inextricable from a quality of ease around women, a liking of women without a fear of being suffocated by them.[49] It is to the cinematic composition of this image of masculinity, and its relevance to the filmic critique of capitalist enterprise, that I turn my attention.

From the moment Susan (Elizabeth Perkins) enters the screen in *Big*, the film slowly and surely composes the female gaze on Josh. At first the viewer is only aware of Perkins as the object of the male gaze rather than the one who gazes. We note Josh's immediate approval of Susan's managing air and obvious attractiveness, and suspect that Josh responds positively to Susan because she reminds him of his competent and caring mother. Marshall implies that in mainstream cinema it is not possible to altogether dismiss the Hollywood conventions of the male gaze, but it is possible to start from the male gaze and then subtly dismantle it. An infinitesimal change takes place in the film as Susan becomes curious about Josh, and begins her study of him. In the limousine scene Josh jangles on Susan's nerves as he plays with all the gadgets. We see his apartment through her eyes, as she takes in the bare floors and bunkbed, Coke machine, and toys strewn on the floor. Throughout the film Susan's gaze is one of incomprehension and misrecognition. Marshall does not grant the female gaze a special knowledge of Josh's metamorphosis, or of the work/play thesis of the corporate world. In fact the Ross–Spielberg script mocks Susan for deploying the pop-psyche theory of the inner child to understand Josh's success at work in terms of his special access to his inner child.

In a beautifully modulated scene Susan understands Josh at an intuitive level, not by studying him or naming him, but by joining him in play. In his apartment Josh invites her to join him in bouncing on the

trampoline, he does not know how to behave on an adult date but he does understand sleepovers. The trampoline scene is the symmetrical opposite of the piano scene. While Robert Loggia is comfortable dancing on the giant keyboard in the toy store, Susan is ill at ease, she is in her party dress and is more comfortable with a martini and cigarette. Josh eggs her on as he might encourage a friend, as Susan jumps higher and higher the camera pulls back to a distance, so that Susan looks more like a doll than a grown woman. It is through this rite of passage, this willingness to look and feel unsure and awkward in boys' games, that Susan slowly recovers her equilibrium even though the male fantasy continually keeps her off balance as the mother-like girl-friend.

Gradually and unobtrusively the female viewer becomes aware of being under the pressure of Susan's gaze, of seeing Josh and the unfolding events through her eyes. We see her standing at the doorway with a woman friend and gazing at Josh who is teaching a friend's son algebra, and we know that the joke is on her for she is looking at a child and finding him perfect husband material. When Paul asks her why she prefers Josh to him, she replies, "Because he is a grown up." When Josh tries to tell her the truth about his metamorphosis, she thinks it is a particularly cruel male technique of breaking up a relationship. The jokes on Susan become, as the film proceeds, a self-mocking joke circulating between the woman filmmaker, the character Susan, and female viewers about the modern woman's difficulty in distinguishing the childishly egotistical Paul from the adolescent sweetness of Josh, or women's difficulties in discriminating between men who never want to grow up and boys who want to grow up too quickly.

In the work/play thesis of capitalist enterprise Susan is the outsider who imitates her male colleagues. Viewers witness Susan failing to please the boss, when she tries to talk shop at the firm party and is snubbed by Loggia with the words, "Have a drink, Susan, it's a party." The snub implies that Susan has broken the protocols of work and play, the firm party is a time for drinking and conviviality not for office gossip and intrigue. As the film proceeds Susan gingerly charts her way through these newly drawn boundaries between work and play, by watching Josh and learning from him and distancing herself from Paul. Josh shocks Susan by telling her "You're one of the nicest people I've met." The implication is that Susan is more than the neurotic workaholic that she imagines herself to be. Josh helps her realize that she is the exception to the old work ethic of rivalry and aggression. His statement is artless and genuine, it is not couched as a gallant compliment, and shocks her with the pleasure it gives her.

Unable to decipher Josh's statement as the unconditional acceptance of a friend that is only possible in childhood and adolescence, Susan wants to know, "How do you do it?" as if it is part of his secret formula for success. The upwardly mobile female executive can, by being the "nicest" of all the people at work, develop a friendship with the company's wonder boy and work on projects with him. Their joint presentation earns a public commendation for Susan at the board meeting. The quick learner Susan persuades the nervous Josh to undertake the project of thinking up a new toy and making a presentation by pointing out that this new kind of work can be a lot of fun. She says, "Come on it'll be neat." Susan is not jealous of Josh's meteoric success, instead she makes herself indispensable to him. It is not at all clear whether Marshall is ironic or serious in suggesting that gender discrimination at the workplace is resolved by women playing a variety of overlapping roles of buddy, mom, nurse, lover, and girl Friday to her successful male colleague.

It is only near the end of the film that Susan takes on her full dignity by acknowledging her subject position as a woman. The conversation takes place in the deserted carnival space where Josh has just made a wish before the Zoltan machine:

Susan: Even if I listened, I didn't hear, how would I know that?
Josh: Maybe you could come with me.
Susan: No. No.
Josh: Why not?
Susan: I've been there before. It's hard enough the first time. You know what I mean? You don't know what I mean.

In the carnivalesque trope of the film Susan's gaze is that of the fool, the innocent dupe, she says, "Even if I listened, I didn't hear, how would I know that?" By the same token the fool who has misrecognized everything around her is also the one who sees into the inner truth of things. Susan articulates the gender difference between the girl-child and the boy-child when she says, "It's hard enough the first time." There is an understated poignancy in Susan's statement for female viewers. For the girl-child the passage from girlhood to womanhood is not in the realm of play. Women cannot turn back the biological signs of puberty and cross over and recross from pre-puberty girlhood to post-puberty womanhood. Nor can a female Josh find a motel room and a job and live in New York without the survival strategies of adult women. A female worker's thirteen-year-old thoughts and expressions

would make her the office joke rather than the office genius, whereas Josh's 13-year-old responses are perceived as brilliant, refreshing, and charming. A female Josh cannot unlearn her first sexual experience as, the film implies, Josh can and go back to the life of a suburban schoolgoing kid without any visible psychic damage from his experience.

Big crafts this defining moment for Susan, not as the loss of the male object of her gaze, namely the fantasy boy-man who has not been socialized into woman hatred, but as an accession of poise and self-awareness. The magical way in which Susan's failure becomes the place of her triumph owes nothing to Zoltan. Perhaps the finest shots of the film are Susan's gazing from her car window as Josh changes into a 13-year-old boy. The camera lingers on a close-up of Susan's expression. It is hard to describe that expression, the actress Elizabeth Perkins achieves a gaze that is amused, indulgent and loving. It is in Susan's last look at Josh that the woman filmmaker comes out of the wings and makes it clear that the film is, in a sense, her loving paean to the friends, brothers, boyfriends and neighbourhood boys that she knew in her childhood days in the Bronx.

The subsuming of child's play by multinational toy industries in Marshall's *Big* and Ray's *Two*

Within the logic of global capitalism the realm of children's play is subsumed in, and isomorphic to the consumer industry of toys, high-tech gadgets, and multi-media products for children. Ideally every child becomes a discerning consumer, demanding the toy of the season so that there exists a vast belt of consumers who are uniformly gratified by the same toys and grow up with the same childhood memories.[50] We can glimpse the complex relationships between the toy industry and cultural production in America by the fact that a cultural worker who is for children's rights becomes, by a natural progression of events, a spokesperson for the toy industry.

For Penny Marshall's buddy Rosie O'Donnell, toys and children's play and celebrity guests invited to play before a television audience constitute the backbone of her television program *The Rosie O'Donnell Show*. The K-mart advertisement by Penny Marshall and Rosie O'Donnell gave them a windfall of free toys for Marshall's grandson and for the charity organizations to which both women regularly contribute, and for which they raise money. A good example of the hyper-real world of toys occupied by celebrities like Penny Marshall and Rosie O'Donnell is the fact that in *The Rosie O'Donnell Show*, viewers are introduced to films about the

activities of the doll Rosie (marketed as a replica of Rosie O'Donnell) and learn to transact with the play-like work of the human Rosie and the work-like play by the doll Rosie. Given Marshall's active participation in advertising campaigns of the American toy industry, it is no wonder that *Big* unabashedly celebrates the world of toys.

Yet *Big* qualifies and resists the discursive identification of child's play with industrially manufactured toys by suggesting that there are cultural sites in America which are not completely subsumed by the toy industry. For example the two friends Josh and Billy devise a game that no one knows about except themselves. This game is a secret code between the two friends consisting of a nonsense ditty, it is proof that their abilities for non-gadget play have not atrophied. Both boys have rooms stuffed with toys but they can still use their imagination and language skills to compose nonsense rhymes without the aid of gadgetry. The filmic plot foregrounds this non-gadget play in a schoolroom scene where Billy is terrified of the metamorphosed Josh. The recognition between friends occurs only when Josh repeats the secret code and Billy joins him. The point of this scene is subtle, the recognition of one child by another despite Josh's physical metamorphosis is made possible by language games that owe nothing to technology but testify to the unforced creativity in Josh and Billy's play.

There is yet another cultural space of children's play in the film which is at odds with global capitalism, the travelling fair. This is a carnivalesque space that has its own giant machines from an earlier era, as seen when Josh and Billy hunt for the Zoltan machine and enter a shop with hundreds of similar machines used in carnivals and fairs. Yet the magic of the carnival does not derive wholly from high-tech gadgetry, a point made subtly when Josh discovers that the Zoltan machine magically fulfills his wish when it is not plugged into the socket.

As a cinematic symbol, the Zoltan machine embodies the historical ties between the travelling circus, vaudeville companies and carnivals, and Europe's textual reproduction of the Orient. In the film the Orient is simply the place of mystery, magic, and metamorphosis – exemplified in the turbaned saturnine face of Zoltan who resembles the Eastern characters of an earlier Hollywood era when white actors and actresses spoke accented English and wore brown make-up and exotic clothes for a miscellany of roles of the Arab, Egyptian, Indian, Anglo-Indian, Roma, and the Chinese. It is not improbable that, in making the Zoltan machine central to the plot, Penny Marshall pays fond tribute to an earlier era of Hollywood films without being concerned with the Orientalising of the Orient in Hollywood. Zoltan as a figure of magic is, in the film's vocabulary,

too much fun, and it is not worthwhile to destroy its magic by analyzing its Orientalist underpinnings too seriously.

The important point for the film, one on which the film's optimism depends in great part, is that the carnivalesque space is a traditional Hollywood trope for the subversion of hierarchy between rich and poor, young and old, woman and man, child and adult. Marshall suggests that there are old American traditions of entertainment that resist the capitalist industries of theme parks and Disneylands, there are still places in America where a child can imagine and fantasize without the aid of technology. The Zoltan machine has to be unplugged by Josh in order for its magic to work and Josh's wish of being romantically acceptable to a girl comes true at the site of yet another fair, where he takes Susan for their first date. As for the dangers of colonizing the imagination of the working-class boy/child, the film suggests that there is enough resilience and creativity in the American working class to counter that danger.

Satyajit Ray has a far more aggressive and contentious position on the problem that *Big* plays out and side-steps, the metonymic substitution of high-tech toys for child's play. Ray suggests that the problem of subsuming the child's imagination in the global marketing of industrial toys includes the subaltern population of children at the margins of global capitalism who have little or no access to toys. In the world created by *Big*, it is inconceivable that there can be a working-class home in the New York suburbs where the children's rooms are not overflowing with toys. In Ray's ten-minute short film *Two*, commissioned for the American public television series titled "Esso World Theater" in 1964, a silent pantomime is played out between a child of the Calcutta elite who has the latest American toys and a child of Calcutta slums who has few or no toys.

In a hostile reading, the rich boy/poor boy narrative of *Two* can be dismissed as the soapbox rhetoric of a Third World liberal. The liberal position would be that the children of Calcutta slums should be the recipients of toys distributed by charity organizations. That is not Ray's point, he does not represent the boy from Calcutta slums as the subject of charity nor does he sentimentalize the slum child's conditions by inviting the viewer to pity him. Ray's point is far more complex: he focuses on the discursive arena of child's play and the technologization of toys by multinational companies as a site for the playing out of the cultural contest between enterprise and indigenous work and play.[51] Elsewhere Ray has examined this theme in the context of the Permanent Settlement (*Jalsaghar*) the annexation of Oudh (*Shatranj ke Khilari*) and

the postcolonial elite (*Kanchenjungha*). Ray does not conceive of the child's world as existing in an idyllic space outside of social determinants. In *Two* he conceives of the child's world as subject to social forces of domination, with the exception that the contestation between the slum boy and the rich boy is played out in terms of opposing conceptions of play.

For this ten-minute film Ray made the felicitous choice of abolishing dialogue, partly as a personal tribute to the films of the silent era, partly to experiment with the possibilities of the silent film, and partly to emphasize that adults communicate through the medium of language and children communicate through play. In this chapter I have suggested that the colonization of childhood by capitalist enterprise focuses on two key concepts, the marvellous inventiveness of children's play and the special qualities of unconditional acceptance in children's friendship. In *Two* the Calcutta slum boy makes an overture of friendship to the rich boy, but the rich boy sees the slum child from his window and decides to force the slum boy into acknowledging his superiority. The two are at cross purposes, the slum child's game is "Come and play" and the rich brat's game is "My toys are bigger and better than yours."

A haunting piece of music composed by Ray accompanies the children's war that ensues in the film. The slum kid's warrior mask and spear is opposed to the rich kid's playclothes of cowboy gear and revolver, kite-flying is opposed to the airgun. The film posits the rich boy who has all the toys that he can want as the child who experiences lack: he needs to assert the superiority of his possessions; he needs the poor child to admire and covet his toys and acknowledge his inferiority; and he needs all this in order to enjoy playing with his toys. The technologization of toys redoubles the child's natural aggression by giving him toy guns and revolvers, children test these air rifles and cowboy revolvers by shooting at objects and birds and other children. In *Two* the rich kid cannot bear to witness the poor child's pleasure in kite-flying, he has to shoot it down and call attention to his toys and his game. At this juncture child's play is disassociated from social interaction, the exercise of motor skills and cognitive abilities and is re-associated with aggression. Play is indistinguishable from the serious work of aggression in the rich child's game. He no longer knows how to play with toys and discover his individual talents, aptitudes and interests, for he has already learnt to use toys to articulate his need for domination.

The contest between technologized play and indigenous play in *Two* begins and ends with the opposition between machine-made noise and man-made music, the toy trumpet versus the flute. The slum kid has

learnt a lesson markedly different from the one learnt by the rich child. He began by associating the world of play with the making of friends. The slum child learns about his conditions by the way he is treated, his natural aggression is channelled into the refusal to be shamed into acknowledging the rich boy's automatic superiority. The contest that he engages in, switching from flute to warrior's mask and spear to kite-flying and back to flute, establishes the struggle that he will have to wage as a slum dweller to eke out his existence. The turning point in his self-consolidating play occurs when he identifies play with creativity. He discovers a realm of alterity. The notes on his flute give him pleasure which is not dependent on the material things that he does not have or on the other child acknowledging his worth. He may or may not find the wherewithal to move out of the slums. Nevertheless the subaltern child's play is not identified as lack, as the absence of toys, but as the plenitude of music.

I contrast *Big* and *Two* in terms of the subsuming of child's play by the multinational toy industry in order to foreground the distinction between cultural production at the centre and at the periphery of global capitalism. The idealistic suggestion at the end of Penny Marshall's *Big* is that capitalism can nourish, reward, and house the adult Josh Baskin at a future date. Meanwhile his childhood has been named as a prelude to, a waiting to grow up to become a company executive. Toys perform multiple functions in *Big*. There is an implicit suggestion that in the 6-week period, when Josh misses his mother and cries into his pillow, toys are like surrogate parents. Toys people his world, cuddle him, and divert him as well as make his apartment resemble his room in his mother's home. It is in these ways that the consumerism of toys is naturalized in *Big*, and technology is inextricably enmeshed with the world of the child.

Contrarily in *Two* Ray scrupulously maintains the otherness, the difference of childhood play. For Ray play does not necessarily signify toys, however play does signify creativity and curiosity. In a Ray film the child's creativity and curiosity is neither an abstraction that can be quantified in an IQ test nor is it consumable like Josh Baskin's electronic comic book. The creative essence of a child's play lies partly in the fact that it is for himself, the child is formed through play and the seeds of his or her adulthood lie in play. At the same time the creativity of Ray's Apu and the child of the Calcutta slum in *Two* is supremely social and other-directed, it is through play that the child relates to the world, the environment, other children and adults in creative ways. It is in this dual combination wherein the child plays himself into existence, and

creates and recreates his relations with the world and the people around him, that Ray locates the possibility of Apu's overcoming class/caste barriers by resistance to servitude and domination and by envisioning alterity.

3
Towards a Theory of Subaltern and Nationalist Genres: The Post-1857 Lakhnavi Tall Tales and Their Nationalist Appropriation in Premchand's "The Chess Players" (1924)

Modern studies of Indian nationalism make frequent reference to the literary-cultural genres of Indian nationalism as sources or texts, yet the implicit assumption made by these scholars of nationalism is that one can gain access to nationalist literatures without theorizing the literary-rhetorical conventions that govern each of the literary forms associated with nationalism. This is a serious drawback, given that Indian nationalism began as literature before it assumed the form of political theory. Cultural production pre-dates the political phase of Indian nationalism; nationalism emerges in the nineteenth century primarily as cultural-social movements and only later constitutes itself as anti-colonial political movements.[1] While the tropes, mythologies and narrative structures of Indian nationalist historiography and political thought have received careful attention, the dominant tendency in the analysis of nationalist literatures is to treat the literary text as a historical document unmediated by genre conventions, a transparent vehicle of discourses and ideologies.[2]

This chapter suggests that genre analysis of the nationalists' cultural production, particularly the borrowings between subaltern and nationalist literatures, remains the unexamined underside of postcolonial theoretical examination of nationalism. Theorizing the literary genres that emerged and flourished under the aegis of Indian nationalism is not merely an exercise in formalism. My point is that it is precisely in the citation and adaptation of the Lakhnavi tall tale by the nationalist literary text, Premchand's Hindi–Urdu language satirical short fiction

"*Shatranj ke Khilari*" (*The Chess Players*, 1924), that we glimpse the complex relationships between elite nationalism and subaltern classes.[3]

I examine the key differences between the two genres, the Lakhnavi tall tale and nationalist satire, because I wish to examine a writer's borrowings, stealings, acknowledged and unacknowledged influences. The study of cross-genre borrowings tells us about the cultural ancestors of the genre, and the sedimented history of influences reveals when and in what way the new genre broke off. The aesthetics of a literary genre provides insight into the set of prohibitions and regulations which determine what can be said within the boundaries of the genre and how it can be said. Cross-genre borrowings constitute a way to track the subtle processes of cultural production. One borrowing facilitates another. Satyajit Ray's interpretation of Premchand's short fiction became the subject of a national debate in the late twentieth century with the screening of his 1977 film *The Chess Players*, a film that seized the imagination of Ray's several constituencies in India and abroad (Ray's borrowings from Premchand and the Lakhnavi tall tale form the subject of Chapter 4). There is no better way of understanding the complexities and ideological stakes of cultural production in postcolonial India than to track the late nineteenth-century subaltern genre of what I call the Lakhnavi tall tale about the chess-playing nawabs from its place of emergence in oral anecdotes and culturally encoded jokes passed down word of mouth, to its appropriation and recodings by early twentieth-century nationalism and its re-emergence in postcolonial cinema in late twentieth century.

Through genre analysis I provide the view from below. Elite nationalism not only excludes subaltern communities and classes from the historic project of nation building, the cultural production of elite nationalism appropriates subaltern histories, genres, and forms of resistance. The subaltern's body, labour power, and collective strength are harnessed by the colonial power and the indigenous elite. In like manner the literary-cultural forms through which the subaltern articulates and mediates the world around him/her and comes to know how, where, and when to resist colonial domination are also subject to appropriation by nationalism. The story of elite appropriation is not included in the official narrative that nationalist literatures tell about themselves. Just as nationalist historiography re-invents the historic past of the nation, correspondingly nationalist literatures describe their stealings and erasures of subaltern genres in the idiom of mobilization as a way to reach the common people, as the nationalist ideologue's commitment to the folk and the popular.[4]

One such subaltern genre is what I name the Lakhnavi tall tale, which is generally a self-mocking story anchored in historical fact.[5] From the perspective of canonical written literatures the popular and folkloric forms favoured by subaltern classes appear ahistorical due to uncertain dates, indeterminate geographical location, anonymous authors, and oral transmission rather than written records. Instead of applying the standards and protocols of recorded elite literature, I make the Lakhnavi tall tale a test case to demonstrate that subaltern cultural genres are not ahistorical formations. The markers of the historical-geographical specificity of the Lakhnavi tall tale lie in the way it recounts the history of British rule in India without following the conventions of dates, documents, privileged historical players and famous events.

Subaltern genres abolish the hierarchy between History and Historical Events on the one hand, and ordinary everyday events like boarding the train on the other. Everydayness in the Heideggerian sense is endowed with the metaphoric richness and complexity of signifying key historical events. The Lakhnavi tall tale invariably rehearses the scene of defeat in the historical moment of the annexation of Awadh in 1856 by the East India Company and the loss of political and cultural leadership by the Muslims with the forced abdication of the ruler of Awadh, Nawab Wajid Ali Shah. I name this subaltern genre after the city of Lucknow, the capital of the kingdom of Awadh and the post-Independence state of Uttar Pradesh, because the tall tale is crafted after the British annexation of Awadh in 1856, and the renaming of the Muslim kingdom under the nomenclature of the North-Western Provinces under British rule. The Lakhnavi tall tale narrativizes the culture of Lucknow in the period of Nawabi rule, where Hindu–Muslim cultures came together in a syncretic flowering of cultural production in the court of the Nawabs of Awadh. In naming it the Lakhnavi rather than Awadhi tall tale I foreground the fact that Awadh refers to the kingdom annexed by the British, while Lakhnavi refers to the city of Lucknow that lives on in popular memory as the seat of culture and the cultural renaissance that came to be known as Lakhnavi culture.[6]

A theory of Indian nationalist genres

Attention to genre analysis allows us to shift away from the limitations of debating the derivative and innovative features of Indian nationalism, thereby banishing nostalgia for a purely indigenous nationalism and abolishing the false dichotomy of nativism versus foreignness.[7] Nationalist literatures arise from the historical-material and cultural realities of

sections of indigenous elites finding themselves at the crossroads. On the one hand Indian nationalism intervenes in the debates and modes of discourse inaugurated at the imperial centre, addressing and countering and assimilating the ideas, philosophies, and theories that are current in Europe at the time. On the other hand Indian nationalism draws on the histories and cultural forms of subaltern resistance, reinterpreting the past and mobilizing the present for the imagined future of the nation. The great strength of nationalist writings in the pre-Independence colonial period is that they do not allow readers and audiences to forget that cultural work is produced under unequal conditions of domination.

The first feature of nationalist genres is that the nationalist text struggles to come to terms with its cultural location. The nationalist artist's political understanding of his or her location functions as the textual site of political collaboration, subversion, or resistance to the discourses of domination. For instance, the colonial discourses of enterprise can speak the artist or the artist can subvert those very discourses as they speak through him/her. The text may quarrel with the indigenous or foreign elements in the narrative, or it may opt for a myth of nativist purity; either way the nationalist genre meditates on the unequal conditions under which its own cultural location is produced, and looks forward to the possibility of a more equal encounter with the colonial power.

The second constitutive genre feature of nationalist literatures lies in the will to power of the nationalist text in identifying the concept of community with the abstraction of the nation. Although every nationalist genre approaches this imperative with a different set of conventions, all of them come into being by enfolding the idea of community into the idea of the nation. This is so essential to the coming into being of the nationalist text that an explicit or implicit historiographical narrative about community in India always accompanies this generic enfolding. Within nationalist historiography all forms of indigenous community lead up to, and are superseded by, the nation. Other forms of community are either relegated to the pre-history of nationalism, or made invisible and demonized as regressive forms based on linguistic commonality, race, or religion.

The success of this enfolding can be gauged from the argument, made by theorists of nationalism like Sudipta Kaviraj, that nationalism is a far more self-aware and complex notion of community than non-national or pre-national constructions of community; the latter are characterized by Kaviraj as "fuzzy" by which he means that they are indeterminate and naive.[8] Kaviraj falls prey to the ideology of nationalist genres, an

ideology within which nationalism denies the plural, non-nationalist or pre-nationalist, regionalist and localist notions of community. The notion that pre-national or non-national social formations are based exclusively on language, race, or religion is not quite true. Subaltern histories and women's histories show that historically, these non-nationalist or pre-nationalist forms of community were organized around alliances between subaltern groups of men and women against feudal and colonial domination. Despite this historical and cultural evidence to the contrary, nationalism and nationalist historiography decries all imaginings of indigenous community as naive, pre-modern, nativist, casteist, nostalgic, and feudal. It is precisely because nationalism exploits and deprivileges alternate non-national forms of community that nationalism facilitates, as Edward Said has noted, the rise of religious fundamentalism for the latter can draw on, give a space to and subsume these alternate communities.[9]

Genre analysis illuminates the fluidity and flux endemic to the nationalist genre. The fluidity partakes of an uncertainty, a certain wobbling of the nationalist text that is inextricable from its bravado and bluster. In Premchand's case the wobbling gait of the text paradoxically coexists with the satirist's lash. I name this wobbling uncertainty the third feature of nationalist genres. This feature is markedly displayed in those places in the nationalist text where there is continual theorizing and narrativizing of the categories of national identity, colonial domination, and anti-colonial resistance. The problem for nationalist genres is that these concepts of national identity, colonial domination, and anti-colonial resistance cannot be taken for granted, they are not stable entities but require continual reinvention and reformulation in nationalist literatures. We can see this most clearly in Premchand's short fiction: behind the confident assertions of his prose there is an uncertainty about the Awadhi cultural identity he denigrates, and the nation state that the text imagines as the future.

The other genre feature of nationalist literatures arises from those coercive elements in nationalism within which nationness is discursively identified with political consciousness. Ashcroft, Griffin, and Tiffin describe this as "the principal dangers of nationalism – that it frequently takes over the hegemonic control of the imperial power, thus replicating the conditions it rises up to combat."[10] In terms of genre analysis this feature of Third World nationalisms mutates into the self-representation of the nationalist literary text in terms of its politics of art and its politics of resistance. Every literary text contains a sedimented theory of art. However, the feature of nationalist genres that distinguishes them from

other cultural forms is the high degree of self-consciousness, dogmatism and exclusivism with which the text represents itself as the exemplar of its own theory of art and resistance.

The subaltern rhetorics of self-mockery: The "After you" (*pehle aap*) Lakhnavi tall tale and its critique of British enterprise

Subaltern resistance is not outside textual conventions. Subaltern texts, and the literary-rhetorical conventions of these oral-performative texts, are neither self-evident nor do they adhere to the categories and rules of canonical written Indian literatures. For the purposes of analysing the genre features of the Lakhnavi tall tale, and contrasting this subaltern genre with nationalist genres, I examine a well-known Lakhnavi tall tale. The oral tale concerns two *nawabs* (landed gentry) of Lucknow who adhere to the protocol of *pehle aap* (After you) by engaging in an interminable argument about boarding the train. They are so preoccupied with proffering and accepting courtesy that the train leaves the station while they are still engaged in the argument.[11]

The Lakhnavi tall tale has a streetwise energy, vitality, and creativity; it is re-enacted and added to every time it is recounted; the cultural genre circulates, not in the homes of the elite, but on the streets, in everyday conversations, in jokes recounted at the corner teashop and the panwallah, and in the anecdotes carried far and wide by the migrant artists and artisans of Lucknow. Collective laughter is a potent weapon of critique. In conditions of colonial censorship the Lakhnavi tall tale must appear to be a defeated people of Lucknow laughing at themselves. I do not wish to suggest that all comic forms are inherently subversive. There is a distinction to be made between the urbane self-deprecation of Awadh culture at its zenith, which relies on the auditor's knowledge and appreciation of the speaker's claim to cultural pre-eminence, and the subaltern self-mockery of the Lakhnavi tall tale which relies on the audience's knowledge of British-colonial and Indian-nationalist derision of Lakhnavi courtesy.

The oral tale forges the rhetorics of self-mockery in a milieu of ridicule and hostility towards a defeated culture. The Lakhnavi tall tale seems to concur with the colonialist version of the events (Awadh was defeated because it was a decadent culture) by portraying the nawabs as unable to keep pace with clock time. Self-mockery is the rhetorical tool of choice for a people whose culture and history has been erased, when the only way to insert oneself in discourse is

through self-criticism. After the downfall of the Awadh civilization in the 1856 annexation of the kingdom by the East India Company, the rebellion of 1857 as well as the large-scale reprisals by Company troops' massacre of the rebels in the aftermath of the failed rebellion, subaltern anti-colonial resistance had to be covert. However, these resistances only become visible if we understand why the tale joins in the laughter at Lakhnavi courtesy.

The contrast between nationalist genres and the Lakhnavi tall tale is nowhere more marked than in their chosen rhetoric. The power, beauty, and seduction of nationalist writings stem from the rhetoric of utopian plenitude, a romanticism of belonging to a world saturated with meaning and purpose. Nationalism imagines a world in which action has a heightened significance because it is nationalist, a world in which death is not the extinction of life but martyrdom for the nation. Even though the utopian plenitude in nationalist writings carries with it an undertow of wavering uncertainty, there is symmetry between self and nation, nationalism subsumes the relation between self and community into the idea of nation. Conversely the rhetoric of self-ridicule and self-mockery in the Lakhnavi tall tale does not arise from a lack of self-esteem, aggression, and confidence, or betoken Oriental dissimulation. Rather the Lakhnavi tall tale's self-criticism executes a central value in Lakhnavi courtesy, placing the other before the self. This ethico-moral philosophy and literary-cultural aesthetic is an index of an other-directed Lakhnavi culture in which self-awareness and self-criticism is valued more than self-congratulation. There is a profound difference between the rhetorical ends of self-criticism in nationalist writings and subaltern genres. Self-criticism in nationalist writings invariably leads to shaming, censure, and anger for the purposes of mass mobilization. Contrarily the Lakhnavi tall tale deploys self-mockery for narrating the history of Awadh: the train leaving the station without the two Lakhnavi gentlemen signifies Awadh's historic defeat at the hands of the East India Company. The oral tale returns in collective memory to this scene of defeat, and the laughter covertly opens up the possibilities of resistance to British-colonialist and nationalist historiography of Awadh.

Like all oral-performative genres, the written transcription of this Lakhnavi tale tends to distort, flatten, and rob the oral tale of its meaning. In spite of these impoverishments that are inbuilt into the written version of the tall tale, the late nineteenth-century transcription of this tale by Abdul Halim Sharar is remarkable in its rhetorical deployment of self-mockery. Sharar alludes to people laughing at Lakhnavi courtesy, and seemingly concurs with this verdict:

> Many people laugh at these ceremonious manners and there is a proverbial joke in which two Lucknow citizens kept saying, "After you" – "No, after you", and the train departed, leaving them standing on the platform. One cannot deny that to carry matters to such extremes can be harmful. But at the same time it shows that the good manners of Lucknow citizens were such that it never entered that they were doing themselves any harm. A refined and well-bred individual will regard these practices as gems of deportment rather than as faults.[12]

In later versions the two characters in the "After you" tale become the nawabs of Lucknow; however, Sharar's nineteenth-century version of the oral tale names them as "two Lucknow citizens."[13] In the heyday of Indian nationalism Sharar's reference to the "many people [who] laugh at these ceremonious manners" suggests that nationalists were creating a range of negative representations of the Lakhnavi idiom. As an exponent of the idiom Sharar appears defensive and apologetic, yet as we read on, it is apparent that he has conceded the point only to make his own argument that the excesses in the idiom are harmful, "to carry matters to such extremes can be harmful." The concluding sentence is confident and unapologetic, he states that "these practices" of courtesy are not faults in a culture. Thus Sharar begins the paragraph by alluding to the people who laugh at the Lakhnavi idiom, and ends with an endorsement of the idiom.

The rhetoric of self-mockery is a way to deal with cultural location in empire. At one level the audience's laughter is directed at the two men and the Lakhnavi culture they represent, the audience laughs with the storyteller in recognition of the fact that the two men of Lucknow cannot keep pace with the clock time of the trains. The railways were introduced by the British and connote British India.[14] The two citizens missing the train condenses the very problem of location. Thus the Lakhnavi tall tale decodes the colonial encounter between the East India Company and Awadh by symbolizing it as a condition of inappropriateness, of failing to board the train, of dis-connection and mis-fit. The new regimen of British time cannot accommodate the Lakhnavi culture of courtesy. The tale dramatizes this conflict by showing how British enterprise renders Lakhnavi culture valueless, obsolete, and absurd.

If the historical obsolescence of Lakhnavi courtesy is all that the tall tale narrates, then we would have to conclude that the British critique of the social manners associated with the city of Lucknow – as futile and lacking in the values of modernity, efficiency, enterprise and punctuality – has

been fully internalized in popular memory. In fact, however, a complicated mechanism of subversion has been activated by the tale's reference to the idiom of Lakhnavi courtesy. Self-mockery allows the subaltern to introduce the self, in effect to introduce the culture of the colonized into a discussion about colonial enterprise. The posture of self-ridicule barely stops short of collaboration with the inscription of Oudh as the place of defeat in colonial historiography and shame in nationalist historiography, yet it is moving in an entirely other direction by enabling the storyteller and audience to take their representation into their own hands.

Through its reference to the ridiculous extremes of "After you" the tall tale points to the cultural encounter between Hindus and Muslims under Mughal colonialism and the co-existence of Hindu and Muslim communities in Awadh prior to the British confrontation with Awadh culture. Nationalist genres tend to privilege British colonialism, and measure earlier colonialisms of India by the normative model of British rule over India. Contrarily the Lakhnavi tall tale aggressively fights the erasure of pre-British Indian history. Through its reference to Lakhnavi courtesy the tall tale contrasts the cultural barriers between British and Awadh culture to the cultural assimilation of Muslim–Hindu communities in Awadh. Lakhnavi courtesy is a product of the cultural fusion between Hindu and Muslim communities; the tale gestures to this ideal of cultural assimilation and implicitly judges the British failure to assimilate the indigenous cultures of the colonies.

Subaltern self-ridicule is condensed utterance. The contumely poured upon the self in elite genres is prolix, emotional, self-indulgent: the laughter and ridicule directed at the self in subaltern genres is pithy, stoic, and haunting. Indeed the characteristic utterance of subaltern classes is both richly metaphoric and laconic due to lack of time and leisure, the fear of speaking too much, and a world view within which there is no place for self pity. The *pehle aap* tall tale inaugurates three motifs of subaltern condensation which subvert the colonial discourse of enterprise.[15] The rhetorical figure for condensation, metonymy, is self-aggrandizing in elite nationalism: for example, in nationalist genres nation metonymically signifies community; nationalist activities and agitations stand for political consciousness and the politics of resistance; and nationalist cultural production represents political art.

Conversely the Lakhnavi tale uses a shorthand from the everyday to reveal the truth of history from the subaltern perspective. Condensation in the *pehle aap* tall tale inheres in encapsulating key historical events – the hundred years of British–Awadh relations, the British annexation of

Awadh in 1856 and the failed War of Independence in 1857 – in the mundane experience of failing to board the train.[16] The use of the everyday as a condensed symbol for historical events does not signify the subaltern storyteller's lack of historical understanding or historical consciousness, it is not a sign that the teller and the listener of the tall tale do not comprehend the full significance of British rule over India. In this subaltern tale, condensing history in common experience is politically subversive.

The first level of metonymic substitution is in many ways the most politically audacious. British players are evacuated and displaced by the symbol of British enterprise, the train. By evacuating British administrators and replacing them with the symbolic objects of enterprise, the tall tale foregrounds the subject position of domination rather than individual historical players and displays a complex understanding of the processes of domination. The Lakhnavi tall tale is often used to indict all Indians for being temperamentally incapable of punctually arriving at the train station and boarding the train. The point of the Lakhnavi tall tale is that the subject position of domination can be occupied by different sets of historical players at different historical periods: the East India Company; the British Crown; the "Brown Sahibs" or Westernized indigenous elite, like the character of Indranath in Ray's *Kanchenjungha* (1962) who rails against the lack of punctuality and chronic inefficiency of Indians; Hindu social reformers and nationalists' exhortations that Indians adopt the values of modernity; the postcolonial nation state and its functionaries who blame the poor for being slothful and backward; the diaspora Indian called NRI in India, or Non-Resident Indian, who reproduces colonialist prejudices about the people in his country of origin by talking about "IST" or Indian Standard Time; the First World tourist who tells amusing stories about "colored time" and how Indians have no conception of what it means to be on time and possess a work ethic. All these players have one thing in common, they occupy the subject position of domination by articulating the discourse of enterprise and its binary half, the expanded cultural critique.

As a symbol of British enterprise, the train in the Lakhnavi tale signifies the long-term effects of colonial capitalism. The establishment of the railways in India is considered to be one of the greatest and most enduring achievements of the British empire. The Indian railway system signifies the thorough penetration of the most inaccessible parts of the colony, facilitating British revenue collection as well as centralizing control. Given these specific connotations of the Indian railways, the Lakhnavi tall tale relies on the teller and listener's historical awareness of British

colonialism and its effects on India. As the symbol of British enterprise, the train denotes the imposition of British enterprise time or clock time in India, within which efficiency, punctuality, mobility, and the prompt arrival at one's destination are at a premium.

The second level of metonymical substitution stages the political contestation between the East India Company and the Muslim rulers of Awadh, not in the palace or the British Residency, but in the democratic space of the railway platform. Furthermore the political conflict is not between key players like Wajid Ali Shah, his Prime Minister Ali Naqui, vis-à-vis Governor-General Lord Dalhousie and the Acting British Resident General Outram, but between the protocols of railway timings and the protocols of Lakhnavi courtesy. If trains signify the intrusion of British time, which renders the interminable exchange of Lakhnavi courtesy obsolete and irrelevant, then train stations signify unregulated community in India and mark a specifically Indian organization of time, space, and community.

The spatial configuration of the tale on the railway station is evocative. The space of the train station is by definition an unregulated public space where people congregate and meet each other. Thus even as the tale revisits the scene of Awadh's defeat, it subverts the cultural erasure of Awadh by inscribing the railway station with an erased order of time. The condensation of British enterprise into a train in the Lakhnavi tall tale sets a succession of metonymic substitutions into motion: trains denote railway stations, railway stations are the place of community, and the bonds and traditions of communities cannot be completely effaced.

In a fundamental sense, subaltern self-mockery is a mode of remembering without bitterness or anger but with understanding, a mode of remembering associated with a Lakhnavi culture which took pride in telling the hardest jokes about itself. Both the metonymical substitutions, the train and the railway platform, facilitate the dominant rhetorical strategy of the *pehle aap* tale which consists of incorporating colonial and nationalist historiographical narratives about the political defeat of the Muslim rulers of Awadh in the moment of stillness. History is frozen in this moment, the exchange of courtesies between the two nawabs is interminable, and the train leaves the station without the nawabs realizing the passage of time. Colonial writers suggested that nineteenth-century Awadh society was in moral and cultural decline and that political misrule infected every aspect of Awadhi culture. The terms "misrule" and "maladministration" were used ad nauseam by colonial administrators to justify the Company's annexation of Awadh.

Nationalist historiography and literature concurred with the British, with the important exception that the terms of nationalist critique were that Awadh lacked patriotism and a passion for politics.

Apparently the tall tale adheres to the discursive rules of the expanded cultural critique, the political defeat is switched onto the cultural terrain. However, the naming of Awadh's culture in the Lakhnavi tall tale does not quite follow the tropes of colonial descriptions (decadence, therefore unproductive play) or the tropes of nationalist descriptions (apolitical art, therefore unproductive play). The truth in subaltern narrative is poised at the margins of colonialist and nationalist historiography, neither completely subscribing to nor completely rejecting colonialist or nationalist historiography, but borrowing from both. Awadhi culture is described, not in the itinerary of British representations of a Lucknow court full of fiddlers and eunuchs, but as a code of courtesy.[17] It is a measure of the reflexivity of the tall tale that this culture of courtesy is not directly celebrated but mocked for its excesses. The humour of the story is directed at the nawabs, their political unsuitableness is indicated by the fact that they subscribe to an outmoded system of civility.

Nevertheless, the tall tale, by establishing the contestation on the terrain of culturally encoded courtesy, subtly discredits the British rather than the nawabs. An implicit contrast is established between British enterprise and Awadhi courtesy; within the discourse of enterprise, the racial Other is colonized, exploited for labour power, wealth, and natural resources; contrarily the other-directed culture of Awadh teaches the members of its culture to take second place to a guest, to accord precedence to the other in boarding a train, serving food, seating arrangements, and so on. This elaborate system of courtesy is not inverted aggression; the Awadhi does not mark himself as superior through these rules. Rather the purpose of Lakhnavi courtesy is to put the other at ease, and to establish equality and fellowship between unequals or with strangers.

Subaltern self-mockery is a moving satiric target, it shifts without warning from person to person, object to object. The ever-moving and ever-shifting target of mockery in the tall tale is not due to any sado-masochist relation between the storyteller and his audience in the genre, rather subaltern self-mockery activates a process of reflection and discussion. The open-endedness of the oral performative genre lies in the audience participation and discussion. The tall tale opens up a space for the audience to intervene in a discussion of cultural values. This discussion is often, though not always, anti-British. Instead of positing the British as a superior civilization, the tale designates them as victorious

but not necessarily better. By anchoring the joke on courtesy, the tall tale also equalizes the colonizer and the colonized, describing the hundred years of British–Awadh relations as the doomed encounter between two disparate and fully elaborated cultures, one manifested in technological advance, and the other manifested in the protocols of social relations. The laughter about the comical misfit between two civilizational values is warm, rich, and self-critical. The cultural terrain also jeopardizes the work/play distinction in the expanded cultural critique, within which the efficient boarding of trains and reaching the appointed destination signifies work and Lakhnavi courtesy signifies unproductive play. Thus by switching the terms of debate into a discussion of competing cultural values, the tall tale invites the audience to consider whether a work ethic divorced from courtesy is feasible or even desirable.

The Lakhnavi tall tale suggests that culture can be assimilative and adaptable rather than rigid and stagnant, the comical nawabs must eventually learn to tailor their courtesies to the demands of train travel, and conversely train travel must also be indigenized to accommodate specifically Indian customs of elaborate leave-taking and sociability. The tall tale puts forward the seemingly improbable proposition that there can be a culture where other-directed courtesy is more important than boarding a train on time. There are several rhetorical positions that the audience of the tall tale can inhabit. One position is to reproduce the British verdict by the well-known Indian cliché, this is how Indians were beaten by the British (*yahin pur toh hum log maar kha jaate hain*). Yet another position for the listener is to embark on an anecdote from real life, the point of which is to show that there are miraculous occasions in life where a passenger's failure to board a train or plane resulted in good fortune like saving his life. The third option for the audience is to discuss a characteristically Indian blending of enterprise and courtesy. This third position marks the postcolonial subject position of the listeners and storyteller. The postcolonial condition is implicitly defined as the place of negotiation, neither full acceptance of the British critique nor an uncritical nostalgia for a bygone Awadh, but an ongoing struggle to come to terms with and negotiate with the semi-feudal, semi-capitalist realities of postcolonial India.

The defeat of Awadh: Contestations between colonial and nationalist historiography

In detailing the genre features of the *pehle aap* tall tale, I have laid the groundwork for understanding the historiographical contestations at

the site of a particularly well-known Lakhnavi tall tale about the chess-playing nawabs of Lucknow. This subaltern tall tale about the chess-playing nawabs was appropriated by nationalist writers in the twentieth century, and therefore serves as an instance of the cross-genre borrowings between subaltern and mainstream cultural forms, oral and written literatures, and indigenous elite and subaltern cultures of North India. The exemplar of this type of appropriation in Hindi–Urdu literatures is Munshi Premchand's short fiction titled "The Chess Players" (*Shatranj ke Khilari*, 1924). Munshi Premchand, the leading figure in Hindi–Urdu literatures in the early part of the twentieth century, reworks the self-criticism inherent in the genre of the Lakhnavi tall tale into savage irony, nationalist ire, and censure in order to mobilize his readership into joining the nationalist movement.

In its subaltern version the tall tale is brief, pointed and the humour is darker than the "After you" tall tale. I reproduce the undocumented oral narrative:

> Meer and Mirza were two nawabs of Lucknow who enjoyed the fruits of their forefathers' ancestral property. They were obsessed with the game of chess. The nawabs began a round of chess in the morning and continued playing till the early hours of next day. The nawabs were so engrossed in playing chess, that the crown of their ruler Wajid Ali Shah was snatched away, the British occupied Awadh, but both nawabs continued to play chess.

The genre feature of comical exaggeration in this tall tale lies in the storyteller's suggestion that the two nawabs' absorption in chess is so great that they can be oblivious of political events that dramatically change the world around them. In both the Lakhnavi tales, the element of exaggeration is anchored to the contrast between the labour time of British enterprise versus indigenous cultural time. The rhetorical function of exaggeration is to distance the audience from the two nawabs, even as the self-mockery in the tale lies in the rueful recognition, shared by the storyteller and the audience, that they are the inheritors and descendants of the nawabs about whom these stories are being told.

I return to the notion in subaltern genres that history should be recounted through the everyday. The subversion of this tall tale derives from the listeners' identification with the common, everyday fear of being robbed at home or at the marketplace, by a thief who takes advantage of the family's preoccupation. There is also a dream text just under the surface of the tale. This dream text draws on the experience

and fears of the migrant poor and the landless worker. The subaltern dreads waking up and finding himself dispossessed, the home razed to the ground, the belongings scattered on the streets, the ancestral plot of land seized, and the city ravaged. The implication in the tall tale that Awadh has been robbed is aggressively anti-British. The East India Company is represented, not as the harbinger of efficient administration and law and order, but as thieves, in marked departure from the oblique representation of the British through the symbol of the Indian railways in the *pehle aap* tale.

There is a distinguished cultural tradition of representing the British–Awadh encounter as the meeting between two possible friends. In the tale of the chess-playing nawabs, the sting in the laughter issues from the tale's reminder that there was a hundred years of interaction between the East India Company and the Awadh rulers before the 1856 annexation. The robbers were not strangers to Awadh but were friends who had been invited into the home, friends who proceeded to rob and occupy the home and exile the inhabitants. This metaphor from the everyday (a friend's betrayal) is not a simple-minded and naive reading of history by the tall tale. Anti-colonial literatures written by British and Indian writers play with the possibility of human connectedness in the inhospitable conditions of colonial domination.[18]

Like the motif of courtesy in the *pehle aap* tall tale, the binary opposition between enterprising British robbers versus the unenterprising chess players in the Lakhnavi tale jeopardizes the colonialist–nationalist critique and the corollary distinction between work and play. The tone of self-mockery in the tale contains a deceptive assent by the storyteller and listeners to the colonialist nationalist critique of Awadhi culture as lost in pleasure-seeking play. The rhetorical strategy of seeming assent allows the tale to suggest that if the nawabs were engaged in play (chess playing) and the British were engaged in work, then the rapacious stealing of Awadh was the work that characterized British enterprise. Enterprise as robbery by another name tends to take away the lustre from British glory. Therefore while the audience laughs at the nawabs for concentrating on play while their own homes were being robbed, the tall tale also invites the audience to participate in the subaltern naming of British enterprise as the robbery of a friend.

Awadh aristocracy in the tall tale is portrayed not in the colonial tropes of misrule, corruption, excessive taxation, and tyrannical oppression of the Awadh populace, but as eccentric chess players. For the nationalists, chess represented a pleasure-seeking cultural practice that was apolitical and anti-nationalist. For others chess symbolized indigenous practices

of technological innovation, and this was important because it disproved the discourse of British enterprise which suggested that all scientific and technological innovations were achieved in the West. In the subaltern version of the tall tale, chess represents the arts and crafts of Lucknow. Oral narratives about these indigenous crafts began to circulate in the subcontinent immediately after the defeat of Awadh in 1856 and continued well into the end of the century. Post-1856 Awadh passed into the realm of legend. Anecdotes were transmitted all over India about the high level of development and sophistication that had been achieved in the Awadh civilization in perfumery, cotton and silk embroidery, cuisine, the classical dance of Kathak, the musical genre of thumri, chess playing, Urdu poetry and drama, translation, architecture, and painting. These stories were transmitted by craftspersons, street vendors, migrant poor, minstrels, and bards.

Chess functions as subaltern condensation of Awadhi arts and innovations. In the Lakhnavi tall tale, chess is on a continuum with the innovation in indigenous knowledges that occurred in the courts of the nawabs of Awadh like the crafts, cuisine, and perfumery that provided employment to artisanal guilds. After the British takeover of Awadh, that employment was no longer forthcoming; these artisans, craftsmen, culinary experts, and musicians had to migrate to other places and seek employment or set up a petty trade; the fame of Awadhi culture and Lucknow cooks, weavers, craftsmen, and poets guaranteed their employment in other parts of British India. Therefore the game of chess has a materialist signification in the subaltern genre, gesturing to the host of industries and occupations that thrived in Wajid Ali's court due to his patronage.[19]

Chess as a signifier of Awadhi culture also contains a characteristically Indian joke about history, recalling the fact that chess was invented and developed in India and then travelled to the Middle East and Europe. In Europe the game underwent alterations so that there are differences between the rules of Indian chess and European chess. This is a joke about history, the tall tale recalls the history of chess not because it invokes nostalgia for ancient India as the golden past, but because the subaltern tale uses the condensed motif of chess to signify indigenous innovation and indigenous technologies. This has the effect of jeopardizing the discourse of enterprise, within which technological innovations are identified with the West, and lack of technology is associated with the colony.

Given these connotations of chess in the Lakhnavi tale, the subaltern narrative underscores the fact that indigenous cultural practices are

neither unproductive nor exploitative. The nawabs in the story are not harming, or stealing from, anyone. Their game is not like the addiction of gambling. Nor is the nawabs' chosen form of play a sadistic exercise of their privilege and power. From the subaltern perspective, chess playing denotes extreme inner concentration to the exclusion of material realities. In this sense the chess-playing nawabs are akin to the *Sufi* trance of the *pir* or wandering Muslim teacher and spiritual advisor, as well as the spiritual meditation (*dhyan*) of the mendicant *sadhu*.

As in the *pehle aap* tall tale, the Lakhnavi tale of the chess-playing nawabs leaves spaces open for a discussion by the audience. The tale is open-ended and permits a wide latitude in the discussion, precisely because the tale neither completely discredits indigenous cultural time nor the labour of British enterprise. Clearly one option for the audience is to discuss Meer and Mirza as lotus-eating escapists, accept the colonialist–nationalist critique, and dwell on the faults in the national character. Conversely the audience can take a pro-Awadh stance and discuss the high evolution of a culture where the game of chess had achieved this level of cultural obsession. Yet another option for the discussants is to comment on the irony that is barely hidden in the tall tale, an irony levelled at the system of values in British enterprise within which high-level robbery and plunder is named as productive work and an obsession with cerebral art is designated as unproductive play. Lastly, the tall tale can generate a discussion about a compromise position, and this compromise is articulated as the need for postcolonial Indians to balance the cerebral brilliance and inwardness of the nawabs with political vigilance.

The politics of art in the Lakhnavi tale inheres in the notion that art emerges and thrives in everyday practices of conversation and anecdotes rather than in museums and books. The politics of resistance in the Lakhnavi tale are diametrically opposed to nationalist genres, self-criticism is preferred to censure of others, the preservation of Awadh and the ongoing critique of Awadh in popular memory are preferred to the shaming of Awadh, and the nightmare of dispossession is reworked into the space of self-mockery, self-reflection, and negotiation. All this was to change radically when a nationalist writer like Premchand took over this oral tale: he identified community with the concept of the nation, and erased the subaltern genre's evocation of older and alternate forms of community in the Hindu–Muslim syntheses in the arts and crafts of Awadh. Premchand was drawn to the oral genre because it constructs community in each telling and listening, at sites as disparate as train travel and the local teashop; this genre feature of constructing community through telling and listening is reinforced by

the laughter, audience participation, and open-ended discussion that follows the tale.

Cultural location in nationalist genres: The case of Premchand

Third World nationalist satire is a supremely ambitious genre. It confidently draws on the powers of indigenous shamans and the pleasures and persuasions of subaltern genres in order to supplant them.[20] The satirist also makes an aggressive bid to dethrone colonial discourses and their power to chastise, upbraid, and condemn the colonized, by using the satirist's lash on himself and his people. It is a passionate genre, its passion comes from its idealism (the satirist is a political idealist who can no longer speak in the idiom of idealism) about anti-colonial resistance, social change, and social regeneration.

One way to understand the workings of the genre, as well as evaluate the use or misuse of shamanism by individual practitioners of the genre, is to examine the legitimacy of its assumption of the shaman's power. The shamanistic powers of nationalist satire acquire legitimacy to the degree that the nationalist satirist seizes the essence of a truth that cannot be reached by rational debate, and to the extent that the satirist exposes the underside of colonial and feudal domination that cannot be unmasked in any other way under the laws of censorship. When, however, the satirist's invective muddies rather than clarifies the truths about domination, when he judges without understanding and lashes without discrimination, then his sweeping rejections and his call for destruction are merely adolescent romanticism.

The secret of the genre lies in its desire to tell history in disguise. Nationalist writers wrench from the colonial master the task of history-writing, the task of representing their own history to the colonized. The licence traditionally accorded to the satirist, the jester, and the comedian is used to wrench this task from British historians and travel writers. Nationalist satire condenses history in satiric shorthand. The exemplar of nationalist satire I have chosen for detailed study is Premchand's "The Chess Players" or *Shatranj ke Khilari* (1924). Premchand is generally acknowledged as a foundational figure in two literatures, Hindi and Urdu. This creates difficulties at several levels. The most obvious difficulty is to prise this writer loose from the kind of stultifying criticism that deifies him as the "father" of Hindi literature, not in order to bring down his stature but rather to join those readers and cultural workers who are interested in the contemporary relevance of Premchand.[21] The second

order of difficulty lies in some of the influential and canonical critical approaches to Premchand in Hindi literary criticism, which erase Premchand's Hindi–Urdu cultural-linguistic location and re-present him in the canon of Hindu fundamentalism.

In my view, Premchand's contemporary relevance in postcolonial India lies in the multiple linguistic-literary communities within which his work is situated. A Eurocentric model of literary production is not useful in understanding Premchand.[22] To read him is to come in touch with the complicated and rich history that lies between Hindi and Urdu, the cross-fertilization of genres, the seeping of one language and literature into the other, and the multilinguality and historical subjectivity of early twentieth-century North Indian writers and cultural workers who were well versed in Farsi, Urdu, Sanskrit, Hindi, and English. It is also not useful to recuperate Premchand in the framework of nativism, for Premchand was enormously influenced by the nineteenth-century British and European masters of the novel form. Although the encounters between European and Indian literatures were produced under conditions of domination, one can catch at the cadences of Dickens' preamble to *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859) in "The Chess Players" even in a bad translation. There is also in Premchand's work the transgressive Urdu–Hindi–British cultural and linguistic creolization that came into being in the British empire, despite the fact that empire-builders forbade free and equal intercourse between Englishmen and women, and Indian men and women. There is also the culture produced by the gradual assimilation of the Mughal and Muslim colonialisms in Premchand. Straddling several languages and admiring several Indian and European literatures, Premchand's body of work is located at the site of overlapping cultures, one sedimented under the other.[23]

Premchand's satire separates nation from Awadh, the nationalist writer from the Awadhi native

Premchand's appropriation of the Lakhnavi tall tale is important because at the height of the anti-colonial movement, he disrupted the silence and erasure of the colonized. Premchand deployed the rhetorical manoeuvre of seeming to agree with the English sahibs in order to participate in the debate about British enterprise as productive work and play versus indigenous cultural practices as unproductive play. In 1909, fifteen years before Premchand wrote "The Chess Players," he was summoned by the British District Magistrate, who reprimanded him for the seditious content of his writings and demanded the surrender of all the copies of

his work. Premchand narrowly escaped not merely losing his job as inspector of schools but even possible imprisonment. Thus Premchand's entry into the debate about British enterprise and Awadhi culture had to be disruptive, Indian natives were not intended to be co-discoursing equals in the discourse that represented them.

Moreover, Premchand's entry had necessarily to be couched in terms of auto-critique and self-censure, for these were the only terms in which Indians could be inserted into the discourse. The range of utterances prescribed by the discourse of enterprise was limited, for the native's cultural practices, in whatever shape or form, had to be confirmed as unproductive play. This confirmation of the colonial judgment by colonial writers had perforce to encounter the tropes, linkages, and vocabulary of the expanded cultural critique. Indeed this was the price Premchand had to pay for moving from silent resistance to the realm of written discourse.

In "The Chess Players" Premchand's move to agree with the several proofs of the unenterprising Awadhi was deceptive. Premchand's transaction with his cultural location lay in changing the rhetorical objective (justification of empire for colonial writers on Awadh, mass mobilization for nationalist writers) of representing Awadh. In Premchand's version of the Lakhnavi tall tale there is a creative reinterpretation of the binary opposition between British enterprise and indigenous cultural practices, from the vantage point of the nationalist idioms current in the mid-1920s. The expanded cultural critique of Awadh, as stated by W. H. Sleeman and George Trevor, has become in Premchand's literary fiction the terrain for cultural struggle. The nationalists perceived this cultural struggle as the pre-requisite and pre-condition for the political struggle against the British empire.

The rhetorical intent of Premchand's nationalist representation of Awadhi culture is significantly different from British representations of Awadh. For Sleeman, at the eve of Awadh's annexation, the rhetorical purpose was to justify the Company's political takeover. For Trevor, in the immediate aftermath of the 1857 War of Independence, the rhetorical goal was explicitly stated as the justification of "any [read English] administration which promised to enforce order, equity and humanity" and the benevolent colonizer's dilemma that "It is not easy to govern men for their own good."[24] The rhetorical ends of Premchand's story are hinted at in the reiteration of phrases like "no one had the slightest idea," "there was no one to listen to their complaints" and "no one cared," and "no one gave a damn."[25] In these phrases Premchand evokes the collectivity of the Awadh populace, and by extension the imaginary

community of the Indian nation. These phrases signal the nationalist targets of mass mobilization in the 1920s.

At the conclusion of "The Chess Players" the rhetorical objective is clarified. Premchand names the historical moment of Awadh's colonization, not as the beginning of order, equity and humanity but as the lowest ebb of nationalism; Premchand comments, "National valor was at its lowest ebb with them."[26] The nationalist imperative is posited by underlining its absence in the Awadh aristocracy. Premchand's Awadh aristocrats say, " 'Why should we die for the King or for his kingdom or for the country?' . . . Why disturb our sweet sleep of apathy?"[27] Thus the satirist plays historian in order to recall the 1856 defeat of Awadh for the new set of conditions in the 1920s. In Premchand's fiction the Awadhi native becomes a key satirical figure in the idiom of nationalist mobilization.

I criticize Premchand's text because there remains a disjunction between the altered rhetorical objective of nationalist mobilization and the *unaltered colonialist tropes* used to reach the objective. This is a troubling disjunction, for Premchand's text falls prey to the very discourse of British enterprise and expanded cultural critique that it disavows. The set of colonial tropes in the Premchand text are the following: the Awadhi native is incompetent, pleasure-seeking, effeminate, escapist, and politically passive; Awadhi culture is decadent; and Awadh's ruler consorts with women, eunuchs, and fiddlers. In Premchand's story these colonialist tropes are redeployed in the service of a new and more hopeful scenario. The Awadhi native represents, for Premchand, all those individuals, groups, and communities that do not display "passion for politics" and "national valor."[28] Premchand's nationalist satire is a call to arms to all those who have not joined the cadres of the nationalist movements; they are exhorted by evoking the emotions of shame, rage, and self-flagellation. The satire offers a clear programme of action to its Indian readers: they must disavow the apolitical Awadhi native by joining the nationalists and transforming themselves into the politically active Indian.

This bold and culturally aggressive change in the rhetorical ends of the colonial representation of Awadhi culture is accomplished by Premchand through his use of language, popular memory, and subaltern modes of satire and irony. The principal reason that Premchand remains the leading figure in the canon of Hindu–Urdu literature lies in his transformation of North Indian dialects. He poured a vigorous critical content into the Hindi and Urdu languages, such that those vernacular literary productions were not only read in Urdu- and Hindi-speaking

regions but also became available to the Bengali-speaking readerships in Bengali translation, and were translated and anthologized in the languages of the South – Telugu, Tamil, and Malayalam. Premchand's contribution in developing this new reading public and forming their tastes and habits of thought lay in the eloquence and aggression with which he intervened in crucial cultural questions like the necessity of political participation (*Seva Sadan*, 1918), the evils of dowry and oppression of widows (*Nirmala*, 1925–1926), the degradations of the rural peasantry (*Godaan*, 1936) as well as his numerous essays and editorials in the periodicals that he edited.[29]

Premchand's authority in representing Awadhi culture in "The Chess Players" comes from the fact that he inherited the secular temper of Awadh by writing in both Hindi and Urdu. I wish to make a crucial distinction between the notion of community as represented by the Muslim–Hindu syntheses in Awadhi culture, and inherited by Premchand; and the notion of community in Premchand's satire which identifies completely with the discourse of nationalism. For many critics and readers of Premchand, there are two Premchands. There is the writer who is unparalleled in his representations of the material realities of rural North India and the oppression of the peasant, and the other is the philistine Premchand who is uncomfortable and heavy-handed in his representation of urban characters. In my view there are two Premchands in relation to the most important question preoccupying writers and artists in the mid-1920s, namely the shape and constituencies, the class-content and revolutionary potential, of the imagined community of the nation. There is the Premchand who inherits the alternate imaginings of community from Awadhi culture. This is the Premchand who in his childhood and youth devoured Abdul Halim Sharar's *Hindustan Men Mashriqi Tamaddum ka Akhri Namunah* (*The Last Example of Oriental Culture in India*) that came out in serialized form in 1913–1920, in the pages of the Lucknow-based journal *Dil Gudaz* (*Heart's Delight*) started by Sharar.[30] This is the Premchand who lived in the city of Lucknow when he wrote the short story "The Chess Players," who loved the city and knew every street and legend of the city. The nationalist satirist rises phoenix-like on the ashes of his double, condemning what he loves and admires, derisively naming all those aspects of Lucknow culture which he has read about and heard and seen, flagellating the citizens of the city and himself.

This dualism in the nationalist satirist should not be read off as an individual pathology, the stakes in this conflict were nothing short of the history-telling and historical verdict that nationalism delivered

about Awadhi culture as a paradigm for India's defeat at the hands of the British. Put crudely, the question that Premchand's satire formulates is, why was Awadh defeated in 1856, and how can the nationalist movements avoid a similar defeat in the 1920s? There are coercive elements in the way this nationalist endeavour is formulated. The project of understanding Awadhi culture is rejected in favour of the political pragmatism of anti-colonial resistance. Premchand tells readers that Awadhi culture has to be disavowed in order to build a victorious agitation. It is here that the ambivalence between the Awadh-loving Premchand versus the nationalist Premchand comes into play. The satirist feels impelled to condemn the cultural formation he has inherited. Nationalism constructs the community of the nation by erasing alternate pre-nationalist, non-nationalist and subaltern forms of community. Premchand's satire executes this genre convention by disavowing the forms of community prevalent in Awadhi culture of the late 1850s.

The long-term effects of the nationalist criticism of Awadhi culture lay in the demonization and communalization of the secular Hindu–Muslim syntheses that Awadh crafted and symbolized.[31] This erasure is particularly damaging to Premchand's body of work because the work stands at the confluence of Hindi and Urdu and therefore creates a cultural dialogue between Hindu and Muslim communities of modern-day Awadh known as Uttar Pradesh. This linguistic meeting of Hindu–Muslim cultures originated in the Awadh Nawabs' decision to depart from the practice of using Persian as the court language in other Mughal and Muslim courts. Instead the Awadh rulers used a mixture of Hindi and Urdu. In the 1820s, Bishop Heber noted, "Hindoostanie, not Persian, is here the court language."[32] Awadh's disavowal of the learned languages and adoption of the vernacular resulted in the development of a language of the people as the repository of new ideas, translations, and cross-cultural fertilizations. Heber noted the royal patronage of this language revolution – a Nawab "made his aides-de-camp read them [English books] to him into Hindoostanie" and also wished to compile a Hindoostanie–Arabic dictionary.[33] These vital connections between Awadh's rulers, the people, and the language they shared and enriched received a setback with the 1856 British annexation of Awadh because English became the language of government and civil administration and the medium of civic-political debate.

Nationalist genres aim to supersede subaltern genres

Premchand's cultural location is determined not only by colonial discourses but also by the relation he establishes with subaltern genres. We cannot

understand Premchand's appropriation of the Lakhnavi tall tale in "The Chess Players" unless we appreciate that through his short fiction Premchand achieved what he set out to do, to make his stories part of the national unconscious and aggressively claim the constituencies of the subaltern genres. In 1924 when Premchand wrote "The Chess Players" a cultural revival was underway in Hindi- and Urdu-speaking regions of North India by writers and intellectuals. Some of Premchand's most widely circulated short fiction are part of this cultural revival.[34] The short stories afford an important clue to Premchand's literary talents and the literary significance of "The Chess Players." Premchand's chosen weapons to supplant oral subaltern and folkloric genres were linguistic as well as polemical, he tried to revolutionize North Indian languages with critical ideas and national debate.

The language of Premchand's short fiction rejected the Sanskritization of Hindi and the Persianization of Urdu. He essayed a direct, vigorous, accessible, and pithy language as a vehicle for bringing important political ideas to his reading public. In my view he achieved stunning success in this area, he pushed the prose form of Hindi short fiction as far as it could go in combining intellectual and political content with the simplicity and directness of conversation and the haunting poignancy of oral storytelling genres of Awadh.[35] Premchand's stories became required reading in school textbooks in postcolonial curriculums, they were read aloud and enjoyed in a family setting, they became part of the fund of stories that were passed down by word of mouth in Hindi–Urdu-speaking regions, as well as translated in written form, quoted, and paraphrased orally in other regions of India.

Premchand's success was somewhat uneven in the second part of his project vis-à-vis the subaltern genres of storytelling, namely to revolutionize the Hindi short fiction into a site of political and cultural debate. Certainly his stories generated political and cultural discussion about Hindu bigotry, superstition, the oppression of the dalit castes, the nationalist new woman, political consciousness, the pauperization of the North Indian peasantry, and they include memorable vignettes of subaltern children, men, and women who live and die in extreme poverty. The trouble was that nationalist genres used the format of political and cultural debate to make didactic statements that narrowed the terms of debate. This genre feature of sermonizing and monolinguality has a great deal to do with the populist elements of nationalism.

Elite nationalists believed that the common people do not participate in revolutionary struggle because they do not know how to think or debate issues.[36] This notion that the subaltern does not have a political

consciousness buttressed the impulse in nationalist genres to replace subaltern cultural forms with nationalist literatures. This impulse stems from not only nationalist writers' fascination with, but also their class and cultural prejudice against, subaltern genres. Together with the ambivalence towards subaltern cultural forms, the nationalist movements of the 1920s wished to exploit the popularity of subaltern genres for mass mobilization. In his biography of his father, Amrit Rai writes that the period of 1910 marks Premchand's involvement with the regional folk literature of Mahoba region in Uttar Pradesh.[37] Nationalist literatures tap into the pleasures and constituencies of subaltern genres and draw their energy and vitality towards nationalist goals; yet the elitism of nationalism is betrayed in the notion that the cultural forms of subaltern classes lack critical self-reflection, and are merely entertainers or opium of the masses.

Recent ethnographic studies of *bhajan mandalis* (informal musical gatherings) in Saurashtra and Rajasthan suggest that when subaltern groups of migrant labour sing the short religious compositions (*bhajans*), there is a discussion afterwards which relates the song to conditions of oppression experienced by the singers, or the participants articulate their own experience by interpolating their own lines into the song.[38] In an analogous fashion the Lakhnavi tall tale has conventions for discussion and debate that may not resemble the conventions of written literatures but are politically and culturally dynamic in their own right.

There are specific textual markers through which Premchand's "The Chess Players" exemplifies nationalism's elitism, condescension, yet fascination with subaltern genres and their popularity. In the story Premchand significantly modulates the genre expectations of the Lakhnavi tall tale by changing the tone. In its subaltern version the Lakhnavi tall tale arouses a laughter that is warm, rich, and self-critical, a communal revisiting of the scene of cultural defeat; the joke is that the rulers change, history passes by, while the Awadhi native pores over the chessboard at the outskirts of the city. In Premchand's story the tone has changed to savage satire. This change of register, from the genre of the Lakhnavi tall tale to nationalist satire, from affectionate laughter to savage satire, should not be read merely as the personal choice of the writer, for it is precisely in the minutiae of these small literary changes that we trace the new positioning of Awadh in the formation of a nationalist consciousness.

There are other changes as well. The stock characters in the tall tale, Meer and Mirza, are given proper names, Meer Roshan Ali and Mirza Sajjad Ali. The proper naming of the chess-playing nawabs is a hint that Premchand is moving these characters into the realm of

historical realism, in order to activate questions concerning their historical consciousness. Premchand wishes readers to ask whether the Awadhi natives in the pre-1856 days were aware of the historical events going on around them, or hopelessly at odds with history. Already in Premchand's textual changes a dichotomy is established between the grand narratives of History and Politics, and the triviality of the nawabs' lives. The subaltern notion that the everyday is a multivalent metaphor for important historical events is thrown out by Premchand's text.

Subaltern condensation is replaced by satiric amplification. The bare bones of the oral anecdote are fleshed out to include a larger cast of characters – the wives of the nawabs and their servants. The nawabs' wives are introduced, not because Premchand has any special interest in a gendered history of Awadh in 1856, but for the purpose of interpolating elements of sexual farce. Male impotence and cuckoldry are stock situations in the genre of Urdu sexual farce: Premchand combines the genre of the tall tale with Urdu sexual farce in order to make his nationalist message scathing. This mixture of genres – Lakhnavi tall tale, Urdu sexual farce, historical realism, satire – concludes in a dark vein. The merry gentlemen, who will not fight to defend their country, quarrel over the game of chess and kill each other. In a sense the most important character in Premchand's story is the people of Lucknow and Awadh. In "The Chess Players" the entire city and countryside is rife with apolitical escapists. While the Lakhnavi tall tale selects the telling cultural gesture of obsessive courtesy or obsessive cerebral meditation, the overweening ambition of nationalist satire is to describe all of Awadh culture in satiric shorthand, a sign that the genre is disguising history-telling as satire.

The limitation of Premchand's literary satire is that he took the unpersuasive and self-contradictory colonial discourse of enterprise, and gave it an unprecedented boost. In the final analysis his nationalism inscribed and etched the defeat of Awadhi culture far more deeply into the national consciousness than anything that Sleeman and Trevor could have accomplished. "The Chess Players" exemplifies nationalism's discursive collusion with colonialism. The examination of the specific sites and discursive strands where Premchand's text colludes with colonial discourses is important. It is precisely because texts are enmeshed with the horizon of ideas, the incompleteness of analyses, the blindness and the brilliance of the historical epoch that they belong to, that they enable us to trace the trajectory of a discourse that continues to be compelling today.

Economism and class interests in elite nationalism's critique of British colonialism

How is domination conceptualized in Premchand's satire? It is important to remember that British colonialism differed from earlier forms of colonialism of India. Earlier colonialisms were either brief invasions, like Nadir Shah's foray into North India, or a colony of settlement like the Mughal empire. The Mughal empire makes a significant contrast with the British empire because, unlike the apartheid European regimes in Africa, the Mughal and Muslim dynasties in medieval India were part of an extended process of assimilation. The East India Company differed from these earlier formations because the wealth of the colony was siphoned off to Britain. Furthermore the production that the Company introduced into the colony was geared to the needs of Britain irrespective of the needs of the colony. Thus the formation of centre and periphery was a key feature of British colonialism of India.

In colonial labour theories the erasure of the conditions of domination is a constitutive element in the discursive binary of British enterprise and unproductive cultural labour of the native. It is characteristic of colonial labour theory to prove the political failure of the colonized, not by proofs from the political domain, but rather through a set of cultural proofs that discursively function as political proofs. The Lakhnavi tall tale counters this discourse, we may recall, by a series of moves. The tale accepts the colonial notion that the political struggle will be waged on the cultural terrain, but changes the cultural naming into a clash between two kinds of innovation. The British innovation of railways for efficient revenue collection and the famed British army which coercively enforced the revenue extortions by a show of force are contrasted to indigenous enterprise. Indigenous innovation is symbolized by the invention of chess and the inventiveness of adapting train travel into a community-centred enterprise. Domination is skillfully represented in the Lakhnavi tale, not through British empire-builders, but through their symbols of British railways and the British army, and Englishmen are evacuated all the better to gesture at the subject position of domination, which can be and is filled by other historical groups and classes.

The task of Indian nationalism was to launch its own understanding of British colonialism, its causes and processes of domination. I suggest that the elitism of nationalist historiography and cultural production is revealed in their partial and incomplete analysis of domination. This is borne out by Premchand's narrowly economistic understanding of colonialism. He represents the extraction of surplus through revenue

extortions by portraying the East India Company as a moneylender or *bania*. He writes:

> While this lavish spending [in Awadh] was going on, the debt to the English Company kept increasing day by day. No one cared a jot how it was to be repaid. Even the yearly revenue could not be paid. The Representative of the Company kept on writing letters of warning and even made threats. But the people here were driven by the intoxication of self-indulgence, and no one gave a damn . . . The company had decided to invade Lucknow; it wanted to devour the whole kingdom as a form of repayment of its debt. It was the age-old ruse of the moneylender; the same old trick that has enfeebled so many nations that, today, they find themselves in shackles.[39]

On factual grounds Premchand's analogy is false. The East India Company did not lend money to the Awadh kingdom, they extorted money over a period of hundred years from successive rulers under the excuse that they needed money to pay for their wars.[40] Premchand's comparison of a colonial trading company with the feudal structures of oppression in the moneylending system is a category mistake. The comparison tends to naturalize colonial violence and extortion of surplus as the class war between moneylenders and peasants, artisans, landless, and the migrant poor. Unlike the moneylender's exploitation of the poverty and needs of the people, British colonialism was premised on the wealth of India not its poverty, a wealth that lay in its thriving agricultural production, heterogeneous artisanal production, natural and human resources, and products which were profitable for national and international trade.

In all fairness we must note the ways in which Premchand's satiric comparison was rhetorically efficacious. Premchand performed a critical national service for his pre-Independence readers. Nationalist genres re-route the rhetorical ends of colonial discourses and indigenous idioms, and Premchand's *bania* analogy is a good example. Like a shaman, Premchand summoned the age-old class hatred and contempt of the poor people for the moneylending classes and castes, and redirected it towards the British. This anti-colonial move was historically important in its time. It was in essence the committed writer's hortatory address to his colonized fellowmen and women, as future citizens of a nation that still lay mirage-like in the future, to shake off their awe of the British.

We cannot understand the full significance of the anti-colonial gesture in Premchand's satire in "The Chess Players" without knowing official British attitudes towards Premchand's work. In his biography of

Premchand Amrit Rai describes how his father was reprimanded by the British for writing a collection of short fiction, *Soz-e-Vatan* (*The Dirge of the Nation*, 1908) and threatened both with losing his job as inspector of schools and with imprisonment. Here is Premchand's description of the incident, as retold by Amrit Rai:

> The Saheb asked, "have you written this book?" I admitted that I had.
>
> The Saheb then asked me to explain the substance of each story and eventually said angrily, "Your stories are full of sedition. Thank your stars that you are a servant of the British empire. Had these been the Moghul times both your hands would have been chopped off. Your stories are biased, you have brought the British government in disrepute in them," etc. It was decided that I should hand over all the remaining copies of Soz-e-Vatan to the government and never write anything again without the Saheb's permission. I thought myself lucky to get off so lightly.
>
> ...but the authorities were not to be so easily appeased. I later learnt that the Saheb consulted some other high officials...[they] sat together in conference over my fate. One of the deputy collectors cited extracts from my stories in order to prove that they contained nothing but sedition from the beginning to the end, and sedition, too, of a contagious variety. The overlord of the police opined that such a man must not be allowed to go unpunished. The deputy inspector of schools (Pandit Raj Narayan Mishra at this time) was very fond of me. It was due to his efforts that the matter was hushed up somehow.[41]

This extract from Amrit Rai is a vignette of the conditions of censorship under which pre-Independence nationalist literatures came into being. British administrators in Premchand's time were astute at discriminating the comprador Indian from the subversive Indian, and British recognition that Premchand's writing was "seditious" and "contagious" affords an important clue to the anti-colonial valence of his work. The principal reason that the British described his work as "nothing but sedition from the beginning to the end, and sedition, too, of a contagious variety" was that Premchand exhorted his Indian readers to see the British, not as a master race, but as extortionists of the kind that Premchand's readers were only too familiar within the ubiquitous figure of the moneylender.

Premchand is peerless among Hindi and Urdu writers in his commitment to anti-colonial agitation. It is when the dust settles from the passion and heat of the nationalist agitations that certain aspects of Premchand's

hortatory address appear troublesome, especially the populist features of Premchand's rhetoric. While the Lakhnavi tall tale draws on and returns to the common sense of the people, the site of common sense in Premchand's text is the figure of the *bania* or moneylender. The satirist is putting on the mantle of common sense, "the age old ruse of the moneylender" and "the same old trick" of lending money and seizing the peasant's lands. There is casual condescension in this populist analogy, almost as if Premchand is reaching for a quick and easy way of explaining the complex processes of capitalist colonialism by reminding his rural and urban readers of the figure that was hated and dreaded in every village, the local moneylender who had the power to seize the peasant's cultivable lands and dwelling if he could not repay his debt.

While the Lakhnavi tale invites its audience to discriminate between feudal and colonial realities of India, Premchand the satirist assumes a posture of neutrality and fair-mindedness by criticizing both sides, feudalism and colonial capitalism, the East India Company and "the nations in shackles." As a Gandhian socialist, Premchand's implication is that both feudal and colonial formations have to be destroyed and supplanted by the true community of the nation. However, this satiric impulse for destruction of Awadh's feudal and colonial structures is dovetailed to an exclusively economistic representation of the East India Company as a rapacious moneylender. Economism was endemic to nationalist explanations of British rule over India.[42] We cannot explain away the limitations of Premchand's economistic analysis of the British empire on the grounds that a partial analysis of colonialism is a feature of the early phases of nationalist struggle. Premchand wrote the story in 1924, at the height of the Gandhian struggle. In the 1940s, Nehru's *Discovery of India* (1946) reinforced nationalism's economistic analysis of colonialism.[43] Both in the 1920s and in the 1940s, economism dominated the Indian nationalist analysis of British colonialism. The representation of the colonial power as a moneylender has the effect, in Premchand's text, of divorcing the moneylender's extortions from the cultural and political effects of the British empire. The danger in nationalism's economistic analysis of colonialism lies in the overemphasis on the economic effects of British colonialism, and an underemphasis on the political, social and discursive effects of colonialism. The limitations of Premchand's analysis of British colonialism are discernible in his acceptance of the superiority of British enterprise. He writes: "About the rest of the world, the advances and inventions which knowledge and learning were making, how Western powers were capturing areas of land and sea, no one had the slightest idea."[44] Premchand's admiring

reference to "the advances and inventions" of the West indicates that his satire is directed, not at the discursive binary of British enterprise and the unenterprising Awadhi, but at Awadh's alleged lack of enterprise. By relegating the English administrators and John Company to the margins of his literary text, Premchand makes no connections between colonialism as the rapacious moneylender (economic domination) and the resulting conditions of being stripped and disempowered (political and social domination) as the material conditions of manual and cultural labour (the apolitical Awadhi). Contrarily the Lakhnavi tall tale foregrounds British enterprise through the symbol of the railways and the Company's army, and opposes to it indigenous innovations like chess.

While the supra-valuation of British enterprise and the erasure of indigenous enterprise remained continuous in colonial and nationalist discourses, the political uses of Awadh's defeat changed considerably. Nationalism reworked the defeat of Awadh into an idiom that circulated between Indians and concerned their national identity. This idiom gave a powerful new impetus to the *synchronic expansion* of the groups and classes that were immersed, in Premchand's view, in "the sweet sleep of apathy." The nationalist charge that Awadhi cultural practices were apolitical, anti-national, unpatriotic, and pleasure-seeking was levelled not only at the people of Awadh but also at individuals, groups, and communities that had not joined the nationalist movements and organizations in the 1920s. Non-participation or conscientious objection to the goals and methods of nationalism was identified with Awadhi apathy. Political action was identified with nationalist action.

The synchronic expansion of the apolitical and unpatriotic Awadhi who caused Awadh's defeat is central to the mobilization of the masses by Indian nationalism. It allows us to glimpse one of the ways in which the gap between the imaginary community of nationalism and the common people opened up even before the birth of the nation. Although the nationalist idiom for Awadh's defeat was organized differently from colonial discourse, the discursive principle was the same as the colonial discourse of the expanded cultural critique. The British had indicted the Muslim ruling elites for the defeat of Awadh; however, the British discourse was flexible enough to include the lower classes and anti-colonial rebels of Hindu and Muslim faiths who joined the 1857 rebellion. According to the definition provided by Trevor, the lack of enterprise was not confined to the Muslim landed elite of nineteenth-century Awadh. In Trevor's view the absence of enterprise is characteristic of all those Indians who resist the "exchange [of] all they hold dear in life for European abstractions" and all those who refuse to acknowledge

colonial domination as a "system of [English] administration which promised to enforce order, equity and humanity."[45] In other words British colonial discourse decreed that all those Indians who were in favour of British rule over India were enterprising natives.

In Premchand's story, nationalist discourse remaps the city of Lucknow and the countryside of Awadh in order to articulate Indian nationalism's view of the common people of the province. It was an approach marked by ambivalence, for elite nationalism both relied on and distrusted the collective strength of the masses. The story's opening paragraph depicts Awadh's political passivity as epochal. Premchand writes:

> It was the age of Nawab Wajid Ali Shah, and his capital, Lucknow, was steeped in subtle shades of decadence and bliss. Affluent and poor, young and old, everyone was in the mood to celeberate and enjoy themselves. Some held delightful parties, while others sought ecstasy in the opium pipe. All of life was charged with a kind of inebriated madness. Politics, poetry and literature, craft and industry, trade and exchange, all were tinged with an unabashed self-indulgence. State officials drank wine. Poets were lost in the carnal world of kisses and embraces. Artisans experimented with lace and embroidery designs. Swordsmen used their energies in partridges and quail fights, while ordinary people indulged in the new fashion for rouge and mascara, and bought fresh concoctions of perfume and pomade. In fact the whole kingdom was shackled to sensuality, and in everyone's eyes there was the glow of intoxication caused by the goblet and the wine flask.[46]

The tonalities of Premchand's prose are reminiscent of Dickens' famous preamble to his novel about the French Revolution in *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859). Premchand uses satiric licence to suggest that hedonism and unproductive play extends through all the classes, "Affluent and poor, young and old, everyone was in the mood to celebrate and enjoy themselves." Each sentence in the opening paragraph of Premchand's text widens the groups and classes that are immersed in unproductive play. Indeed the paragraph literally enacts the synchronic expansion, the allusion to "some" and "state officials" and "swordsmen" culminates in the indictment of the entire people of Awadh. Premchand concludes: "In fact, the whole kingdom was shackled to sensuality." In the nationalist text unproductive cultural play is not simply an attribute of the higher classes, but pervades all sections of Awadh society. This notion is satirically reiterated in the second paragraph of the story which

describes the stasis in court life, “The Nawab was in even worse condition.”

This synchronic expansion of the apolitical and unproductive Awadhi is a textual marker of the elite composition, ideology, methods, and goals of Indian nationalism. Premchand’s rhetoric does not unify all classes against empire, it provides elite nationalism with a stick to beat the poor for being responsible for their own poverty. Premchand’s satiric survey encompasses the indigent, “If you gave alms to a beggar, he would not buy bread with it but would spend it on opium or hashish.” The fractured colonial discourse is expanded, in the confident assertion of Premchand’s prose, to the subaltern classes. Thus the nationalist reworking of the colonialist expanded cultural critique in the idiom of the politically passive Awadhi was imprisoned in class-interests.

The politics of resistance and Premchand’s tropes of male impotence and simulacrum of sexual/political passion

Nationalist satire recounts an entire history of the colonized through the metaphor of male impotence. The trope of male impotence is a gauge of the strengths and limitations of disguised history-telling by the satirist. The metaphor allows the nationalist satirist to whip up the characteristic negative emotions of anger and shame evoked by nationalist discourses in order to mobilize its readers. Conversely, the satirist as historian can also fall prey to the tendency for pre-digested historical judgements, the proclivity to censure without historical understanding, and the tendency to close down the terms of debate rather than open them up. The dangers attendant on nationalist satire are, first, that collusion with colonialist discourses and historiography marks the site of citation, and, second, that the satirist’s lash can all too easily duplicate the coercive elements of colonialism.

Sleeman’s account of Awadh haunts Premchand’s text. Sleeman represents the stern and just English harbinger of order with whom the nationalists have to agree. Premchand’s vision is not free of colonial discourse, for he repeats verbatim Sleeman’s charge of the travesty of justice in Wajid’s court, “People were being burgled daily, and there was no one to listen to their complaints.”[47] With a more intimate knowledge and a greater savagery than the English writers, Premchand undertakes the limning in Awadh culture of the classic symptoms of Asiatic decadence. Awadh’s capital “was steeped in subtle shades of decadence and bliss” and “others sought ecstasy in the opium pipe” while some “bought fresh concoctions of perfume and pomade.”[48] The

pervasive suggestion of decadence (opium, hashish, alcohol, perfume, dance, music, sexual licence, idle pursuits like cock-fighting and chess) is combined with the suggestion of misrule: "There was panic in the city, people gathering up their wives and children and fleeing in the countryside."[49] One of the chess players observes of the Awadh ruler, "His Majesty, the Life of the World, will also be resting – or perhaps he's enjoying a round of drinks."[50] The lack of political leadership results in the political apathy of the citizenry, according to Premchand, and the citizens of Awadh confront the threat to their liberty with the thought, "Why disturb our sweet sleep of apathy?"[51]

The sexual connotations in colonialist and nationalist representations of Awadh are germane to the colonial violence of gender construction.[52] My own intervention into the ongoing debate in postcolonial theory about colonial gender construction is to point out that the colonial construction of gender is inseparable from the discourses of elite labour. The British upper classes brought to India the notion that the elite labour of governance – of women, children and subaltern classes – determined whether a man earned the title of manliness or was deemed effeminate. The labour of the dominant classes, manifested in their strategies and talents for governance, was valorized both as work and as socially acceptable gendered behaviour. This code of masculinity prescribed stern and just governance of women, children, the colonized, and the dispossessed. Male enterprise was at once both industrious and heroically masculine.

On both sides of the binary in the discourse of enterprise, a restrictive conception of masculinity was at stake. The binary complement of enterprising masculinity is the Awadhi who expends his labour and talents in pastimes that cause impotence. English observations on the Awadhi's masculinity were brief, terse, and enormously influential. Sleeman observed contemptuously of Wajid:

> He lives, exclusively, in the society of fiddlers, eunuchs, and women – he has done so since his childhood, and is likely to do so to the last. His disrelish for any other society has become inveterate – he cannot keep awake in any other.[53]

Apparently no more needed to be said. Evidence of Wajid's impotence is furnished by the fact that he spent his time with "fiddlers." The implication is that artists are mimic men, and Wajid displays an unkingly pursuit of art. In Sleeman's catalogue eunuchs are less-than-men, and women are inferior to men. Sleeman does not elaborate on how the

unfit Awadh ruler spends his time with this motley group, how he conceives of these three groups. Wajid's incapacity for governance is sufficiently proven by the fact of his spending time with mimic men, less than men, and inferior to men. Sleeman also manages to suggest that the overriding symptom of Asiatic decadence – the sexual impotence of the Oriental despot – inevitably leads to a psychic-political impotence. He states: "his [Wajid's] understanding has become so emasculated, that he is altogether unfit for the conduct of his domestic much less his public affairs."[54] This loose, intuitive and misogynist linkage between loss of virility and culture as a mode of political explanation is a characteristic feature of colonial genres.

The coupling of political misrule with impotence/sexual decadence became part of the British-inspired lore surrounding Wajid's Awadh. In jokes and anecdotes the Awadhi native of Wajid's time is portrayed as too apathetic to fulfill a discontented wife; at other times he is an indolent groom who can't stay awake on his wedding night and asks his friend to put the engagement ring on his bride's finger. These materials of sexual farce became the web and woof of popular versions of the British discourse of the expanded cultural critique. Nationalists did not repudiate the charge of impotence: Premchand repeats Sleeman's words in his story, "Jesters and mimics, Kathak dancers and providers of bliss held sway."[55] Nationalist writers simply directed the accusation of impotence at their audiences and readerships for mass mobilization. Nationalist writings did not question the discursive association between colonial enterprise and vigorous masculinity on the one hand, and unproductive cultural labour and effeminacy among the colonized men on the other hand.

In changing the rhetorical objectives of colonialist gender construction, nationalism did not challenge the colonialist ordering of sexual identity. Nationalism subtly reworked the sexual/political references so that male impotence was no longer linked with political misrule, but rather with political passivity. The trope of impotence became part of the demagogic and populist elements in nationalist rhetoric, and challenges to the colonized males' masculinity were a powerful rhetorical weapon in exhorting and haranguing the masses. Both orthodox revivalists and Gandhian nationalists like Premchand habitually deployed the rhetorical weapon of challenging the manhood of their readers/audiences, by using a range of adjectives that were associated with the Awadhi native in Wajid's time. The following adjectives and phrases – effeminate, effete, "womanish," impotent, slave of wife, emasculated – became synonyms for political passivity in the nationalist idiom.

The literary innovation in Premchand's text lies in the way Awadhi culture functions as the simulacrum of sexual passion. The cultural passions of Wajid's Awadh are represented in Premchand's text as a weak substitute for political passion. The elaborate joke which is repeated in several variants in the literary text is that Awadhi sensuality is a simulacrum of lovemaking. No one in the story engages in copulation. Premchand states that they "sought ecstasy in the opium pipe" and the innuendo is that opium dulls sexual appetite. Poets do not seek the arms of the beloved, but write about "the carnal world of kisses and embraces." In Awadh the intoxication of love is replaced by the intoxication of alcohol, "in everyone's eyes there was the glow of intoxication caused by the goblet and wine flask."[56] Thus Awadhi culture is reinterpreted as a culture of displacement and perversion.

The satiric targets for bringing home this point are the characters of the nawabs, and Premchand's detailed representation of their conjugal lives. The wife of Mirza is a shrew, and the wife of Meer cuckolds him. The discursive links between the two men's impotence and political disinterest is naturalized through a narrative device that is worth examining in some detail. The politics of elite nationalism is discernible in this narrative device of ventriloquising the common people of Lucknow. Premchand writes:

> There were a few old men of the district who also started to predict disaster. "There is no escape now. When our nobility has become so effete, only God can save the country! This kingdom will be ruined by chess! The omens are bad indeed".[57]

Common sense is cited in this paragraph in such a way that citation has become the mark of collusion between nationalist and colonialist discourses in Premchand's text. The phrase "a few wise old men in the district" is a signal for the wisdom passed down intergenerationally and word of mouth amongst the people. The colonial metonymy of native misrule as male impotence is attributed not to Sleeman and Trevor, but to the common sense of the people. It is here that we see the differences between the subaltern genre of the Lakhnavi tall tale and nationalist appropriations of the subaltern genre. The subaltern tall tale injected the colonial verdict on Awadh, like poison in the bloodstream, into their anecdotes and conversations precisely in order to build immunity, and fight back and refute the colonialist verdict. Premchand's text not only abolishes the distinctions between good sense, in the Gramscian sense of the term, and colonial discourse; he goes even further and ascribes colonial discourse to the wise old men of the city.[58]

The nationalist text represents itself as the exemplar of its own theory of art and resistance. Indian nationalist genres are most strident, self-contradictory, and crisis-prone at the point when they articulate the politics of resistance and the politics of art. Nationalist genres are uneasy and "wobbly" texts because subterranean collusions do not coexist harmoniously with the overt impulse for rebellion. The crisis in the genre occurs when the self-conscious narrator covers over the newly fashioned and tentative nationalist subjectivities. The dogmatism of the text hides the fact that nationalism's theory of art and theory of resistance require and pre-suppose a new history of the colonized people and a new understanding of the people's culture and labouring productivity. Instead of submitting to the task of these incomplete projects, the nationalist text conveys the impression that historical interpretation must already have been accomplished before nationalist history-writing can begin, indigenous cultural traditions must be categorized as apolitical or political art before the task of understanding culture is launched, and the complex rhythms of indigenous labour practices and productivity are evaluated harshly and narrowly before fashioning the tools and apparatus for understanding them. There is an undeniable pathos in this false necessity which is self-imposed by the nationalist genres, yet that pathos has to be held in counterpoise with the grievous errors of judgement, interpretation, and discursive complicity that is endemic to nationalist genres.

The crisis in Premchand's short story occurs at the point where the text commits a self-contradiction, contravening its own avowed principles in its articulation of resistance and its concomitant theory of art. The narrator/satirist makes a series of reductive moves: he reduces resistance to military resistance and identifies nationalist activism with martial valour. There is an explicit historical interpretation in the satirist's indictment of Awadh for acceding to British annexation in 1856 without waging a war in self-defence. Premchand makes overt what was obliquely implied by colonial historiography about the Awadh annexation. Sleeman and Trevor could not frontally discredit Awadhi valour because Company sepoys in the Bengal Army were largely recruited from Awadh till 1857. Awadh served as a military labour market for the British, and, moreover, Awadh sepoys were counted amongst the bravest in the East India Company's army. Therefore Sleeman and Trevor confined themselves to sexual innuendoes about a generalized political ineptitude, a lack of English sobriety and statesman-like moral rectitude. Premchand's "The Chess Players" endorses the colonial critique of Awadhi cowardice. Furthermore, Premchand erases the 1857 War of Independence in which

Awadh served as a nucleus for the rebels. In this way Premchand erases Awadh's armed resistance to British rule and subsequent British efforts to factionalize the joint Hindu–Muslim resistance into fratricidal violence.

The valorization of armed resistance, and the identification of anti-colonial nationalist resistance with armed resistance, poses a crisis for Premchand, the avowed Gandhian. The 1920s are often referred to by Premchand scholars as the most Gandhian phase of his writing.[59] Premchand resolves the contradiction between his avowed faith in the Gandhian methods of non-violence and his recoding of martial valour as nationalism by making the following qualification:

> He [Wajid Ali Shah] was under arrest, and the [British] army was taking him away. There had been no trouble in the city at all – no warrior had shed a single drop of blood! . . . From the beginning of time no king had ever been dethroned in such a peaceful and non-violent fashion or at least history has recorded no such example. But this was not that ahimsa, that non-violence which pleases the gods. It was gutless impotence which made them weep.[60]

In this passage Premchand refers to an important distinction made by Gandhi between passive non-violence, which Gandhi rejected, and the strategic use of non-violent methods of agitation like non-cooperation and hunger strikes which were favoured by Gandhi. Adapting this Gandhian distinction to his own ends, Premchand offers us his view of history, namely that the people of Awadh displayed total passivity and cowardice in the 1856 annexation of Awadh by the East India Company. It is imperative for Premchand to distinguish the non-violence of Gandhian nationalism in the 1920s from the non-violence of Awadh in 1856 because the gap between the imagined community of the nation and Awadh must be maintained.

The satirist prepares the reader for the association between lack of martial valour and loss of masculinity by mocking one of the chess-playing nawabs, Meer, for being a cuckold, and portraying him as "trembling with fear" at the prospect of fighting a battle to prevent the conquest of Awadh. Premchand's Meer says, "The mere mention of battle gives me the shivers" (68). Here Premchand draws uncritically on the misogynist and patriarchal clichés and proverbs in North India, which state that a man who cannot "govern" his wife at home will certainly not be able to govern in the public sphere. Satiric derision at Meer's sexual inadequacy functions as a metonymy for his cowardice in battle. Premchand's Meer

prepares the reader for the full measure of the satirist's invective, directed at the subjugated people of Awadh, "But this was not that *ahimsa*, that non-violence which pleases the gods. It was gutless impotence which made them weep." The key phrase is "gutless impotence" because the satirist gathers together and marshals his satiric tools to estrange the reader from the suffering of the defeated and colonized people of Awadh, implying that a people who fail to take up arms for self-defence should not be pitied for losing their liberty.

Later in the text the satirist returns to the representation of Awadh as "gutless impotence." The narrator has to explain away the contradiction in his representation of the nawabs, they have to be shown as fighting each other to death even though we have been told that they tremble with fear at the thought of battle. Premchand resolves this anomaly by stating, "Though our two heroes were indolent men, they were not without honor" (73). Note how the text has circumscribed Awadh's options, if Meer and Mirza do not fight the British army they display gutless impotence, if they match swords with each other or with the British they are motivated by an outmoded feudal code of personal honour that must be destroyed along with all the other vestiges of feudalism. The cultural pride of the Awadhi is distinguished from national pride and valour, "National valour was at its lowest ebb with them, but personal pride they possessed in plentiful quantity."[61] The Awadhi's passion for cultural pursuits is characterized as the absence of political consciousness, and thus distinguished from the correct passion of the nationalists, "any passion for politics had died within them."[62] On the one hand, resistance and art are exclusively identified with nationalist resistance and nationalist art, on the other hand Premchand internalizes the British association of enterprise, military valour, and violence as effective resistance and a hyper-masculinity that celebrates the cult of violence and domination through armed force.

Here is a passage from Premchand's story that exemplifies the nationalist reconstruction of the British-expanded cultural critique of Awadh:

> The Nawab took leave of his kingdom in exactly the kind of weeping way that a young bride leaves home for her in-laws' house. The Begums, his wives, wept also. The maids and the housekeeper wept . . . The ruler of Lucknow was made to march as an ordinary prisoner, while his own city slept on unconcerned in the sleep of decadent bliss. This indeed was the nadir of political decay.[63]

Ostensibly we are being given a scene of political defeat. Instead of being told about the political actions undertaken by the native ruler,

the indigenous elites, and the common people of Awadh to challenge the political domination of the East India Company, the scene of political defeat is described in the obfuscating sexual invective of a ruler who is so effeminate that he resembles a weeping bride. A satirist exercises complete freedom to exploit the popular repertoire of jokes, fears, and anecdote concerning all sorts of forbidden topics like misogyny, sexuality, religion, family. I am not questioning Premchand's freedom as a satirist, nor am I unmoved by the weeping anger the satirist unleashes with this word-picture. I am, however, questioning the literary reproduction of colonial representations of Awadh in phrases like the "sleep of decadent bliss" under the alibi of satiric licence. Moreover the satirist's historical interpretation in these words, "his own city slept on unconcerned" and "the nadir of political decay," should be taken seriously, debated, and challenged if it is erroneous.

In order to make an argument about political resistance through political proofs, Premchand would have to ask if the Awadh populace was discontented with the native ruler. He would also have to ask if there were any signs of popular resistance to the British annexation of Awadh. The answers to both questions were disallowed by the colonial portrait of Awadh. The fact was that the political subjects of free Awadh in 1856 were not discontented, they were loyal to Wajid Ali Shah. Moreover, history's record shows that there was within the year the first full-scale War of Independence in 1857, and Awadh was a major participant and leader in this anti-colonial war. Why did not the nationalists exhort the Indian people by recalling Awadh's political resistance in the 1857 War of Independence, instead of deriding and shaming the Indian masses by recalling Awadh's annexation by the East India Company? Premchand's story shows that this possibility did not materialize in the nationalist rhetoric. Instead the question of political resistance in the 1850s, a question that was so vital to Indian nationalism in the 1920s, was answered by loose cultural generalizations concerning the alleged sexual impotence of Meer and the cuckoldry of Mirza.

Women's discursive positioning in nationalist satire

The positioning of women in Premchand's text gives away the game. Indian women were inserted into the expanded cultural critique as the object of rescue.[64] Sleeman's contempt for women in the context of politics is evident, he denigrates Wajid for preferring to spend his time with women. In Sleeman's grouping of women, artists, and eunuchs, all three groups emasculate men because they are inferior to men. Trevor

provides the benevolent aspect of the same view that women have no place in the civic arena, except as claimants to protection. Trevor states that a bad ruler is heedless to the claims of "dishonoured women."[65]

In Premchand's stories and novels, the urban educated female characters were conceived in the mould of the nationalist new woman. The rural uneducated women were applauded or denigrated in Premchand's stories and novels in terms of their values of self-sacrifice or self-interest, loyalty to husband, or avarice for jewellery. Thus there was a dichotomy between the awkwardly imagined emancipated urban women in Premchand's novels, and the conventional and conservative view of rural women. Premchand was at his best when he wrote with knowledge and compassion about the subaltern women peasants, like the character of Dhania in his classic novel *Godaan* (*The Gift of a Cow*, 1936).[66] This overview of Premchand's female characters is necessary to understand the marked departure Premchand makes from the conventions he established in his representation of female characters in his treatment of the Begums or wives of Meer and Mirza. Premchand had no interest in a gendered history of Awadh, he was incurious about the women of Awadh and their perceptions of the Awadh–British conflict. Nevertheless he devoted a large part of his narrative to detailing their actions and comments on Meer and Mirza. There is an incipient communal dichotomy here. Premchand's Hindu women characters are never allowed to articulate their marital discontent, although Premchand's Muslim women characters in the story not only voice their discontent but are aggressive in restricting their husbands' chess game.[67]

The narrator in "The Chess Players" has some difficulty in constructing the two Begums as figures of discontent. By the social standards of Premchand's time, these two women do not suffer any of the traditional modes of gendered oppression; their husbands neither deprive them of money nor restrict their autonomy within their own household. The nawabs also do not exercise the traditional Muslim right of four wives. In fact the two nawabs are monogamous, devout, and courteous to their wives – their single eccentricity is the game of chess. How then can the narrator construct the portraits of the wives of Meer and Mirza to reinforce the nationalist representation of Awadh? The answer lies in the fund of misogynist proverbs and sayings in patriarchal societies about the need for men to govern and control women. The majority of nationalist male writers revived and legitimated these misogynist sayings by suggesting that the colonized male must regain control over the women of his household and community because loss of control over women entails loss of control in the public sphere. Thus the satiric

target in the story is precisely the Muslim women's excessive freedom. Mirza's wife throws a tantrum and Meer's wife cuckolds him. It is only through activating anti-Muslim and anti-woman rhetoric that the nationalist satirist can deploy the Begums to indict their husbands.

It is apparent that for Premchand, the two women in "The Chess Players" are stock figures of sexual farce. As stock figures they cover over a yawning gap in the expanded cultural critique. Premchand could not show popular discontent under Wajid Ali Shah's rule because the people of Awadh were loyal to Wajid, and Awadhi culture was unique in that the vegetable seller on the street and the ruler of the kingdom shared a common love of language, punning, word-play, and poetry. Premchand's solution was to borrow the materials of Urdu sexual farce, the discontented wife of the absent-minded nawab, and make her *function* as metonymic signifier for the discontent of the populace. The Begums' metonymic function in the text does not derive from the satirist's interest in the social conditions of Muslim women, nor from the nationalist writer's perception of women as citizens of Awadh, but rather from the loose, intuitive, and misogynist nationalist formulation that loss of control over women entails loss of control in the public sphere. The satirist reaches for a quick, surface effect. As stock figures the discontented wives are aligned in a visual tableau with the bitterly complaining servants and the prophesying wise men on the street. Women, servants and wise old men compose an impressionistic tableau of discontented political subjects of a mismanaged Awadh.

Theory of politicized art in nationalist genres

The overarching motif of chess and the Awadhi chess players in Premchand's story gathers together all the emotive linkages between political resistance, art as unproductive play, and sexual inadequacy. For Premchand, chess is a simulacrum at many levels. Chess-playing is a simulation of nationalist enterprise. The satirist comments ironically on the nawabs' abuse of their privilege and their neglect of their political-military role as the leaders of Awadh society, "How else could they spend their time but by playing chess?"[68] In Premchand's view, chess is a simulation of intellectual endeavour, therefore it is an emblem of escapist art. The chess players' obsession with the game results in the loss of conjugal felicity at home and loss of political liberty in the kingdom. The wife's exclamation, "My husband's brains and guts have been devoured by chess" underscores the notion that chess is a substitute pleasure, like the simulated sexuality of a people intoxicated with drink,

opium, games of pleasure, "perfume and pomade."[69] Most importantly, chess is a simulacrum for the armed resistance the *jagirdars* or landlords should have been planning. Much of the satiric laughter of the story is directed towards the metonymy of chess/politics. Premchand writes:

> But meanwhile, the labyrinths of the political chess game being played in the country were becoming more and more elaborate . . . Such disturbances were of no concern to our two chess-playing friends, however.[70]

Chess is the controlling figure in Premchand's text as a simulacrum of art, political resistance, and masculinity.[71] Therefore this game is Premchand's representative example of Awadhi culture as unproductive play. The story concludes with a warning, a quarrel ensues about chess, which ends the chess players' lives. Premchand warns readers that the pursuit of endless play and not work, the pursuit of escapist art instead of political art, and the pursuit of individual gratification rather than national freedom and collective interest lead to self-annihilation.

A number of Premchand's readers have noted the small-town provinciality in his view of the world, especially his view of the world of art. This may have something to do with his refusal to grant that the cerebral game of chess may be an index of the intellectual leanings of the Awadhi chess players. Premchand notes that Meer and Mirza are not hedonists, they are oblivious to the pleasures of food and drink, and prefer to starve and lose sleep when they are engaged in chess playing, "compared to chess, the best known *korma* curry and the finest of *pulaos* seemed insipid."[72] Contradictorily, however, the satirist is at pains to blur the boundaries between the spartan pleasures of chess, and other games that involve gambling like "partridge and quail fights" and modes of intoxication like alcohol and opium, as well as visits to "the houses of pleasure."[73] In Premchand's view chess is a poor substitute for scientific-technological intellectual enterprise. The intellectual status of chess is derided by Premchand:

> The game of chess was considered ideal for self-advancement, for the maturing of wisdom and sharpening of the intellect. Even today there are descendants of those people who advocate it enthusiastically.[74]

In defence of Premchand, it needs to be said that he belonged to the "social realism" literary school of nationalist literature, which makes a sharp distinction between socially relevant art and escapist aesthetics.[75]

Yet Premchand was also a lover of the city of Lucknow, and the inheritor of Awadhi culture. Therefore the disavowal of Awadhi art, and Awadhi chess in particular, is intimately experienced as a disavowal of the self. In nationalist texts and discourses, the colonized people were mobilized by dichotomizing their subjectivity in the cultural spheres of art, gendered masculinity, and national identity. The unenterprising and unproductive self was characterized by impotence, a simulacrum of sensuality, a simulation of conjugal harmony, a predilection for escapist art, political passivity, and lack of interest in nationalist resistance.

The fact that Awadh in the 1850s was experiencing a cultural renaissance is dismissed by Premchand in the all-inclusive category of apolitical art, "Poets were lost in the carnal world of kisses and embraces."[76] Nationalist writers and activists' contempt for what they too readily identified as apolitical art is evident in Premchand's observation, "Politics, poetry and literature, craft and industry, trade and exchange, all were tinged with an unabashed self-indulgence."[77] The stakes in this debate about art and chess are nothing less than the evaluation of indigenous art forms, crafts, and poetry and the productivity of artisans, as well as the indigenous modes of cultural work in the colonial capitalist category of luxury goods. Indigenous cultural production and innovation was characterized, under the all-embracing category of Oriental decadence, as obsolete feudal forms that have no place in colonial capitalism.

It may seem obvious to us that nationalist writers, given that they did not share the hostility, prejudice, and incomprehension displayed by Sleeman and Trevor towards a culture they did not understand and art forms which did not evoke their appreciation, should have essayed a more discriminating reading of Awadhi culture. At the very least we would expect nationalism to rectify, or protest against, the arbitrariness of culture masquerading as political proofs. However, the fact was that a price had to be paid for entering the debate, eschewing the realm of silence and opening up some negotiable spaces. The price was to make the expanded cultural critique part and parcel of nationalist self-examination of its own culture and cultural forms, its culturally formed masculinity, and culturally formed modes of work and labour. The irony in the nationalist reworking of the expanded cultural critique is that even as culture is given the burden of explaining the native's lack of productivity, there remains an ever-shifting space of cultural activity that can be designated as apolitical art and unproductive labour, simply because it does not fit the agendas and class-interests of the nationalist bourgeoisie.

The problems and limitations of Indian nationalism begin right here. The politics of cultural nationalism are deformed. Nationalism's ongoing

project of resistance is impoverished. A gap widens between nation and culture, nationalist resistance and the politics of cultural resistance, and nation and community. When a nationalist writer born and bred in Awadh takes over the expanded cultural critique, broadening its scope vertically to encompass all the classes and enlarging it horizontally to include all the spheres of cultural activity, then we might reasonably expect an egalitarian political content in the signifier of the culturally unproductive Awadhi native. Instead nationalism discursively constituted all those groups, classes, and communities under the nomenclature of the Awadhi native who do not participate in nationalist agitation, or choose agitational methods that conflict with bourgeois nationalism, or whose interests conflict with the postcolonial nation state. This answer was bound to affect the poorer classes the most, for it was an answer that sharply demarcated the elite domain from the subaltern domain.

4
Comic Representations of Indigenous Enterprise in Daniel Mann's *The Teahouse of the August Moon* (1956) and Satyajit Ray's *The Chess Players* (1977)

Cultural representations of non-European indigenous enterprise are dogged by the false necessity to prove that indigenous innovations and sciences are as efficacious and successful as Anglo-American technologies and colonial enterprises. This positivist project is doomed, indigenous enterprise cannot appear or represent itself as the equivalent of colonial enterprise without falling prey to the colonial project of exploiting the resources and labour power of the colony. The centre–periphery relation determines cultural representations of indigenous enterprise. Depicted as the exact inversion of colonial enterprise, indigenous enterprises soon begin to function as the inferior half of colonial enterprise. By discursively situating indigenous enterprise as the mirror opposite of colonial enterprise, cultural texts like Daniel Mann's *The Teahouse of the August Moon* (1956) construct indigenous inventions and innovations, not as the equal of colonial enterprise but as its auxiliary, enhancing the productivity of the imperial economy, and the colony becomes the space for the recuperation from colonial enterprise's failures and mistakes.

In Satyajit Ray's *The Chess Players* (1977) indigenous enterprise is not the mirror opposite of British enterprise. Ray is not completely immune to the nationalist discourses which refill the evacuated landscape of the colony with indigenous industries, arts and crafts, norms of efficiency, and competitiveness. He delights in pointing out that chess was invented in India, in order to call attention to indigenous enterprise.[1] In fact Ray's proposition concerning indigenous enterprise is contained in the chess game. The metaphor of chess playing is central to the historical debate about Awadh. Premchand used the playing of chess by

the two nawabs to signify lack – the lack of indigenous enterprise and the absence of political engagement and patriotism. For Ray, chess is the perfect strategic vehicle to explore and debunk the British colonialist claim that the impulse for enterprise, innovation, and scientific experimentation belonged wholly to the West.

In Chapter 2, I suggested that Ray's notion of play influences his critique of colonial enterprise; he relates to political issues through play rather than work. This is borne out in *The Chess Players*, where his response to Premchand's satiric portrait of the Lakhnavi chess players is tempered by his pleasure in the game of chess. Chess became an obsession with Ray in the 1940s and 1950s when he was in his twenties. This obsession faded away with Ray's absorption with film-making.[2] For Premchand, chess was a perfect metaphor for a culture of simulacra. The first scene of Ray's film, after the prologue, alludes to Premchand's interpretation through the narrator. The scene opens on Meer and Mirza poring intently over their next move in the chess game. The Awadhi narrator ironically comments on the manoeuvres of the chess players, "Look at the hands of the mighty generals deploying their forces on the battlefield. We do not know if these hands have ever held real weapons." This comment condenses Premchand's critique of Awadhi culture as lacking in martial valour and passion for politics by noting that "this is not a real battle" and they are merely "playing at warfare."

Ray's proposition concerning indigenous enterprise, I argue in this chapter, is neither wholly subsumed in nationalist discourses nor wholly outside these discourses and debates. As the film progresses, Ray's particular point of incision into chess as metaphor for indigenous enterprise is to explore the psychopathology of colonialism. It is here that I mark the differences between *Teahouse of the August Moon* and *The Chess Players*. The reconciliatory and optimistic comedy in Mann's film indicates the triumphalist progress of global capitalism and the subsuming of Asian economies in First World capitalism. The comedy in Ray's film is self-mocking and darker in tone, and the reason is that Ray uses the chess metaphor to symbolize the exile, migration, and erasure of Awadhi enterprise after the takeover by the East India Company. The political projects of the films are skewed differently: Mann's film is concerned with how the oppositional American hero can insert himself into other cultures and other economies while Ray's film is concerned with how to think through the historical destruction of indigenous technologies, sciences, and crafts in British India.

Ray's aesthetic-political solution is to make indigenous enterprise the continually threatened, ever-displaced, constantly disappearing and

reappearing source of creativity, curiosity, play, and desire. Ray describes his treatment of chess in the film: "Chess is used as a metaphor for the political manoeuvrings of the Raj, as well as an actual ingredient of a subplot involving two noblemen addicts of the game."[3] In Premchand's short story, chess functions as a metonymy; in contrast, in Ray's film the game of chess is a metaphor for the plot of the film. Ray's plot is restricted to the week before the Company's annexation of Awadh. Within this week the major characters of the film shift positions like chess pieces. The movement of the narrative is chess-like: Wajid and Outram in the main plot and Meer and Mirza in the sub-plot advance like the moves and countermoves of two players in a game of chess. Like chess pieces, turn by turn, each character becomes the site of the discursive contestation between colonialism and nationalism. The Awadhi narrator's warning in the first scene, "save your King, for if the King is lost, the battle is lost," is resonant because as the film progresses each character successively becomes Wajid, signifying the defeat of the game. Each character is also faced with the crucial moment when he/she is face to face with his/her historical moment and must find some way of coming to terms with Awadh's defeat and the destruction of indigenous enterprise.

The liberal trap: Okinawa's potato brandy as the mirror opposite of American military enterprise in Mann's *Teahouse of the August Moon*

I interrogate the political problems attendant on cultural images of indigenous enterprise in a Hollywood film of the mid-1950s, Daniel Mann's *Teahouse of the August Moon* (1956). This oppositional film metamorphosed from a novel to a long-running Broadway play to a Hollywood film, typifying the cross-fertilization between literature, theatre, and film in Hollywood's cultural production.[4] Vern Sneider's novel (1951) was successfully adapted into a long-running Broadway play by John Patrick in 1953, eventually leading to the motion picture in 1956.[5] The film's success depended on Marlon Brando, the most popular star of the time.[6] The question that continues to be relevant even today is why this anti-imperialist and anti-military Daniel Mann text, as well as its comic debunking of American military enterprise and valorization of Okinawan enterprise, earned mainstream popularity and critical success.[7]

American readerships of the book, audiences of the play, and movie viewers were made aware that these cultural texts were intervening in

one of the most important and controversial areas of America's post-war imperialism, namely America's cultural colonization and military occupation of Japan in the post-Second World War years.[8] The film's political message is, at one level, unambiguous. Mann's *Teahouse of the August Moon* pronounced the Americanizing of Okinawa a failure. The film questioned the American military presence on Okinawan soil, openly naming it "colonization." Moreover the film raised the spectre of American military personnel dissenting from military edicts and "going native" by adopting the Okinawan way of life. In order to understand how cinematic comedy conveys its anti-colonial message, I examine the character of Sakini because he is the principal vehicle for the critique of American imperialism, and the role that Brando memorialized through his performance. As the translator and native informant, Sakini is the mediator and guide for the border crossings between American culture and Okinawan culture. Sakini crosses and recrosses the elite/subaltern domains of the American military and the village of Tobiki. In his role as the narrator, Sakini speaks directly to the audience at the outset of the film and provides a thumbnail sketch of Okinawan history:

Sakini: History of Okinawa reveal distinguished record of conquerors, We have honor to be subjugated in fourteenth century by Chinese pirates. In sixteenth century by English missionaries. In eighteenth century by Japanese war lords. And in twentieth century by American Marines. Okinawa very fortunate. Culture brought to us . . . Not have to leave home for it.[9]

There is marvellous humour in Sakini's punchline.[10] Sakini exhibits no anger against the colonizers, and he does not deploy the nationalist discourse of anti-colonial patriotism. Instead he describes with the faintest tinge of irony the civilizing mission of the colonizer as the benevolent introduction of culture to the uncultured but grateful Okinawans. There is subaltern condensation and indirection in Sakini's observation. Sakini's comment, "Culture brought to us," implies that colonization carries a penalty; the colonizer is exiled from his homeland whereas the colonized "not have to leave home." Brando's interpretation managed to convey through the character of Sakini that American military enterprise is a self-important busyness rather than an endeavour of great valour and skill. Brando achieved this subversive suggestion not by direct statement or open contempt but by comical innuendo. For instance, Brando's Sakini is not at all rebellious about his American boss's harangue "Pull your

socks Up" but manages to convey through his compliance that the military obsession with efficiency, dress code, and rules is an absurdity.

The same kind of condensed satiric utterance accompanies the visual-aural representation of the enterprising American officers like Colonel Purdy; in the film, it is as if we as film viewers see his comical busyness through Sakini's eyes. Alluding to the economic exploitation of Okinawa, Sakini says that the colonizers make public pledges of friendship and "then take everything." The discussion takes place before Captain Fisby's first public speech to the Tobiki villagers:

Fisby: Good. Now, Plan B calls for a lecture on the ABC's of democracy. Make sure they understand that I come as a friend of the people. That we intend to lift the yoke of oppression from their shoulders.
Sakini: Oh, they like that, boss. This their favorite speech.
Fisby: What do you mean, their favorite speech?
Sakini: Oh, Japanese say same things when they come, boss. Then take everything.
Fisby: Well, we're not here to take anything.
Sakini: They got nothing left to take away, boss.
Fisby: Well, if they did have, we wouldn't take it. We're here to give them something.
Sakini: Oh, not get angry, boss. We not mind. After eight centuries we got used to it. When friends come now, we hide things quick as the dickens.
Fisby: Well, I guess it's up to me to convince them we really are friends. Let's meet the villagers.

Later in the chapter, I will examine another aspect of the thematic of friendship in colonialism in greater detail, particularly in relation to Ray's study of the friendship between the two chess players in his film *The Chess Players*. Ray focuses on the friendships that are possible between the colonized under the conditions of colonization. In contradistinction Mann's film focuses on friendships between the colonizer and the colonized. In Mann's *Teahouse of the August Moon* the thematic of friendship begins as comic debunking of the possibility. For example, in the above scene such assertions of friendships are ridiculed as part of the colonizer's rhetoric. Sakini's critique of this colonial rhetoric of friendship is contained in the pithy observation, "When friends come now, we hide things."

Sakini interprets Plan B, the very embodiment of American military enterprise, as simply a variation of the same speech that every group of

colonizers delivered to the Okinawans. Sakini's interpretation jeopardizes Captain Fisby's sense of self. Fisby is irritated and thrown off his stride by the suggestion that his benevolence is only a cover for "taking away" rather than "to give them something." Characteristically Sakini displays no signs of nationalist censure of Fisby's plans for the cultural indoctrination of the villagers. The subaltern humour of Sakini's comments lies precisely in his lack of surprise, as he says "After eight centuries we got used to it." The very absence of outrage in Sakini's demeanour, combined with an unemphatic statement to show that he is not fooled by the persuasive techniques of American imperialism, contributes to the comical effect.

Does the comedy in both these scenes of the film play a conservative or subversive function in relation to the film's oppositional stance concerning American colonization? I would like to address this question by examining the film's critique of American military enterprise. A great deal of the film's comedy is directed at America's political rhetoric about spreading democracy to Asian countries. Nevertheless, the oppositional strategies of this anti-colonial and anti-military filmic text are defused by its liberal perspective on indigenous enterprise in the Okinawan village of Tobiki. Colonel Purdy articulates the colonialist view. In his view the Okinawan people are colonized because they are indolent and lack American enterprise:

Purdy: No wonder you people were subjugated by the Japanese. If you're not sleeping you're running away from work. Where is your "get-up-and-go"?
Sakini: Guess "get up and go" went.[11]

The slang term by which American enterprise is both satirized and praised in the film is "get up and go." Purdy's enterprise consists of useless busyness like putting up signs and making up plans that do not work. The film suggests that American military enterprise is a camouflage for careerism. Purdy's "get up and go" consists of directing all his efforts towards earning the promotion of becoming a general. However, Purdy's enterprise depends on others, subordinates like Fisby or lower down on the scale the Okinawan villagers, accomplishing the work for which he will receive the credit. Similarly the enterprise of the top military brass and the political leaders lies in mobilizing the labour of the Okinawans. As Purdy says, "some fool senator" reads his report and "He's using this village as an example of American 'get-up-and-go' in this recovery program."[12] Thus the film indicates that imperial enterprise consists of receiving credit for work done by others.

Much of the ideological contestation between American military enterprise and the enterprise of the villagers in Okinawa circulates around the alleged superiority of Colonel Purdy's Plan B. The plan is to teach the villagers to build a Pentagon-shaped school, instruct them in the English language, and organize the village women into the Women's Democratic League. Conversely the Okinawan conception of indigenous enterprise is embodied in their plan to build a tea house. The binary opposition is between work and play, Colonel Purdy believes that the Okinawan villagers will be emancipated by instruction in American civic ideals, contrarily the villagers convince Captain Fisby of the superiority of play as represented in the tea house.[13]

The productivity of imperial enterprise is at issue in the film. The hidden imperative behind the army propaganda is to make the Okinawan village productive in the imperial economy. They must grow something that can be marketed and earn the village a profit. Fisby looks for a suitable commodity made by the labour of the Tobiki villagers which will be profitable in the market:

Fisby: Did Sakini say you made this cup yourself?
Oshira: Oh, yes. I learned from my father before me who learned from his father before him. Is our heritage.

At first the film dramatizes the incommensurable distance between the mass production that will boost the profits of the imperial economy and the handcrafted indigenous enterprise. This incompatibility between imperial enterprise and indigenous enterprise is highlighted in the conversation between the indigenous craftsman and Captain Fisby:

Fisby: Sakini, here's an industry we can start right away. This is a lost art. Is there any way we could mass-produce these?
Oshira: Mass-produce?
Fisby: You know set-up machines and turn them out by the gross.
Oshira: I take pride in making one cup at a time, Captain. How can I take pride in work of machine?
Fisby: How many of these could you turn out in a day?
Oshira: If I work hard, maybe one or two a week.
Fisby: Well. It's a start. Make as many of them as you can. We'll send them up to the American Post Exchange and sell them as fast as you can turn them out.[14]

Here indigenous enterprise is characterized by the craftsman taking pride in his work and by carrying forward the technology that is passed

down intergenerationally. Conversely, Fisby's conception of enterprise is mass production, the number of cups that can be produced by one worker in a day, and the exchange value of the commodity. At this point in the film it would seem that colonial enterprise and indigenous enterprise although they do not look alike at all function as mirror opposites of each other. However, as the film progresses, it becomes clear that the discursive representation of indigenous enterprise as the mirror opposite of imperial enterprise in fact facilitates their reconciliation. The liberal politics of the film is manifested in the scene where the American hero, Captain Fisby, accidentally discovers the productivity of Okinawan enterprise in the potato brandy distilled by the villagers for their own consumption. Tobiki's potato brandy is a perfect metaphor for indigenous enterprise; it is consumable by the Western consumer, Fisby earns large orders from the military encampments for this local brandy; it is a perfect low-cost complement to American colonial enterprise because the local labour in distilling the potato brandy is cheap; Okinawan brandy also fits into the Orientalist representation of the colonized as a place of hidden treasures, where a seemingly illiterate and poverty-stricken village has all along been distilling and enjoying a potent and marketable brandy.

The discovery scene in which the Tobiki villagers' hidden enterprise is revealed is worth detailed examination. The film makes an implicit critique of Purdy's colonial gaze; Purdy's gaze at the Okinawan landscape inscribes it with lack or the absence of enterprise, in order to make the entry of American military enterprise persuasive. Charles Mann's oppositional message is that the colonial gaze cannot see anything because the American military administrators have never tried to befriend the villagers, share their dreams, or understand their desires. In the discovery scene the Tobiki village is miraculously re-filled with enterprise, industry, and profit, interlinked to other military camps, and inserted into the global economy through trade. This scene of discovering indigenous Okinawan enterprise, of re-filling the colonized space, is constructed in such a way in the film as to suggest that even though indigenous enterprise is the opposite of American enterprise in its values, world view, and labour practices, it can be harnessed for the greater good of Okinawan–American relations and the greater acceptability of American military occupation of Okinawa.

This liberal message of the co-existence of American and Okinawan enterprise is constructed carefully. Fisby promises Sakini, "Well, I guess it's up to me to convince them we really are friends." The film celebrates the friendship between the two stock figures of comedy, Fisby is the comic stereotype of the klutz or the person who fails at everything, and

Sakini is the wily servant who knows more than his master and rescues him every time. The old political rhetoric of Colonel Purdy is replaced by a new political rhetoric of the friendship between Fisby and Sakini. Fisby is the oppositional hero, the Don Quixote who is at odds with military enterprise and its criteria of efficiency and blind obedience, the good-natured American who earns the trust of the village, the love of Lotus Blossom, and the friendship of Sakini.

In the discovery scene Fisby's discovery of Okinawan enterprise rescues his failed career. He has just discovered that all their village-manufactured goods have not sold in the market. Fisby needs to earn self-respect by helping the villagers produce a marketable commodity. He is rescued by the village, he is also the rescuer: he discovers the village's invisible enterprise; he makes them aware that they have a marketable commodity; he shifts a product from use value to exchange value; and he markets the indigenous product through his own contacts in the American military.

We are now in a position to understand why the film's image of the American hero – the good-natured armyman who is a failure until he goes native, wears the kimono, and watches the sunset – is a recuperative image from the perspective of liberal politics.[15] It is not enough that Fisby provides the way out to reconcile indigenous brandy distilleries and the alcohol requirements of the American military for mutual profit on each side. The new American hero must also rescue the old-style colonialist Colonel Purdy. In the concluding scene of the film Fisby's friendship with Sakini is the means by which the career of his boss Colonel Purdy is salvaged.

Purdy: I'm a sinking ship . . . scuttled by my own men.
Sakini: Colonel Purdy?
Purdy: Don't bother me.
Sakini: Stills not all destroyed.
Purdy: I haven't got time to . . . What did you say?
Sakini: We not born yesterday. Get sergeant drunk . . . and give him water barrels to break.
Purdy: Sakini, my friend, you're not just saying that to make me feel better?
Sakini: Oh, stills all good as ever. Production not cease yet.
Fisby: You really are a rogue, Sakini.
Purdy: No . . . he's really an American. He has get-up-and-go.[16]

At this concluding point in the film the interface between indigenous enterprise and imperial enterprise has ended in the two becoming

mirrors to each other, Sakini the exemplary Okinawan is "really an American" because he has American get-up-and-go. The dialogue in the film departs in one significant instance from the play: in the film Sakini beckons to the two Americans and putting his arms around them adds, "Now we're going to show you Okinawan get-up-and-go." One could argue that Purdy's description, or Sakini's self-description, is simply a compliment and should not be taken seriously. Alternately one could argue that the gesture betokens the liberal wish for equality between Americans and Okinawans. However, the linguistic terms of this image of equality suggest that the norm is American get-up-and-go.

In *Teahouse of the August Moon* Okinawa is poised between two representations of the colonized place. Okinawa is the feminized space that is supine, repeatedly subjugated, and yet mysterious. As Sakini says, Okinawa has been colonized by the Chinese, English, Japanese, and Americans. Contrarily Sakini's words also depict Okinawans as a people who are superficially colonized, whose inner life goes on undisturbed, who have learnt from the successive colonizations to adapt, hide their goods and their intelligence and play the stupid yokel, and survive. There is a sting in Sakini's description of the emptied landscape, "They got nothing left to take away, boss." Contradictorily, Sakini also describes the same landscape as a place of concealment rather than lack, a place where goods are hidden rather than a ravaged and destitute landscape. It will be clear that both representations of Okinawa are not that dissimilar, the colonized as the arch-victim habituated to victimage, or Okinawans as the wily natives who can outwit the colonizer and maintain their indolent lifestyle. Mann's liberal representation of the non-Western Other is that the other possesses alternative sciences, medicines, therapies, crafts, and products that may have a different epistemology from Western sciences and medicines but can harmonize with them, in order to provide a greater range of choices for the Western consumer.

Ray as fellow traveller of the left-wing intelligentsia in Bengal

Ray's critique of nationalism and nationalist discourses in *The Chess Players* should not be treated as an exercise in individualist art, but as part of the milieu of dissenting voices in Bengal in the late 1970s.[17] The re-evaluation of colonialism and nationalism had begun in study circles, conferences, articles, and reviews in lesser-known Indian journals among the academic intelligentsia in Calcutta in the late 1970s.[18] It is hardly a

coincidence that Ray's highly meditated film on British colonialism *The Chess Players* was researched, filmed, and marketed in 1977, paralleling the milieu of ideas from which the work of volumes of *Subaltern Studies* essays emerged.[19] Referring to the common ground between British ideologues and Indian nationalists, Guha states:

> Both proceeded from the standpoint of liberalism to regard the colonial state as an organic extension of the metropolitan bourgeois state and colonialism as an adaptation, if not quite a replication of the classical bourgeois culture of the West in English rendering.[20]

Guha suggests that Indian nationalism made a historic error in misrecognizing the British colonial state in India as an elaboration of Britain. Nationalists erroneously believed that by extension, the normative transition from feudalism to capitalism in Europe would occur in India through the destruction and suppression of Indian feudalism by capitalism. Thus the Indian bourgeoisie would follow the normative emergence and rise to power of the European bourgeoisie. The flaw in this reasoning, according to Guha, was that the metropolitan British colonial bourgeoisie were antagonistic to "feudal values and institutions in their own society" but found it convenient to collude with feudal elites in the colony and displayed "their vast tolerance of pre-capitalist values and institutions in Indian society."[21] It is this deformed development under British colonialism, this enmeshing of feudal and capitalist interests and structures, the one accommodating the other, that constitutes the major error in Indian nationalism's understanding of colonialism and nationalism.

Guha's formulation illuminates the considerable importance in postcolonial cultural production of looking back and re-evaluating the debates, historical analyses, rhetorical strategies, literary tropes in the anti-colonial agitation waged by Indian nationalists. Just as the *Subaltern Studies* volumes revolutionized the understanding of Indian nationalism among academics, university students, and intellectuals, in a comparable manner Ray's Hindi-film *The Chess Players* stirred up a nationwide debate about the layperson's nationalist perspective on what really happened between the Awadh civilization and the East India Company in 1856. The issues at stake in Ray's critique of nationalism in *The Chess Players* are the historic encounter between Indian feudalism and colonial capitalism; the errors in the nationalist analysis of this encounter are revealed, discussed, and fought over at the site of Awadh, around the issue of nineteenth-century Awadh's lack of enterprise, and in the

competing subaltern and nationalist symbolisms of the stock folk characters of Meer and Mirza, the chess-playing friends.

Ray's critique of nationalist historiography of Awadh can be graphed through the compass points provided by his statements in his rebuttal to Rajbans Khanna's critique of *The Chess Players*. Ray writes:

> The *crux* of the theme [of the film] is to be found at the end of the film, in Meer and Mirza's *continuing* to play chess in the British way after they have cleared their conscience by admitting that they have been cowardly in their behavior.
>
> To spell it out for Rajbans what it says in effect is a) that *Nawabi did not end* with the takeover; b) that upper class values were only *superficially* affected by British rule, and c) that feudal decadence was a *contributing* factor in the consolidation of British rule in India [emphasis mine].[22]

Ray's political analysis is condensed in the trope of continuation. This trope of continuation is significant. Ray refers to the "crux" of his interpretation as "Meer and Mirza's *continuing* to play chess" even after Awadh has passed into British hands. The nationalists emphasized the destruction of feudal Awadhi culture through British annexation. Contrarily Ray calls attention to the continuities in the preservation of feudal norms and privileges under the British empire. Ray's emphasis on the continuist elements in elite domination harmonizes with Guha's emphasis on the colonial British state's encouragement and tolerance of pre-capitalist structures in Indian society.

In Chapter 3, I suggested that Premchand's story "The Chess Players" exemplifies the analysis of Awadh's 1856 defeat that was current in the 1920s among socialist activists inspired by British and Soviet Marxism, Gandhian activists, and Gandhian socialists who tried to bring together the analysis of Marx and Gandhi. In the scathing tones of the satirist-narrator in Premchand's story, one can discern the main thrust of the argument about Awadh made by these sections of nationalist intelligentsia. Premchand's narrator criticizes both sides, the feudal elite of Awadh and the colonial capitalist East India Company, the latter in a narrowly economistic analysis of the East India Company as an extortionist moneylender, and the former in terms of the obsolete and decadent norms, values, and privileges that need to be destroyed in order to usher in the modern democratic nation state.

In the 1970s, Ray's postcolonial perspective on Awadh is that "upper class values were only superficially affected by British rule." Feudalism was not destroyed and class domination by the indigenous elite did not

change radically with the takeover of Awadh by the East India Company, or the takeover of the Indian colony by the British parliamentary monarchy after 1857. Unlike Premchand who accords feudal decadence primacy in the defeat of Awadh, Ray nuances feudal decadence as one of the "contributing" factors. In Ray's political vision "Meer and Mirza's continuing to play chess" albeit in the "British way" at the end of the film symbolizes the compromises, accommodations, and negotiations made by the Indian elite. The indigenous elite changed only to the extent that they sought to please, win favour from, and imitate their new masters. Ray's position vis-à-vis Awadh's annexation is complex. He neither shares the colonialist–nationalist proposition that the takeover of Awadh meant the victory of British enterprise, nor does he participate in the nationalist rhetoric that the defeat of Awadh is a site of national shame; moreover, Ray's ease with European as well as Indian culture also distinguishes him from the streak of provincial nationalism in Premchand.

Ray's film maintains a double lens for Meer and Mirza. For the nationalists, nawabi signified elite feudal domination. For Ray, nawabi culture signifies Lakhnavi *tehzeeb* (courtesy) which is more than, and in excess of, elite feudal privilege. The restricted nationalist definition of nawabi culture as elite privilege and feudal obsolescence tended to tar an entire culture with the faults of the elite sections of Awadh. In the magazine interview I quote above, Ray distinguishes nawabi culture ("Nawabi did not end with the takeover") from "upper-class values" and "feudal decadence," thus suggesting that nawabi does not simply mean that feudal decadence continued unchecked despite British colonialism. For Ray, nawabi culture also signifies Lakhnavi manners concerning intra-community relations between Hindus and Muslims in Awadh, class relations in the master's obligations and duties to his servants, and gender relations in the consideration and affection the Lakhnavi husband should accord his wife.

Ray's familiarity and love of Lakhnavi culture allowed him to restore the humourous affection in the subaltern version of the Lakhnavi tall tale. Andrew Robinson recounts Ray's childhood encounter with Lakhnavi courtesy and hospitality. He writes:

> Satyajit took holidays there [Lucknow] in the late 1920s and 1930s from the age of about eight, staying at first in the house of an uncle, later with other relatives. The uncle, a barrister called Atulprasad Sen, was the most famous Bengali composer of songs after Tagore. His house hummed with music of every kind, and his guests displayed

> polished manners to match; they included the greatest north Indian classical musicians of modern times, Ustad Allauddin Khan (the father of Ali Akbar Khan and the guru of Ravi Shankar). The young Ray listened to him playing the piano and violin, and took in the atmosphere of courtly refinement which was so characteristic of Lucknow. He was also taken to see all the sights that had made Lucknow known as the "Paris of the East" and the "Babylon of India" a century before.[23]

Ray's relationship to the city of Lucknow is far stronger than to any other Indian landscape outside Bengal.[24] The reason is that childhood is a powerful source of Ray's political and aesthetic discriminations, not only because the director is faithful to his childhood memories of vacations spent in the city, but also because it is characteristic of Ray's method to find a connection between the film project and the child's vision of the world. Once that connection is made, Ray discovers a profound accession of insight into the aesthetic structure of the film and his political vision. The adult Ray confirmed his childhood admiration for Lakhnavi tehzeeb in the late 1950s when he returned to Lucknow to arrange for the famous ghazal singer Begum Akhtar to appear in *Jalsaghar* or *The Music Room* (1958). Ray told his biographer that the husband of Akhtari Bai, a barrister, impressed him with the "absolute perfection in his behavior and of courtliness."[25]

Given the enormous heterogeneity of India's regional cultures, Ray's love affair with Lakhnavi tehzeeb carries another political dimension. A cultural worker like Ray is intimately and richly connected to the regional culture of Bengal, and its language, literatures, dialects, and history. Ray is not the exiled diaspora artist, he is strongly rooted in Bengal and lived all his life in the city of Calcutta. For a postcolonial artist with a strong sense of cultural rootedness, prolonged contact with another regional culture can be a productive and creative encounter. It meant that Ray's Lucknow is not a product of legend and Orientalist scholarship. In the film he re-creates a Lucknow from the vestiges of Lakhnavi culture that survived and made an impression on him as a child. The city that he remembers in the film is not one that was ruined and laid waste by British rule. The observant child in Ray noted the "polished manners" of the uncle's guests, he absorbed and soaked in the atmosphere of courtliness characteristic of the city's long-time residents. Once again music is the characteristic trope through which Ray thinks through difficult political and aesthetic issues. Ray's childhood memories of Lucknow are mainly composed of reminiscences about the living, vibrant and assimilative Lakhnavi musical tradition in his uncle's house, within

which North Indian classical music, his uncle's Tagore songs, and Western instruments like the piano and violin co-exist.

Ray subtly distinguishes his position from Premchand by the way his camera follows the servants who enter and leave the screen. Premchand's nationalist satire included servants as well as the lower classes of Awadh in charge of corruption and indolence. Ray's visual representation of the servants in the film interrupts the nationalist condemnation of the subaltern classes of nineteenth-century Awadh. Ray makes it impossible for viewers to treat the servants as part of the furniture – sometimes the servants block the camera as they enter the room. The filmic narrator draws attention to the burden on the servants of the nawabs obsessed with chess; he voices his sympathy for Maqbool who has to replenish the *hookah* (water pipe), "Poor Maqbool! How often will he have to attend to these hookahs." As the film progresses, Ray's Meer and Mirza are less and less like Premchand's Meer and Mirza. Ray maintains a subterranean vein of nationalist critique, while also gesturing to the subaltern and folkloric narratives within which the two nawabs are figures in the popular imagination.

Ray's film neither indulges in nationalist and orthodox revivalists' nostalgia for a glorious pre-British past nor does it indulge in the incipient romance of destruction of feudalism that is characteristic of nationalist texts like Premchand's story, in which the nawabs' killing each other implies that the feudal world has come to an end. Ray's distinction between Lakhnavi culture and the feudal elites of Awadh allows him the insight that far from being destroyed, feudal elite domination continues into postcolonial India; at the same time Ray gains insight into those aspects of Lakhnavi culture that are a positive blueprint for postcolonial India, namely the secular, assimilative, tolerant, and other-directed impulses in Lakhnavi culture.

Ray's portrait of Meer and Mirza's Lakhnavi courtesy in three movements of a sonata

British and nationalist writers ridiculed the Lakhnavi nawab as a lotus-eater oblivious of the rapidly changing world around him. This critique is encapsulated in Premchand's satiric motif of the chess-playing nawabs who ignore marital discord at home and political chaos abroad. In the sequence by which Ray acquaints us with the double register in which we view the chess-playing nawabs, Meer and Mirza, they represent the feudal aristocracy and they also exemplify the Lakhnavi culture which is in excess of, and cannot be reduced to, the decadent manners

of the feudal elite. Ray's estrangement from colonial and nationalist caricatures of Lakhnavi culture is nowhere plainer than in his cinematic portrait of Meer and Mirza's Lakhnavi courtesy or *tehzeeb*, its protocols of hospitality towards the guest, and its spirit of religious tolerance. Ray's Meer and Mirza are endowed with historical consciousness even while Ray shows them a beat behind the march of history.

It is in his formal experiments that Ray's critique of nationalist representations of nineteenth-century Awadh inheres. In interviews and writings Ray has stated that Western classical music is a major source for the structure of his films. Ray notes:

> Cinema is a medium which is closer to western music than to Indian music because in Indian tradition, the concept of inflexible time does not exist – There are no "compositions" – the duration is flexible and depends on the mood of the musician.
>
> But cinema is a composition bound by time. That is why I feel that my knowledge of western forms is an advantage. For one thing, the form of the sonata is a dramatic form with a development, a recapitulation and a coda. Musical forms like the symphony or the sonata have much influenced the structure of my films.[26]

Ray executes the vignette of Meer and Mirza's Lakhnavi courtesy in three movements, rather like the three movements of the sonata. Ray views the sonata in Western classical music as "a dramatic form with a development, a recapitulation and a coda." The first movement in the Nandlal sequence constitutes the development of the theme, it establishes the strength and vitality of Lakhnavi culture. In the second movement of musical recapitulation, Ray shows Lakhnavi *tehzeeb* under attack and exposes its weaknesses. The final coda recuperates the weaknesses in Lakhnavi culture as part of its strength, without erasing the flaws in that culture. Through these three movements Ray achieves the poise of the subaltern Lakhnavi tall tale, its poise between self-criticism and self-knowledge, and at the same time distances his film from the sweeping condemnations of Awadh's culture in nationalist literatures. Ray assembles a scene where Meer and Mirza are shown interrupting their chess game for a reason that has to do with the essence of Lakhnavi culture, namely the courtesy that must be extended to the guest. The cultural motif of courtesy to the guest is given a secular dimension. Ray creates the figure of Nandlal, the nawabs' guest, who is a Hindu teacher and accountant for the British Resident Mr Collins, and a friend of the nawabs. Ray's account of the

Nandlal sequence in an interview highlights the secular dimension of Lakhnavi courtesy. Ray states:

> In Shatranj one kind of change involved the introduction of new characters. Two of the most important are Munshi Nandlal and the peasant boy Kalloo. I felt it was important to introduce a Hindu character to establish the friendly relations that existed between the two religious groups in Lucknow in Wajid's time. In terms of plot, Nandlal serves the crucial function of teaching Meer and Mirza the rudiments of British chess which assume such significance at the end of the film.[27]

It was necessary for Ray to invent Nandlal to emphasize an aspect of Lakhnavi culture that is erased in colonial and nationalist accounts, namely the extraordinary intermingling and tolerance between Hindu and Muslim communities in nineteenth-century Awadh. The courtesy that the Muslim nawabs, Meer and Mirza, extend to their Hindu friend in this scene is a politically significant re-citation of history. Ray felt it was important to remind the new generation of postcolonial viewers that Lakhnavi tolerance was not a lie, a boast, an exaggeration.[28] Ray combats the communalizing of modern Uttar Pradesh in the late 1970s by disavowing colonial accounts of the religious fanaticism and distrust between Hindu and Muslim communities in the province of Awadh in the nineteenth century.

The scene opens with Meer and Mirza at prayer. This small detail chips away at Premchand's portrait of Lakhnavi immorality. As the two nawabs set up the game of chess, Munshi Nandlal's arrival is announced. Mirza displays irritation at the interruption, quickly superseded by a sense of duty. Meer and Mirza warmly welcome their guest. Their verbal exchange exemplifies the protocols of Lakhnavi courtesy which dictates that the host defer to the guest's needs and wishes in all matters, and in turn that the guest intuit the situation and not overstay his welcome.

By rewriting one key element of Awadh's history, Ray discovers a way to subtly alter the competing significations of chess as unproductive play or political escapism. A conversation ensues among Meer, Mirza, and Nandlal on the subject of chess. The naturalness and economy in the Satyajit Ray–Shama Zaidi screenplay is evident in this scene. Conversation about chess leads naturally to a discussion of the political events taking place in Awadh. The dialogue does not appear contrived; with great economy Ray examines the different configurations of work and play in

the discourse of colonial enterprise and the cultural idioms of Awadh. Nandlal functions as a link figure who moves between the Hindu, Muslim, and British parts of the town. As the tutor of the British Resident Mr Collins in the Persian language, he has learnt the British way of playing chess. Meer and Mirza are intrigued by Nandlal's disclosure that chess originated in India and travelled to Europe. Nandlal observes, "I see you are playing the Indian way." This observation serves as an alienation device to usher in the British way of playing chess and the time of British enterprise, and to define the space of Mirza's living room as a native space of play. Meer and Mirza respond to Nandlal's revelation that there is an English and an Indian way of playing chess with incredulous laughter. Mirza's comment, "Don't say the Company's taken over chess too!", exemplifies the sophisticated repartee for which Lakhnavi culture was justly famed.[29] With characteristic Lakhnavi understatement Mirza acknowledges the high achievements of his culture, while ridiculing his own ignorance of the history of chess, and represents the British appropriation of chess as a symbol of the East India Company's takeover of Awadh territories.

As Nandlal explains the differences between the British "faster game" and the native game of chess, Mirza is quick to decode the distinction as one between fast and slow. Meer joins in by observing that the British find "our transport" too slow – witness the British innovations of trains and telegraph. Ray's nineteenth-century characters display a sophisticated self-knowledge and understanding that Awadhi culture is under threat, assaulted and undermined by denigrating comparisons with British enterprise. Nandlal expresses his dislike of the telegraph: "Bad news travels faster." Nandlal's aphorism reflects a system of values within which faster communication is not necessarily an unmitigated good: it does not distinguish the good from the bad, bad news travels as fast as good news.

The second movement in the Nandlal scene is like the second move of the sonata and the countermove in chess. The three men discuss the rumour rife in the city that the Company plans to take over Awadh. The issue at stake is the historical consciousness of the Awadhi citizens. Did Meer and Mirza know what was happening in the political realm or did they bury their heads in the sand? Ray endows the three characters with different degrees of historical consciousness. Mirza explains that the British charge of misrule is a stratagem to force the King of Awadh to pay the Company's military campaigns. Ray's Mirza is astute in unmasking the Company's propaganda about anarchy in Awadh. Yet the tragedy is that Mirza is a beat behind the events taking place in Awadh. Viewers know from the prior scene between General Outram and his subordinate that

the Company's conquest of Awadh has been decided. Thus Ray's Awadhi citizens are only too aware of the Company's economic depredations, but they fail to draw the conclusion that economic exploitation leads to political domination, robbing Awadh has to culminate in annexing Awadh.

The fact that Lakhnavi citizens are unwilling to lose their political freedom is underscored by Mirza's show of bravado: he asks Meer to take down the ancient sword mounted on his wall. In a gesture of Lakhnavi vanity, Mirza asks Meer to tell the story of his great-grandfather's valour.[30] The tale of past glory explains how Meer and Mirza, as the landed elite, enjoy a life without labour. The story of the sword in the age of British bullets, guns, and cannon proves not Mirza's claim to a noble lineage but their specious attempt at proving their own valour by citing the past. Nandlal marks the place of history and sounds a requiem for the passing of an era: "Don't worry, Meer Sahib. We may have invented the game, but it's the British who have taken it up." Nandlal's words suggest that chess may have been invented in Awadhi time, but in the time of British enterprise it will forever follow the British rules.

If Ray had ended the conversation at this juncture we would have a scene that, although not written by Premchand, allows nationalism to triumph by decreeing that the Awadhi civilization outlived its usefulness. But Ray ends with an exchange that is effective, quick, and fleeting. This exchange comprises the coda, the final movement that recuperates Ray's love for Lakhnavi culture without erasing its flaws. The third movement is as follows:

Nandlal: Well, I must take my leave.
Meer: So soon?
Nandlal: I feel like an intruder. Mr. Collins wouldn't answer the door to any callers when we played.
Mirza: Then Mr. Collins should not only have studied our languages… but our manners (*tehzeeb*) too.

Mirza's words obliquely criticize British orientalist scholarship, which always dismembers the other in service of empire. In two sentences Ray has summarized the conundrum faced by the postcolonial subject in the Lakhnavi tall tale. How do we inhabit two incommensurable time frames, those of Awadhi cultural practices and of British enterprise? In the time of British enterprise play must be undertaken with the same seriousness as work; in the time of Awadhi cultural practices neither play nor work can usurp the place of other-directed courtesy. The exchange

interrogates the place of Lakhnavi culture in a world transformed by British enterprise. In the very next scene there arrive Dalhousie's orders for the annexation of Awadh.

Ray's film turns Premchand's satiric tale on its head. Premchand's two chess-mad nawabs are the subplot of the movie while centre stage is occupied by the political machinations between Lord Dalhousie in Calcutta, and Outram and Nawab Wajid Ali Shah in Lucknow. While Premchand took a subaltern idiom and proceeded to draw its characters as broad stock characters in a cautionary tale, Ray uses the subplot concerning Meer and Mirza to essay a carnivalesque exploration of the making of a Lakhnavi tall tale and the proliferation of tall tales. By not participating in the cultural guilt regarding the defeat of Awadh, Ray, the postcolonial artist and outsider to Lakhnavi culture, frees himself to concentrate instead on the process by which a Lakhnavi tall tale is made. In Ray's film, Premchand's satire about the effete nawabs becomes an exploration of colonized sexuality, marriage, and culture in relation to the politics of the era. Ray's chief strategy is to make the single tale on which Premchand's story is based to proliferate into multiple tall tales concerning the two chess-playing nawabs. After the focus on British-colonial enterprise in the prologue, the remaining tall tales in the film focus exclusively on comical narratives about indigenous enterprise in everyday life.

Influences and aesthetic-political choices that shape Ray's alliances with subaltern cultural genres

The study of postcolonial cultural production remains elitist unless we make visible the third angle in relation to which the postcolonial text inhabits its place in culture. This third angle, distinct from British-colonial and nationalist discourses, concerns the field of cultural production by subaltern classes.[31] The scrutiny of domination/subordination is incomplete without a corresponding theory of the elite/subaltern relation between postcolonial metropolitan literature and cinema on the one hand, and the oral-performative genres of subaltern classes. The overt, subterranean, or clandestine relations that the postcolonial text establishes with subaltern genres reveal how the text inhabits its privilege and/or its marginality.

Ray's relationship to subaltern genres has a good deal to do with his cultural formation, his family's cultural capital, his childhood reading and influences, his reading and research for his films as well as his interaction with creative collaborators for each film. There are several elements of

the Ray family's cultural capital that are relevant to the filmmaker's relation to the popular, the folkloric, and the subaltern traditions of Bengal. In his interviews Ray has consistently identified three sets of influences on his art.[32] The first of these influences harks back to his teenage years when, as an adolescent, Ray was more drawn to popular British fiction than to the great literary masters of British and European literatures. A second influence on Ray was his grandfather's abridged translations of the Hindu epic poems *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana* for children, and this affords us a clue. These epic poems have been radically reinterpreted by heterogeneous subaltern groups. The mainstream scriptural (*shastric*) and Hindu fundamentalist (Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh or RSS) versions differ markedly from the subaltern *Ramayanas* and alternative *Mahabharatas*. From his childhood, Ray was more familiar with Indian folklore and mythology than with canonical works of nationalist writers or the Brahmanical texts, and this may be the reason for his unfulfilled project of filming the *Mahabharata*.

One of the grids through which the elite/subaltern distinction functions in postcolonial cultural production is the upper castes' claim to cultural leadership in opposition to the traditional forms of cultural production by subaltern classes and communities. In this context, Ray's aesthetic-political positions derive from his deliberate and reasoned rejection of the elite religio-cultural texts of Brahmanical-scriptural traditions, and his appreciation of non-Brahmanical subaltern cultural forms. That is the significance of the family's Brahmo heritage. The Ray family's cultural capital consisted in large part of a cultivation of the popular in preference to the priestly. Indeed one can read in many of Ray's early films like *Pather Panchali* (1955), *Aparajito* (1956), *Apur Sansar* (1959), and *Devi* (1960) the fully conscious and thought-out rejection of the Brahmanical priestly claim to cultural production, in a manner analogous to the Joycean artist in *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916). The Apu trilogy charts the trajectory of the hero, known by his childhood name of Apu, from the liquid poetry of the pastoral in *Pather Panchali* to the proletarianization of Apu's family and the destruction of the pastoral. The change of genre from the pastoral to the first of Ray's city films, *Aparajito* marks the historic migration of the poor to urban centres. This change of genre parallels the adolescent Apu's fortunes, in the city he is in danger of becoming a servant. When he returns to the village, the pastoral mode is wrecked and Apu rejects his traditional family occupation of priest in *Aparajito* and remakes himself into the secular artist in *Apur Sansar*.

The trajectory of Ray's hero in the Apu trilogy marks his own turning away from Brahmanical cultural production in favour of secular themes

and mediums like cinema, the graphic arts, and children's literature. The distinctions between elite and subaltern cultural production in India has to do with the artist's impulse towards, or his or her rejection of, Sanskritization. By enacting his own rejection of Brahmanical Hinduism and the Brahmanical-priestly claim to cultural leadership in his films, Ray cleared the way for a new kind of cinema that, without displaying nostalgia for the organic beauty of subaltern culture, was nevertheless drawn to the creative and critical possibilities of popular cultural forms.

The third and strongest influence on Ray, by his own admission, has been the influence of popular cultural forms, an influence which began to take a more definite shape as he grew older. His passionate interest in music, painting, and sculpture made him a student of traditional art forms of India at the university of Santiniketan. As a young man in search of his vocation, Ray disliked the artifice and sentimentality of the cultural forms that were forged by the nationalist intelligentsia, like the Bengal school of art. He learnt to distinguish these forms from the traditional art forms of India. In the latter he discerned an aesthetic that contained "reverence for life, for organic growth" and that trained the sculptor and painter in such a way that "each stroke of brush, each movement of finger, of wrist, of elbow, contemplates and celebrates this growth."[33] In his twenties Ray was avid, open and lacking pre-conceptions about the traditional crafts and arts that he studied, like the miniature paintings of Rajasthan or the sculptures at Ajanta, Ellora, Elephanta, Sanchi, and Khajuraho that he and his friends studied in their tour of India for the purpose of familiarizing themselves with Indian art.

It is in this period that Ray groped for an understanding of his cultural location as an artist. Ray's personal shorthand for his cultural location is to refer to his passionate love for Western classical music, which co-existed with his lifelong interest in and love for Indian classical music, dance forms, and the plastic arts. Ray's personal shorthand has all too often been misread as evidence of his privileged access to the cultures of the West, even though he earns high praise for his fusion of Western classical music with North Indian classical music, Bengali folk songs, and Tagore's songs (*Rabindra Sangeet*). The fact is that Ray's approach to the music of his films originates in his childhood memories of watching the vibrant subaltern cultural form of Bengal, the itinerant theatrical *jatra* companies which experimented with combining Western and indigenous musical instruments, using the Indian drums (*tabla*) and harmonium alongside violins, clarinets and piccolos.[34]

From the subaltern artists in *jatra* companies Ray learnt a lesson that shaped his cinematic and literary aesthetic and informed the politics of his films. The musical experiments by *jatra* artists taught Ray that cultural autonomy and political self-confidence can come from studying a Western instrument, without institutionalized training or dogma or pre-conceptions, but rather from understanding its musical tradition and falling in love with its specific pleasures. Ray imbibed from the *jatra* artists the artistic and political aggression of redeploying these Western instruments in completely new ways and at new sites. The postcolonial artist's aesthetic judgement provides an opening for his political insight; conversely his political dilemma is clarified by his aesthetic choices. The creative processes by which Ray's aesthetic judgements, cultural knowledge, and hybrid influences come into play are rhetorically reflexive. Ray's politics is not static but work-in-progress, depending as much on his ongoing reflection on his successes and failures in each film as on the changing political events in India. The nationalist artist's solution of nativism does not suffice for him or contain him.

Comic versions of indigenous enterprise: Ray's tall tale about serial thievery, and the resourceful Begum

Unlike the nationalist artist, Satyajit Ray does not erase, supplant, or domesticate subaltern forms. In Chapter 2 I argued that Ray relates to subaltern cultural forms through the child's curiosity and play rather than work. I would now like to elaborate that argument further. The nationalist artist approaches the Lakhnavi tall tale through the question, what is the historical consciousness and political understanding displayed in this naive and premodern genre? Conversely Ray approaches the Lakhnavi tall tale in *The Chess Players* with the question, what makes it work? What are its inner springs and sources of laughter and creativity? In effect, Ray interrogates the conditions under which the Lakhnavi tall tale is composed and comes into being. Through this process Ray arrives at a certain knowledge and intimacy with the genre, and crafts his own set of Lakhnavi tall tales which do not supersede the subaltern genre but maintain their distinctive autonomy while paying tribute to the ur-text of the Lakhnavi tall tale.

The second tall tale in the film is about indigenous enterprise and serial thievery and is a pure invention of Ray and "sends up" the work/play binary of colonial enterprise. Ray constructs the tall tale with five interlocking tropes of robbery, female resourcefulness, death, inventiveness in play, and banishment of the entrepreneurial players. In the film

Meer arrives at Mirza's house one morning ready to play chess. He finds Mirza angry: there has been a robbery and the thieves have made away with the chess pieces. The film viewer sees the joke; a robbery where the only theft is that of the chess-set is no robbery at all but the setting into play of a strategy by Khurshid, Mirza's resourceful Begum (wife) who does not wish her husband to play. Ray inveigles our assent to watching the Lakhnavi players as they use their wits to reinvent the chess pieces. Meer confesses that he does not possess a chess-set and suggests that they buy one. Mirza replies that it is Friday (the Islamic day of rest) and the shops are closed. Mirza hits upon a plan. They will ask their lawyer for the loan of his chess-set. Mirza's photographic memory of the south-east corner of the lawyer's living room helps him in recalling the chess-set displayed there. Meer intuitively grasps the direction of Mirza's thought. At this point it is clear that a tall tale is about to unfold concerning the quickness of intellect Meer and Mirza display about matters concerning chess. The implication is that Awadh's talents for innovation, inventiveness, and adaptability have been displaced from the spheres of work to the realm of play. Ray's tall tale delineates this process of displacement, this flight from place to place as a tragi-comic journey in which the players are continually blocked and each time display their enterprise in solving the problem.

Meer and Mirza visit the old lawyer's house, only to learn that he is in a coma. They are momentarily discomfited but agree to wait. As they wait, they unobtrusively begin to play with the chess-set displayed in the room. They are then invited to the lawyer's bedroom, but as Meer and Mirza leave the room they hear the sound of wailing, so they quickly perform a prayer for the dead and leave the house. In Ray's tall tale the death is that of an old man who dies in the fullness of time. There is a subtle suggestion in this scene that the lawyer has cheated Meer and Mirza of money all along, and even in death cheats them of the pleasure of chess, thus the lawyer has the last laugh. This part of Ray's tall tale suggests a callousness and obsession that we have trouble recognizing in ourselves.

The viewer sees Meer and Mirza as idlers and wastrels or as enterprising gentlemen. The cheated and disappointed players ponder their problem in a public park. Ray juxtaposes the players against a ram fight in order to underscore the contrast between the obsession of gamblers at the ram fight and the obsession with a cerebral game like chess.[35] Ray does not allow his viewers to forget that under the East India Company's economic and military stranglehold over Awadh, indigenous enterprise is in flight from the realm of politics. A drummer proclaims the King's

order that the Company forces are marching through Lucknow to Nepal and rumourmongers suggesting that the Company plans to annex Awadh will be punished. Meer asks in a puzzled tone, "Mirza Sahib why do people spread rumors?" and adds that he will do violence to any person who mentions the takeover of Awadh. The political crisis facing Awadh is not Meer and Mirza's concern, they are wholly caught up with the crisis of not having the chess-set in order to play their game.

Meer's next comment is shocking. He says, "What a glorious day, yet we have to spend it in idleness." Meer defines their inability to play chess as "idleness." With this reversal chess becomes the realm of work, and the public-political events of Awadh become the realm of idleness. Mirza's response to Meer's reversal is unexpected. He says, "Meer Sahib, for every problem there is a solution. One must know where to seek it." Mirza's words could serve as an aphorism for English enterprise, but they are spoken by the losing side.

In the next scene we see Mirza set up a chess game with nuts, spices, and vegetables to signify the different chess pieces. When we see the chosen site of Mirza's enterprise, chess, and the tools of his ingenuity and inventiveness – nuts, spices, and vegetables – we feel comfortable once again in our laughter.[36] The tall tale ends as all tall tales about Meer and Mirza must, by arousing our resentment against their inveterate obsession with the game of chess and the displacement of native enterprise. In the *zenana* (women's quarters) Khurshid hears through Maqbool that her strategy has been checkmated, her theft of the chess-set has proved futile because her husband has raided her kitchen to find replacements for the chess pieces. The Lakhnavi tall tale ends with the final victory accorded to the female player. Khurshid is near tears but recovers her anger, marches to the doorway of the living room, and flings the chess pieces so that they rain on the two astonished men. The discomfited men decide thereafter to play chess at Meer's house. Ray's tale ends with the banishment of chess from Mirza's home. The motif of banishment lends a certain poignancy to the tall tale, it is no longer possible to play in the freedom of one's own home.

Awadhi sexuality and aphanisis of desire in colonialism

Male impotence is a highly charged trope in colonialism.[37] British colonial writings on nineteenth-century Awadh deploy the trope of emasculated maleness to denote misrule. Nationalist writers rework the Awadhi male's lack of virility to signify political passivity. Ray's film on Awadh does not directly challenge these colonial and nationalist interpretations. Nor

does Ray take on the burden of disproving that the Awadhi was, literally and metaphorically, impotent. Instead Ray examines the social, psychological and political conditions under which tales about male impotence circulate by word of mouth and are embellished in each retelling.

Ray's interest in the making of the tall tale is evident in the ways he skews the motif of impotence in Premchand's story. In keeping with the nationalist warning that lack of patriotism leads to loss of power in the private sphere of the home, Premchand portrays Mirza as the henpecked husband and Khurshid as the shrew. In the bedroom scene between Khurshid and Mirza, Ray redoes Premchand's stock characters. *The Chess Players* remakes the impotent man into a courteous, affectionate but inadequate husband, and alters Premchand's shrewish Khurshid into a lonely and discontented wife.

Ray's Lakhnavi tall tale about male impotence opens on Meer and Mirza playing chess. They are at a crucial point in their game, Mirza has found the way to outwit Meer's unexpected move. Meanwhile in the bedroom Khurshid waits for Mirza to finish his game, while on the soundtrack a wistful thumri sets up Khurshid's loneliness and sexual longing. She badgers Mirza into visiting her bedroom on the pretext of a headache. A distracted Mirza cannot make love despite Khurshid's efforts. Khurshid looks hurt and releases Mirza; he makes a sincere apology to his wife as he buttons his *angarkha* (shirt). Mirza acknowledges his failure and inadequacy; "My mind was elsewhere, with Meer waiting and the game half-finished." The sound of horses passing in the night outside creates a montage, reminding viewers of the earlier scene of the horseback rider leaving Delhi with the Governor-General's orders for the annexation of Awadh. The public political game outside has entered the private bedroom of Khurshid.[38]

Ray brings to the screen many of the elements of the Urdu sexual farce: the impotent husband and dissatisfied wife; the sexual connotations of the wife's headache; and the eavesdropping maid and friend. Ray's *The Chess Players* manages to take the smirk and leer out of the sexual farce. Unlike nationalist writings Ray removes the shame-inducing invective from the trope of sexual dysfunction. Instead he shows how colonization seeps into and poisons the colonized people's most intimate relationships, their sources of renewal, tenderness, and feeling.[39] Ray changes the signification of male impotence into a cinematic portrait of the aphanisis of desire in colonialism.

In Ray's Awadh, women are the storytellers, they orally transmit tall tales about Awadhi sexuality and add to them in the telling. We learn that Khurshid's maidservant Hiria is a storyteller. Her duties include

telling stories to her mistress.[40] When Khurshid complains that in sleepless nights she listens to the same three stories told by Hiria, we learn that Lakhnavi storytelling helps to assuage the loneliness of the unfulfilled wife. Hiria collects stories through gossip and eavesdropping, we see her sitting outside the bedroom door hearing the sounds of Mirza and Khurshid's lovemaking and smiling to herself knowingly. Hiria is a minor character who represents the subaltern raconteurs and transmitters of the high noon of a civilization, Awadh which will soon be a thing of the past, preserved in popular memory.

In this film, every character makes chess-like moves and sets strategies in motion, but Khurshid's strategy does not work because she refuses to acknowledge the death of desire. Khurshid reproaches Mirza for not loving her and neglecting her, and Mirza tries to appease her by replying, "How can you say that? I left the game because you called." Khurshid is unmollified and calls chess a "stupid game." Mirza tries to conciliate her by saying that ever since he began to play chess his "power of thinking has grown a hundredfold." Ray plays with the popular understanding of chess as developing intellectual powers. Through this exchange between husband and wife, Ray both recalls and sets into further play the work/play dichotomy, this time producing the equation that if the desire to finish the game of chess is play then to make love is work.[41] Khurshid's words imply this proposition when she says to Mirza, "You only care for that game…You love that game more than you love me." By implying that marital sex is work, Khurshid draws attention to the disappearance of desire in colonialism while indicating her disavowal of it.[42]

With Mirza gone, Meer cheats and moves a chess piece to a more favourable position. In this Lakhnavi tall tale Mirza becomes the subject of psychoanalysis when he occupies the place of the subject who does not know. Mirza's unknowingness recalls Wajid, who is described in the prologue by the narrator as the unknowing subject (he does not know what is going on in General Outram's head). There is also the semiotics of the folk narrative of the carnival within which Mirza occupies the place of the scapegoat, for he is cheated both of sexual pleasure and of his legitimate victory in chess.[43] When Mirza comes back, Meer pretends concern for Khurshid's headache and capitalizes on Mirza's discomfiture to checkmate him. The fact that Mirza cheats his wife of sexual pleasure is offset by Meer's cheating him at chess. The film plot has become a carnivalesque chess game. Mirza's coming to terms with the painful knowledge of his impotence will be followed by the subsequent tall tale in which it is Meer's turn to inhabit the scapegoat function.

Aphanisis part II

Premchand's Meer is a coward and cuckold, a man who has lost all sources of self-respect in the private and public sphere and a parable for the apolitical and unpatriotic Awadhi. Premchand's Nafeesa is an unfaithful wife and schemer who tires of her husband's presence in the house. She conspires with the servants of the house and her cavalryman lover, who impersonates a royal official with orders that Meer present himself in court, frightening Meer into flight from his home and even his home city of Lucknow. Premchand's representation of Awadhi sexuality in the story falls into the Hindu communalist stereotype that the nawabs of Awadh were impotent, all Muslim wives were faithless or sexually discontented, all Muslim men visited nautch girls, and the Muslim zenana is a place of female confinement and immorality.

Ray does not dispute the cuckoldry, but he is intrigued by the psycho-social conditions under which adultery and cuckoldry express the psychological deformity and inner wound in a demoralized populace. His changes in the Premchand tale of the Awadhi cuckold are so subtle that they almost escape notice. For one thing, Ray alters the beat of the narrative. Earlier Lakhnavi tales in the film have a slow pace, but the narrative of Meer's cuckoldry hurtles to its conclusion. In Ray's crafting of the tale about the cuckold and the schemer, aphanisis is the condition of colonization and the erasure of a culture by a more "vigorous but malevolent culture."[44] Thus the Lakhnavi tall tale about the cuckold builds on Ray's thesis concerning the sexuality and psychology of the colonized.

Meer's cowardice is disclosed visually.[45] In the midst of a conversation in which Meer is paranoid with fear, Mirza looks at Meer, who is standing framed against the display of ancestral weaponry, and bursts into laughter. Meer inquires, "Why are you looking at me like that? What are you laughing at?", and Mirza, laughing helplessly, replies, "I'm laughing at my friend, descendant of Burhan-ul-Mulk's brave cavalry officer." The disclosure of Meer's cuckoldry is a much more prolonged sequence in the film, involving some of the finest dialogue Ray has written. The superb comic timing of the actors Farida Jalal, Saeed Jaffrey, and Faroukh Sheikh conveyed Ray's tableau of the unfaithful wife, the deceived husband, and the wife's lover.

Meer sends word to his wife of their plans to play chess at home, and Meer and Mirza set up the chessgame. On the subject of marital felicity Meer declares, "No problem here" which signifies his denial of his lack of desire. Meer is expansive on the subject of his wife. First he says,

"I don't wish to boast" and then proceeds to boast "I'm the luckiest man in the world" for having "so sweet and reasonable a wife." Mirza is the incredulous audience for Meer's self-representation as the much loved husband, Mirza chokes back his laughter and exclaims, "That is luck indeed!". Meer waxes eloquent on how his wife takes an interest in his chess-playing, insists on his leaving early to play chess and at night rubs almond balm on his forehead. Ray intercuts shots between Meer's boasts to Mirza in the living room, and the bedroom where Nafeesa and her lover Aqil sit on the bed and laugh and talk. Through editing, Ray shifts Meer into the position of the dupe, as the one who does not want to know but will be forced to confront his dismal marriage. Ray's interpretation of the Awadhi cuckold is that he is a man who covers over the death of his desire by over-investing the place of lack with even greater desire.

Ray establishes the diversity of ways that Awadhi men and women come to terms with their lack of desire. Within this economy of desire, Meer's wife, Nafeesa, is the most skillful and successful author of Lakhnavi tall tales. We first learn about Nafeesa through Khurshid, who says, "He sits there and doesn't know what game his wife is playing at home." Khurshid's reference to Nafeesa's "game" is significant. Khurshid's strategy fails in securing her husband's attention, she is a failed author of indigenous feminine enterprise because she refuses to accept the deforming of sexuality as a result of the conditions of coloniality. In marked contrast Nafeesa is a consummate player because her games are predicated on a clear-eyed knowledge and acceptance of her failed marriage.

Ray's Nafeesa is first seen in her bedroom humming to herself in happy anticipation of her lover's visit. When she hears the voice of her husband, she is put out, she improvises before our eyes and her improvisations pass into Awadh's legends. Outside a young man walks through a narrow lane and enters a house through the backdoor. The young man, Aqil, enters Nafeesa's bedroom, she grabs him and anxiously warns him that Meer is at home playing chess with his friend, adding "he's never played here before. I'm so worried." When Nafeesa worries that some confrontation may take place, Aqil consoles her, "Don't worry, a man with his eyes on the chess board is lost to the world." Ray likens playing chess to *ibadat* or act of worship when one is lost to the world. The phrase "lost to the world" also implies that the cuckold is self-deluded, unable to see the obvious. Nafeesa's face clears, she says: "That's just what he always says." Aqil is the co-author and co-conspirator who teaches Nafeesa to build her strategy on the ideas cherished by the dupe.

Ray crafts the climactic scene of the tall tale like a chess game. All three players display overconfidence; Meer cheats, boasts and displays

overconfidence in his wife's virtues; and Meer's overconfidence is counterbalanced by Nafeesa and Aqil's assurance in Meer's unawareness of his surroundings. The stage is set for the crowning of the scapegoat as king of the carnival before the sacrifice. Meer's scapegoat function is evident in the scene that follows in the bedroom. Nafeesa and Aqil hear Meer's voice. It is too late for Aqil to leave. He rolls off the bed to the ground and does not manage to hide himself under the bed. Meer walks in, Aqil is frozen in fear. It is at this point that Nafeesa's inventiveness comes to the fore; she is the trickster and artist whose resolution of the cliched situation of adultery is inflected with political and historical particularity. The exchange between the scapegoat, the trickster, and her accomplice is worth quoting in detail:

Nafeesa: Sh-sh. (*She pushes Aqil down with her hand*.)
Don't come out. It's not safe yet.
Meer: (*Finding his voice at last*.) What is going on?
Nafeesa: He's hiding.
Meer: That I can see. But why?
Nafeesa: They're after him.
Meer: Who? What have you done, Aqil? Was there a fight?
(*Meer spots Aqil's cane hanging over the door and feels even more disconcerted. But Nafeesa has run out of invention. Meer turns to Aqil on the floor*.) Say something! What happened?
Aqil: N-nothing.
(*Aqil, too is desperately trying to make up a story that will fit the situation*.)
Meer: Who's after——?
Nafeesa: Sh-sh.
Meer: (*Lowering voice*) Who's after him?
(*Aqil has found his story at last. He gets unsteadily to his feet*.)
Aqil: The army. The army is after me.

The reason that Nafeesa's improvisation is remembered and retold is that she manipulates the public-political events – the fear seizing the city and rumours circulating about forced conscription by the Awadh ruler and other rumours about British aggression – into the plausible reason for the implausible situation of the lover hiding under the bed. Whereas Khurshid fails to prevent the political events from entering her bedroom, Nafeesa is the cynical profiteer for whom the downfall of Awadh is only grist to her schemes. Ray's script refers to her "invention" and resourcefulness, underlining the fact that the Lakhnavi tall tales are

about indigenous enterprise. Emboldened by Nafeesa's feminine enterprise, Aqil starts to embroider the story that officers came to his house but he escaped through the back door. Nafeesa adds that she heard the sound of the officers' horses go by just before Aqil's arrival. It is at this point that the improvised script requires ratification by Meer. He is the dupe who must consent to the deception practised on him. Ray's Meer is exquisitely poised between disbelief and willingness to be deluded. He asks, "But why hide under the bed? You can't be seen from the street." Aqil has no answer, Nafeesa plugs the loopholes in her story by sheer brazenness, she takes Meer's hand and places it on Aqil's chest and says, "He lost his head, he's like a child. Feel how his heart is racing." Meer assures Aqil that he is perfectly safe, advises Nafeesa to give Aqil some hot milk and leaves. Nafeesa and Aqil are relieved, they laugh and hug each other.

Ray takes a stock situation from Urdu sexual farce, the lover under the bed, and remakes it to draw out the native inventiveness that goes into the making of a Lakhnavi tall tale.[46] The genre of the Urdu sexual farce is in essence a joke about the culture from the inside. Ray's version takes apart the tall tale elements of fear, desperate hurry, exquisite bungling, ingenuity, and brazenness that go into the making of a tall tale. By taking the tall tale apart and reassembling it, Ray shows that the cuckold is not a generic, transhistorical figure of ridicule. Ray's Meer is the straight man who sets up the joke in this tall tale, yet at the same time it is important for Ray to investigate why Meer endorses his own swindle by Nafeesa and Aqil. Ray suggests that Meer finds an explanation for the death of his desire in Nafeesa and Aqil's explanation.[47]

The film implicitly contrasts the marriages of the two nawabs. Mirza and Khurshid's marriage is in the process of disintegration, but it is still alive in Khurshid's accusations and anger and in Mirza's attempts to placate her. There is honesty and equality between Khurshid and Mirza, Khurshid makes Mirza confront his neglect of her. She freely expresses her displeasure at her husband in the presence of his friend, and it is her display of anger that intimidates Mirza into deciding to abandon the comfortable routine of chess-playing at home. Meer's marriage has gone beyond this point. Nafeesa is no longer angry at Meer's obsession with chess nor the death of his desire. She supports the death of his desire by displacing her own desire and seeking solace elsewhere. In fact Ray's Nafeesa actively encourages her husband's displaced obsession with chess. Meer is satisfied with this arrangement, he brags about the ministrations of his "sweet and reasonable" wife. Ray's point is that Meer displays all the psycho-sexual effects of colonization. In the bedroom scene he is a full

participant in his own deception. He nudges Nafeesa and Aqil towards a creditable explanation that he will then present to Mirza. Subsequently he persuades Mirza to run away from the city without acknowledging the reasons why he does not feel "safe" at home. His world of delusion requires the active participation and collusion of all three, Nafeesa, Aqil, and Mirza.

Throughout the latter half of the film, the Awadhi characters make continual reference to rumours that are rife in the city, which indicate that Awadh's political life has been pushed underground into subterranean channels.[48] An agitated Meer informs Mirza that people are being rounded up to fight for the King. Mirza remarks, "Meer Sahib you can be arrested for spreading such rumors." Meer denies it is a rumour and explains that his nephew Aqil saw it with his own eyes. Ray provides the answer to Meer's question in the park, "Mirza Sahib why do people spread rumors?" by suggesting that rumours are a subaltern genre. Rumours are the means by which the common people make sense of their situation, rumours serve the psychological needs of people who find themselves in an undefined and threatening situation.

Meer: How can I play when I know we're not safe here?
Mirza: Should we go back to my house?
Meer: Out of the question.
(*The sound of horse's hooves is heard. Meer turns pale.*)
Meer: It's them. For God's sake don't go out on the balcony!
Mirza: They don't seem to be looking for anybody. I tell you, there's nothing to worry about.
Meer: We'll run away from here.

In this dialogue and through the film's soundtrack, Ray reinforces the sense of panic and threat. It is the third time we hear the sound of horses outside Meer's living room, each time the sound magnifies the sense of threat and paves the way for the banishment of Meer and Mirza from the city. Our laughter at Meer and Mirza has obscured from us the fact that slowly Meer and Mirza have been stripped of everything, their status, security, identity, the comforts of wife, home and servants, friends, and city. They have been stripped bare of everything except their desire to play chess.

The exile of indigenous enterprise in British-occupied Awadh, and the politics of friendship in exile

Premchand concludes his tale with an unsparing comment on the consequences of anti-nationalist pursuits. He describes the escapist

extremes to which the chess players go. In order to escape the political turmoil in the city of Lucknow, Premchand's chess players shift their game of chess to a ruined mosque outside the city. Premchand writes: "From that day on, the two friends would leave the house in the darkness before sunrise...They would go across the River Gomti and set up camp in an old ruined mosque" and "On reaching the mosque, they would lay down the carpet and the chessboard, fill the chillum, light it, and start to play."

Premchand sets the final scene "in an old ruined mosque" to underline the fact that his comic protagonists are irreligious, chess is their God. In Premchand's story they quarrel over chess and kill each other. The end of his tale has a Gothic gloom that betokens the destruction of feudalism which is necessary, in Premchand's view, for nationalist anti-colonial agitation and the birth of the nation: "Silence reigned all around. The falling walls of the ruin, its crumbling arches and dust-laden minarets peered down at the corpses and grieved at the frailty of human life compared to stone or brick."[49]

Contrarily, Ray invests the chess players' departure to the countryside with the historical poignance of the exile of indigenous enterprise. In the film chess as the signifier of indigenous enterprise is driven from place to place, culminating in the chess players leaving the city to find refuge in the countryside. The migration of Awadhi enterprise after the dismantling of Wajid Ali Shah's court is presaged in Meer and Mirza's exile. The importance Ray gives to this part of the story can be gauged from the fact that it is the only location shot of Lucknow in the entire film. The shot of the *Bara Imambara* is a condensed reference to Awadhi architecture which had achieved a high level of excellence although much of the city's architecture was razed to the ground by the British during the rebellion of 1857.[50] Ray's aural image for indigenous innovation is the classical *raag Bhairon*, which is rumoured to have been innovated by Wajid Ali Shah. On the soundtrack we hear the *raag Bhairon* on the indigenous reed instrument called *shehnai*.[51] Thus Ray creates a marvellous visual-aural image of the eclipse of indigenous enterprise. In the early morning light, framed against the famous Lucknow skyline of the *Bara Imambara* mosque, Meer and Mirza make their way out of the city in search of quiet and safety.

In *The Chess Players* Ray asks, "where do people go when they are exiled and have lost their desire?" The traditional refuge in religion does not work for the nawabs, the old mosque does not exist except in Meer's childhood memories, and for once the deeply religious Meer and Mirza are unable to hear the call of God. In the film the exiled friends

seek refuge in a place of plenitude, a dreamspace, an ideal pastoral that exists only in the imagination. Meer describes the mosque, "A quiet place with not a soul around. The quietest, safest place imaginable." Yet the two friends soon find out that this place of undisturbed play does not exist:

Mirza: Well Meer Sahib, where is your mosque?
Meer: I can see it clearly in my mind's eye. Even the tamarind tree right next to it.
Mirza: Perhaps the British troops have razed it to the ground?
Meer: God forbid! God forbid! . . .
Mirza: Well Meer Sahib? Perhaps you saw the mosque in a dream? Well?
Meer: I'm terribly sorry Mirza Sahib. That mosque was in Cawnpore (Kanpur). I saw it as a child . . .
Mirza: Do you want to go back now?
Meer: Not at all.
Mirza: Then you'll stay and play?
Meer: Certainly.[52]

Step by step the film unfolds Ray's proposition about migration and dispossession. Exile begins with the search for a false idyll. Even after Meer has been discredited for describing a place that exists in his childhood in Cawnpore, he fastens his delusions on the new site for playing chess, Kalloo's village. He crows with pleasure, "What an ideal spot this is. No officers to harass us . . . and the British can come and go for all we care." Meer and Mirza are in dreamspace within which all time, present, past, and future, has become one.[53] Ray has a few laughs at the expense of the two city-bred *jagirdars* or landlords, Mirza slaps at the mosquitoes and says irritably, "These mosquitoes are draining my blood." The film director, who is most famous for his lyrical pastoral film *Pather Panchali*, is determined to execute the anti-pastoral in his portrayal of the Awadhi countryside. I shall return to this point in discussing the character of the little village boy, Kalloo, who carries forward the political and historical dimensions of Ray's anti-pastoral in *The Chess Players*. For the moment I would like to track the way in which Ray's anti-pastoral provides the setting for his cinematic statement about the politics of friendship in exile.

For Ray the exiled Meer and Mirza must re-examine and relocate the essential constituents of their culture in the new and inhospitable conditions of exile. Exile strips them of their masks, they have to confront

their displaced desire in their obsession with winning the game of chess. Mirza wants to win, Meer does not want to lose. Mirza and Meer have eaten together and played chess from morning to night, but they are ready to stake their friendship in order to win. Mirza has hosted Meer, borne his cheating and boasting with dignity and restraint, yet he renounces all claims to Lakhnavi courtesy and friendship, and he purposely makes a disclosure that will shame and humiliate Meer simply because he is unable to bear the fact that he is losing. Meer has long enjoyed Mirza's hospitality and companionship and witnessed Mirza's most embarrassing moments, yet he is ready to cast aspersions at Mirza's lineage and to treat Mirza's disclosure as an unethical, mean-spirited "dirty trick" designed to make him lose at chess. In the seven scenes that we see Meer and Mirza playing chess on screen, we never see Mirza win a single game, while Meer wins twice. The imperative to win is so great for Meer that he is willing to cheat, his cheating is symptomatic of his self-deception. Ray shows that when chess is robbed of its history and place in the culture and its complication, chess becomes the site of displaced desire.

In the last scene of the film it is early afternoon. Meer and Mirza are playing chess. As Mirza loses, his irritation grows. Mirza has his eyes on the chess pieces as he makes reference to Meer's being cuckolded. The two friends quarrel, and their quarrel escalates dangerously into violence. Ray's screenplay captures the sense of a friendship that is about to be torn asunder:

Mirza: You must have slept well, thanks to the balm your wife rubs on your brow.
Meer: That's true every night.
Mirza: I wonder where Aqil places himself while your wife does her massage? Under the bed, I suppose.
Meer: What do you imply?
Mirza: Your move.
Meer: It's a dirty trick to put me off my game, just because you're losing.
Mirza: Who's losing? I've moved, now it's your turn.
Meer: You've beaten me so often, and I've never lost my temper.
Mirza: Your move, Meer Sahib.
Meer: One doesn't expect it from a gentleman.
Mirza: Does a gentleman let his wife carry on with any man that comes her way?
Meer: You've no right to talk like that ... When I'm really angry, I can kill.

In the final scene of the film, Meer is still in the position of the scapegoat. By winning at chess, he is refusing the death of his desire. Through his words Mirza rips the masquerade that supports Meer's desire. At first Meer responds with pain and anger. Mirza's repetition of the phrase "your move" indicates his refusal to participate in his friend's self-deception.

Mirza mounts a spirited defence by asking Meer, "Do you think I could ever be so mean?" and makes a counter-allegation, "It's you who cheated in the past, but I never said a word." Meer's pistol goes off at this precise moment. Meer's bullet does not draw blood, it only grazes Mirza's shawl. Will Meer and Mirza's friendship, like the shame friendship between Awadh and the East India Company, be rent asunder or will it survive? And if it survives, on what terms? The firing of the pistol functions in the film like the marker of the end of an era. In part it signifies that Meer's masquerades have come to an end, with Mirza's admission that he has known all along about Meer's cheating at chess. Most importantly the pistol goes off to mark the coming of the British.

In the wake of the high psychological drama of the afternoon there is the sound of the *azaan* (Mullah calling from the mosque to the faithful to pray) and Mirza's eating of food. Ray affirms the everydayness of life in the aftermath of the quarrel. Mirza affectionately invites Meer to come and eat because the food is getting cold. The tonality of this scene is of reconciliation. Meer's reply indicates that he is racked by shame and self-contempt, he says, "Even the crows despise me. The British take over Oudh, while we hide in a village and fight over petty things." In the time after all masquerades, Meer admits that he is an escapist and coward. We realize that Meer is in flight from political and domestic realities that are unbearable. Ray breaks decisively from nationalist discourse by representing Meer and Mirza as historical subjects with political consciousness. Mirza responds, "We couldn't have done much even if we'd stayed in town." Ray is suspicious about large and brave gestures of resistance. In Mirza's acknowledgement of their powerlessness, Ray displays his skepticism regarding the idealization of armed resistance.

Ray focuses on the small, ordinary moments of resistance. In response to Mirza's query Meer admits that after the stripping of all his masks, his only worry is that he may have lost his friend. Throughout the film we have come to know Meer as a man who is so angry at the death of his desire that he will move from masquerade to masquerade and coerce everyone around him into supporting his desire, in order to hide it from himself. After all masquerades Meer admits that he is worried "About who to play chess with?" signifying the guise of his desire for true friendship.

Ray suggests that it is this kind of friendship – the honesty and acceptance of the friend even in the moment of humiliation – that has the capacity to become a transformative political power in the lives of the exiled, rather than extravagant gestures of armed resistance.

The protocols of this politically transformative friendship require reciprocity; Meer and Mirza ask and give this friendship. Moved by Meer's worry that he may be friendless, Mirza replies: "Here is one person, Meer Sahib. And there is some food; we can eat and play at the same time. When it's dark, we can go home. We need darkness to hide our faces." Meer nods. In exile, Meer and Mirza have faced their truth. Along with Meer and Mirza, Lakhnavi culture is exiled from the territory of Awadh, but will survive inside closed doors of houses, in tea shops and street-corner paan shops, in the tongues of poets, musicians, dancers, tongawallahs, rickshawallahs, and street vendors. Its expatriate community will be all those from the Indian subcontinent who count themselves as the admirers and practitioners of Lakhnavi *tehzeeb*. Wherever and whenever like-minded people gather and reside, there is a space for Lakhnavi courtesy. The idiom of Lakhnavi courtesy is distilled in the practices of friendship, and Lakhnavi courtesy is a language of friendship.[54]

In the globalizing impulse of capital, Lakhnavi friendship may survive only in the subaltern humour of a Lakhnavi tall tale. Nevertheless, Lakhnavi courtesy in the conditions of colonialism marks the alterity of the other by keeping alive the ideals of other-directed, self-abnegating friendship. For Derrida, friendship implies the death of the other.[55] For Ray the politics of friendship lies in asserting, practising and renewing a non-coercive and non-consumable connectedness to the other despite the unequal relations of colonialism. This non-coercive non-consumable friendship can serve as the basis of an eco-feminist consciousness and practice in spite of the unequal conditions of global capitalism in the postcolonial present.

In British India, indigenous enterprise is replaced by the indigenization of colonial enterprise. Mirza tells Meer, "Come, let's have a fast game . . . Fast like a railway train." The Indian railway system, which is the central trope in the Lakhnavi tall tale, represents the indigenization of European innovations through the labourers who laid down the railway tracks and built the engines, the engineers and engine drivers and others who learnt the technology, the administrative machinery that managed and maintained it as well as the petty trades that mushroomed around the trains and stations. At the beginning of the film Nandlal had warned Meer, "We may have invented the game, but it's the British who have taken it up." At the end of the film Mirza picks up a chess

piece and adds, "Move over, Minister. Make way for Queen Victoria!" The camera freezes on the queen in Mirza's hand. The shot dissolves into a long view of the two friends playing chess in the gathering gloom of the evening. Ray's film suggests that chess will no longer be played in the Indian way. The inventors and originators of chess as well as passionate enthusiasts like Meer and Mirza will perforce play by British time which privileges speed over enjoyment and efficiency over courtesy. Awadhi time has passed into history, the arts and crafts and innovations by indigenous artists will be judged by British standards and played by the British rules. As Ray reminds us wryly, members of the indigenous elite like Meer and Mirza will continue their dominance by adapting to the rules of colonial capitalism.[56]

The filmic vehicle for Ray's critique of the indigenous elite like Meer and Mirza is the character that viewers meet in the last few minutes of the film, the village boy Kalloo. At the most fundamental level he encapsulates the cinematic trope that I have discussed at length in Chapter 2. He stands looking at the chess players in curiosity. Kalloo displays the fearlessness and the ability to investigate the unknown that is only possible in a child. Kalloo's village is deserted, rumours about the impending political turmoil have reached the villages and caused panic and migration. On Mirza's asking Kalloo why he stayed behind, Kalloo explains that he wants to see the British who will be coming down the road today: he likes their red coats. Kalloo is the paradigmatic Ray child; one of his functions within Ray's examination of the eclipse of indigenous enterprise in British colonialism is to keep before the film viewer the inventiveness, curiosity, and imaginativeness of the child; this is important for Ray because in his view the child's untrammelled imagination is the foundation for the adult artist's creativity in the sciences and arts.

Another key function of the character of Kalloo in *The Chess Players* is to bring the subaltern classes to the forefront. Unlike Maqbool and Hiria he does not enter the screen as a domestic servant, but he temporarily becomes the servant of the nawabs. He offers his home and services to the two noblemen in return for *bakseesh* (tip). Kalloo suggests they play at his house because it has been vacated by his family. As a representative of the rural peasantry, Kalloo disrupts the mirroring between colonial enterprise and indigenous enterprise. He represents the third axis consisting of the subaltern classes who are oppressed by the indigenous elite and the colonial capitalists, and from this viewpoint indigenous enterprise and colonial capitalism appear as mirrors of each other.

Imperceptibly the perspective of the last scene shifts towards Kalloo. The boy watches the two strangers take their out pistols and asks, "Are you going to fight the British, Sahib?" From his viewpoint the elite were duty-bound to resist and they reneged on their duties when they offered no resistance. Kalloo's perspective on the pre-annexation period is articulated in his observation to Mirza after watching the long column of the British army marching in the horizon. As the sounds of the marching army fade, Kalloo runs up to Mirza with the food and says: "Our King has given up, Sahib. The British have become our rulers. There was no fighting, Sahib. No guns went off." While Ray may not believe in the heroism of individual acts of armed resistance, Ray marks Kalloo's expectation and disappointment that not a single gun went off. As Ray writes in his magazine article, "Nawabi did not end with the takeover."[57] It is to underscore the fact that the elite continued their way of life that Ray's Awadhi narrator enters the soundtrack and mockingly echoes Kalloo's sentiments: "You're right, Kalloo. No fighting, no bloodshed." In *Shatranj ke Khilari* Kalloo signifies the future. He is the witness and the chronicler of the eclipse of the Awadh civilization. Kalloo is not only excluded from elite privilege of the two nawabs, but his viewpoint is that of someone who stands outside. He does not see Meer's shot at Mirza as having any significance because he does not share in the self-examination, self-criticism, and self-mockery of Awadhi culture. Ray's final judicious proposition about indigenous enterprise is that if nawabi of feudal mores did not end with the advent of British rule, then it is also true that the oppression of Kalloo's class did not end.

5
Refuting the Expanded Cultural Critique: The Construction of Wajid Ali Shah's Alterity

Like the Bengali landlord in *Jalsaghar*, Wajid Ali Shah, the last Nawab of Awadh, is an overinscribed figure in colonialist and nationalist historiography. He is the referent of all Lakhnavi tall tales. In mainstream postcolonial films, folk tales, and popular memory he is cited for the high achievement in Awadhi culture.[1] At the same time the figure of Wajid Ali Shah appears in these cultural texts as a figure of contradiction, teetering between perfection and ludicrousness.[2] He is acknowledged as the patron of indigenous arts and crafts, a ruler in whose reign these knowledges and innovations achieved unparalleled excellence. Simultaneously he is held responsible for causing the defeat of the Muslim dynastic nawabs of Awadh in his hedonistic pursuit of pleasure. Thus the Manichean perception of Wajid in the popular imagination contains elements of the colonialist as well as nationalist critique.

The insistence with which the Wajid figure reappears in the margins of mainstream cultural production suggests that in the popular imaginary he is more than, other than, the colonialist/nationalist formulations about him. In popular memory Wajid Ali Shah is a figure in excess. This excess is a consequence of Wajid's status as an artist himself and the local legends in circulation concerning his artistic accomplishments, a fact that is completely glossed over by colonialist as well as nationalist accounts.[3] It is when his artistic accomplishments are foregrounded that the ambivalent figure of Wajid exceeds the boundaries of ridiculousness as well as villainy. He becomes a tragic figure in whom postcolonial cultural producers recognize themselves with sneaking sympathy and identification. Thus Wajid, the figure of fun and calumny, becomes the artistic ancestor of cultural producers and artists.[4]

When Ray was researching and writing his script for *The Chess Players* based on Premchand's short story, he created the character of Wajid. The Wajid he constructed did not exist in Premchand's story, there is only a passing reference to the King. Nor is Ray's Wajid a faithful reconstruction of history. Historical documents about Wajid at best repeat the colonialist nationalist judgment about him. Ray's Wajid is his own creation. The film *Shatranj ke Khilari* (1977) has been received and interpreted as a film about Wajid Ali Shah, but at the same time it has been condemned for its portrayal of the last Nawab of Awadh. The historian Rajbans Khanna's is a typical reaction, although he perhaps expressed it more strongly than most. He writes:

> The film shows Ray's unfortunate failure to understand either the atmosphere of the period dealt with or the character of the pivotal figure in the tragic drama that unfolded in 1856 – the character of Wajid Ali.

Khanna indicts Ray for his "British-inspired view" of Wajid as an "effete and effeminate" character, a characterization that is marked by what he considers to be Ray's lack of courage "to restore this much-maligned character to authenticity."[5] Fourteen years later in 1992 (after Ray's death in the same year), Amaresh Misra writes that *Shatranj ke Khilari* lacks focus because it is inscribed by Ray's "humanist predilection" which led him to search for "'redeeming'" features in Wajid and also by his "desire to comment on a larger political historical event."[6] Another Indian film critic Khalid Mohamed caricatured Wajid's fourteen-minute speech scene "we watch him belt out singsong soliloquies."[7] Indian film distributors refused to screen the film, calling it a film made for foreigners while most film critics abroad considered *Shatranj ke Khilari* to be "not one of Ray's best films."[8]

The debate about the historical accuracy of Ray's representation of Wajid is mired in the colonialist nationalist binaries of cowardly versus manly. It ignores Ray's intellectual, artistic, and critical investment in the figure of Wajid and his substantive thesis about Wajid. I intervene in this debate by suggesting that Ray's Wajid continues to invoke such powerful reactions from postcolonial commentators and critics because in Ray's portrait of Wajid we come face to face with our own subject position as postcolonial subjects.[9] Specifically I attempt to delineate the viewing process by which the gendered Westernized educated and alienated postcolonial subject is produced. I diagram this process as a triangulation between the historical/fictional figure of Wajid, Ray's Wajid, and Ray

himself in order to argue that this triangulation of the gendered postcolonial spectator in *Shatranj ke Khilari* allows an examination of questions regarding the status of cultural resistance and cultural leadership in colonialism, the questions of defeat/failure, alterity, and pacifism.

Authoring Third World political cinema: Ray's Wajid as intercessor

I read the Wajid figure in *Shatranj ke Khilari* as Ray's meditation on postcolonial subject constitution. To embark on this reading, I begin with an engagement with Gilles Deleuze's discussion of Third World political cinema in *Cinema 2: The Time-Image* (1989). Referring to First World cinema, Deleuze contends that one of the big differences between classical and modern cinema is that in classical cinema "the people are there" but in modern political cinema "*the people are missing*." For Deleuze modern cinema is distinguished from classical cinema by the fact that it is the cinema made after the Second World War. He argues that the idea of cinema as the art of the masses in classical cinema, like Soviet and American cinema before and during the Second World War, made the masses a true subject of "the supreme revolutionary or democratic art" of cinema. But with the rise of Hitler in Germany, Stalinism in the former Soviet Union, and the disillusionment in America about the melting pot, the object of cinema became "not the masses become subject but the masses subjected." Therefore Deleuze concludes that in modern First World political cinema "the people no longer exist, or not yet."[10]

Deleuze points out that although the fact that the people are missing may have remained undiscovered in the West by most cinema authors, it "was absolutely clear in the third world." Although Deleuze's referents for this part of his discussion does not include Indian cinema but Brazilian, African, Arab, and Black American cinema, it is instructive for the purposes of my argument about postcolonial subject-constitution to follow his theses about Third World political cinema.[11] Deleuze argues that the Third World was well aware of the absence of the people because in the Third World the conditions of colonization put the people "in a state of perpetual minorities, in a collective identity crisis." For Deleuze the acknowledgement that people are missing is not a repudiation of political cinema; instead this acknowledgement becomes the new basis of Third World political cinema and cinema of the minorities. The objective of all art, particularly cinematography, is to take part in the invention of a people, not in addressing a people who are presumed to be already there. Deleuze writes:

> The moment the master, or the colonizer, proclaims "There have never been people here", the missing people are a becoming, they invent themselves, in shanty towns and camps, or in ghettos, in new conditions of struggle to which a necessarily political art must contribute.[12]

Deleuze makes an argument for Third World cinema as a political art, by noting that when the new foundation of political cinema is the fact that people are missing, it is in the process of addressing this phenomenon that political cinema brings people into being.

For the purposes of my own project in this chapter, Deleuze's key statement concerns the moment of becoming for the missing people. He describes this moment of becoming precisely: it is the moment when the colonizer announces that there have never been people here that, according to Deleuze, the missing people come into being. I suggest that Deleuze overlooks the function of nationalism when he suggests that it is the colonizers' words alone that depopulate the landscape. For example, Awadh was doubly erased from the national culture of the postcolonial state because the depopulation of Awadh by the colonialists was reinforced by nationalist historiography.[13]

Ray as the author of Third World political cinema is face to face with the doubly erased culture and people of Awadh. According to Deleuze's theory, Ray faces two philosophical choices for breaking with the condition of colonization and creating collective utterance. One route, Deleuze notes, requires the author to go over to the side of the colonizer "even if only aesthetically, through artistic influences." The other route requires the cinema author to address a people who are "doubly colonized" from the cultural point of view: to address the fact that their stories have come from elsewhere and their mythology is at the service of the colonizer. In order to counteract this, the cinema author cannot become the ethnographer of his people, or even become a writer of fiction; the ethnography and the fiction would function as one more private story because "every personal fiction, like every impersonal myth, is on the side of the 'masters.' " According to Deleuze the way out of this conundrum is for the author of Third World political cinema to seek and find "intercessors." Deleuze describes the process thus:

> There remains the possibility of the author providing himself with "intercessors," that is, of taking real and not fictional characters, but putting these very characters in the condition of "making up fiction," of "making legends," of "story-telling." The author takes a step towards his

> characters, but the characters take a step towards the author: double becoming. Story-telling is not an impersonal myth, but neither is it a personal fiction: it is a word in act, a speech-act through which the character continually crosses the boundary which would separate his private business from politics, and which *itself produces collective utterance*.[14]

I suggest that Ray makes Wajid an intercessor of his collective utterance. Ray's Wajid starts as a "real not fictional" historical figure. Ray puts his Wajid in the condition of "making up fiction" by situating him within the truncated political events of the week before the annexation of Awadh. In cinematically representing a historical character who is absent from Premchand's literary text, Ray's Wajid is engaged in the process of "double becoming." Deleuze contends that when story-telling becomes a "speech act" it "produces collective utterance": this is manifested in the ways in which the gendered postcolonial viewer is interpellated into Ray's historical/fictional representation of Wajid in *Shatranj ke Khilari*, in order to return the viewer to an examination of her own subject-formation.

Ray's Wajid as time-image

In this section of the chapter, I engage with yet another aspect of Deleuze's cinematic theory: how Ray creates a time-image of Wajid Ali Shah in *Shatranj ke Khilari*. The term "time-image" is employed by Deleuze in the process of examining First World post-war modern cinema. Key innovations in film aesthetics are a response to the material changes caused by major historical events. Deleuze explains the connection between the Second World War and the time-image:

> The fact is that, in Europe, the post-war period has greatly increased the situations which we no longer know how to react to, in spaces which we no longer know how to describe…Situations could be extremes, or, on the contrary, those of everyday banality, or both at once: what tends to collapse, or at least to lose its position, is the sensory-motor schema which constituted the action-image of the old cinema. And thanks to this loosening of the sensory-motor linkage, it is time, "a little time in the pure state", which rises up to the surface of the screen. Time ceases to be derived from movement, it appears in itself.[15]

Deleuze suggests that modern cinema of the First World is distinguished by the fact that in post-war conditions, the situations and spaces we

encounter exceed our sensory-motor schema, we cannot react to them. Time is no longer a function of movement. The loosening of the sensory-motor linkage replaces the cinema of action with the cinema of seeing. No longer connected to action and movement, cinematic time becomes an exploration of a thought outside itself and the unthought within thought. This means that when First World modern cinema is no longer driven by the action–reaction schema, it is driven by the same possibility that drives Third World political cinema, the "developments, forkings and mutations . . . of a becoming."[16] Ray's Wajid belongs to this cinema of seeing and becoming. The time-image of Ray's Wajid in *Shatranj ke Khilari* is neither flashback nor recollection, not even the empirical succession of time: past, present, and future. Ray's time-image of Wajid makes visible what is concealed from recollection.

I use Deleuze's insights about the time-image with two caveats. The first caveat is that Deleuze's demarcation of classical and modern cinema is a distinction that is meaningless in the case of third cinema.[17] I do not subscribe to his linear history of cinema from movement-image to time-image; this linear chronology is not useful or even true for postcolonial cinema. Postcolonial films emerge from a fractured history of colonization and borrow from pre- and post-war film techniques. These borrowings constitute a pastiche wherein movement-image co-exists with time-image in the aesthetics of pastiche.[18] The second caveat is that Ray's time-image of Wajid is a speech-act. Quoting Serge Daney's comment about African cinema Deleuze writes:

> Daney observed that African cinema (but this applies to the whole third world) is not, as the West would like, a cinema which dances, but a cinema which talks, a cinema of the speech-act. It is in this way that it avoids fiction and ethnology.[19]

I examine Ray's creation of Wajid's time-image in terms of its discursivity; that is, I interrogate the discursive effect of Ray's Wajid on the postcolonial gendered spectator.

The first full-length scene involving Wajid in Ray's film represents him as a spectator at a kathak dance recital, and the scene problematizes the activity of spectatorship. This is a scene of reaction, which records Wajid's response to the news that Awadh is to be annexed and he will be dethroned. Therefore the scene is organized to show the effect of the Company's wounding blow on Wajid. Ray maps the difference in responses to the news of the impending annexation. Wajid's Prime Minister Ali Naqi responds with remonstrances, consternation, and tears. For a considerable

amount of screen time Ray makes the viewer watch the unknowing Wajid's reaction to the dance. He displaces narrative action, defers gratification, and prolongs time in this scene. In an earlier scene Nandlal critiques the time of enterprise and the coming of the telegraph as, "Bad news travels faster." Through this scene of Wajid's spectatorship Ray displaces us from the time of enterprise into the mode and manners of the historically irrecoverable Awadh before the annexation.

The sense that Awadhi time is changing is reinforced through a detour into the lives of Meer and Mirza where another kind of theft (the theft of Mirza's chess pieces) echoes the theft of Wajid's crown. These multiple thefts suggest that disorder and despair reign, deepening our sense that the Awadh civilization is changing irrevocably. Although they do not know it, Meer and Mirza's stolen game of chess in the dying lawyer's house will mark their everyday, fracturing it irreparably from the inside. From this moment on there is no going back to a comfortable routine of playing chess till all hours for Meer and Mirza. They are destined to roam the city and its outskirts rootlessly till the end of the film.

The seven-minute dance sequence cuts into the shot of Meer and Mirza hastily retreating, in consternation, from the house in mourning. A midshot of a singer and his accompaniments pulls back to show a dancer beginning her kathak dance. An extended sequence of dance depicting a *gopi* (milkmaid) and Krishna in *ras leela*, in play, is intercut with a shot of Wajid.[20] The camera tracks Wajid up from the floor where he sits, leaning against a pillow, his hands caressing a cat in his lap, to his face where we see his eyes which do not follow the dancer, but are turned inward.[21] The camera moves back to the dancer for a long half minute. In the second minute of the dance, the camera reveals a close-up of the grave and grieving Ali at the door, looking down at Wajid, waiting to deliver the news. The camera follows Ali's line of view, tracking down to a shot of an unaware, unsuspecting Wajid in profile, immersed in dance, and in the background there is the dancer. From the moment of Ali's appearance, as viewers we are switched into the sado-masochistic mode: we experience a combination of excitement and dread. We both dread the inflicting of the wound, and wish to see how Wajid will take this blow. We are impatient to see, for this is a cinema where the activity of seeing is laden with signification, in contrast to the films that celebrate enterprise because their primary orientation is action, crisis, and resolution. Ray closes up on the dancer's gesture behind Wajid's back and cuts to an introspective Wajid, still unaware, lost in dance.

Ray is in the process of creating a "time-image." By refusing to deliver up Wajid's pain for our consumption, Ray places us in the interiority of

time. "Time," Deleuze explains, "is not the interior in us, but just the opposite, the interiority in which we are, in which we move, live and change."[22] Ray does not short-circuit the real time of the waiting, or abbreviate the dance or edit out the courtesy of waiting till the end of the dance. Ray lets time flow at its own pace, thus he makes the dance scene an image which is "present and past, still present and already past, at once and at the same time."[23] We are no longer the historical, knowing, postcolonial, fully formed subject in control. Instead we are in the process of being constituted. When Ray staggers the received and executed wound to Wajid, first by deviation into Meer and Mirza and then with this seven-minute dance sequence, he is cultivating and layering our experience of this gap between action and reaction and deferring the construction of the viewer's subjectivity.

When we next see Ali, we are over two minutes into the dance. Our impatience as viewers has risen to a fever pitch – something must happen, this useless dance must stop! Viewers are situated alongside Ali as he looks distractedly up at the dancer and then again down at Wajid. We wish he would do something, or we could do something to stop the proceedings at once. We are outraged, this is no time for dance and music! Yes! An angry voice inside us asserts, the British were right! It is this debauchery, decadence, and degeneration that has brought things to such a pass. The postcolonial, historically knowing viewer unwittingly finds herself aligned against fellow natives who are deemed indolent, alongside a certain cherry-eating English gentleman. Ray emphasizes the gap between Ali Naqi's entrance as messenger and Wajid's receiving the message, and we must fill the gap with our feelings of impatience, expectation, and anger. These feelings occupy the gap without filling, covering, or erasing the gap. At this point we ask ourselves, what scene or action can Ray conjure up to fill this gap, this waiting, this impatience? The answer lies in Ray's turning us back to ourselves in the next few moments of the dance sequence.

Rendered powerless to act in any way, in exquisite pain, Ray's viewers are forced to watch, alongside Ali, the dance for the next minute and a half. As we watch, we begin to experience a slow shift. Our impatience abates. We notice what it is that engages Wajid's attention and obsesses him. For the first time we are struck by the impossible perfection of the dancer's face and gestures. The teasing, pleading dance between Krishna and the *gopi* exerts its seductive influence. Halfway through the dance recital the third intercut shot of Ali appears, but at this point we are absorbed in the dancer and her dance. During the fourth and fifth shot of Ali we have moved out of the subject-position of the messenger Ali

and moved into the subject-position of the spectator, Wajid. By the time of the fifth shot of Ali, we are captivated, barely registering at the periphery of our camera vision that he has come to sit by Wajid. We watch the dance first from behind Wajid and Ali, then alongside and then move even closer.

Without recognition or memory of what it is to be either Wajid or Ali Naqi, we feel a sense of déjà vu, we have been in the place of Wajid and Ali at some other time. The moment is familiar like a fantasy or a dream. Deleuze tells us that it is not recollection and recognition that gives us the optical-sound time-image; instead, it is the inability to recollect and recognize. According to Deleuze, "the disturbances of memory and the failures of recognition" inform us that we are in the presence of an actual image.[24] Suspended in our dreams and images of the past, we are poised between Ali's present grief as he takes a last sidelong, anxious look at Wajid, and Wajid's grief to come. Thus in the dance sequence we virtually experience the time-image and subjectivity of Wajid.[25] The ephemeral beauty and allure of the dancer and the dance conveys a higher truth, more lasting, more real, and meaningful than the political shenanigans of the moment. Deleuze describes the subjectivity engendered by the time-image, "it is no longer motor or material, but temporal and spiritual: that which 'is added' to matter, not what distends it; recollection-image, not movement-image."[26] As viewers we are knowingly deluded. By forcing us to watch the dance, by slowing down filmic time, Ray enables the viewer to move out of and sublate the limitations of passive spectatorship. The viewer becomes a participant through the slow unfolding of the dance, and to the extent that he or she receives the dance in a meditative state of absorption.

The seven-minute dance sequence ends in a crescendo. The dancer slowly takes leave of Wajid along with the courtiers. The hour of reckoning has arrived. An ornate clock chimes the hour in the British sequence of notes bringing to an end the raga that accompanied the dance. The dance and music of Awadhi time is over. We are switched back to British time. Just when we think there are no more surprises, Ray inveigles us once again with a scene that encapsulates the substance of our experience. Viewers are reminded of the earlier scene of Weston's recitation of Wajid's couplet, in which the poetry recitation opens up an alternate, interior space in Outram's study. The camera cuts to a midshot of Wajid looking sideways at a tearful Ali, his face covered by his hands.

Wajid: The Resident Sahib must have sung a gazal to you.
(*Ali is still overcome*)

Wajid: Come now, Mudda-ud-Daula, tell me what he said. Nothing but poetry and music should bring tears to a man's eyes.
(*Ali attempts to control himself, looks up at Wajid*)
Ali: Your Majesty's head will be deprived of the crown.

Ray constitutes his own historical interpretation, his own Wajid in this fictionalized scene. Ray's Wajid cannot or will not react. Wajid's vision is not a prelude to action, it occupies and takes the place of action. Deleuze names this the "cinema of the seer and no longer of the agent."[27] Deleuze explains that cinema of the time-image neither extends into action, nor is induced by action. Therefore Deleuze calls this cinema a cinema not "of recognition [*reconnaissance*], but of knowledge [*connaissance*]." According to Deleuze, in the cinema of the seer the character or the viewer, as well as the two together, "become visionaries." The distinction between the cinema of the seer and the cinema of the agent is that the purely optical and sound situation of the time-image "gives rise to a seeing function, at once fantasy and report, criticism and compassion," while the sensory-motor situations of the cinema of the agent, no matter how violent, "are directed to a pragmatic visual function which 'tolerates' or 'puts up with' practically anything from the moment it becomes involved in a system of actions and reactions."[28]

What kind of resistance is possible in the cinema of the seer? Nyce calls Ray's cinematic approach in the dance scene in *Shatranj ke Khilari* a "documentary approach."[29] I argue that in the dance sequence Ray constructs a time-image of Wajid's cultural resistance. Ray makes us co-present with the event by calling upon the internalized shame and anger concerning Awadh felt by the postcolonial subject. He deflects and delays our gratification in witnessing Wajid receive the news of his misfortune. Ray's camera replaces this gratification by bringing into sharp focus the aural-visual cultural feast of the dance at the periphery of our vision. When Wajid invests poetry and music with the power of tears, he robs Ali and us of the last vestiges of our revelatory and wounding power. Through Wajid's words Ray allows us to have an epiphany, to experience our historical location, temporality, and spirituality. The next section explores the modes of cultural resistance under conditions of domination.

Wajid's rhetoric: The feminization of the colonized

In *Shatranj ke Khilari* Wajid's fourteen-minute speech scene is a long time in appearing on the screen. For this sequence Ray abandons the

aphoristic style of the dance sequence and goes back to the montage technique of the prologue. Unlike the conventional visual montage in the prologue of the film, in Wajid's speech scene Ray experiments with an aural montage, a montage of voices.[30] In Wajid's speech Ray evokes the memory of other voices and other times. It almost appears as if Wajid speaks in other tongues. All these other voices intersect with Wajid's speech, the mood is deepened and our understanding complicated. Ray achieves complexity of analysis by layering our insight into Wajid's speech. The prologue is one reference point for this sequence. Ray's voice montage employs the depth of field technique to critique the postcolonial viewer's initial reception of the images presented in the prologue.[31] In the prologue Ray presents the colonialist–nationalist critique of Wajid as the debauched, frivolous, and unworthy king absorbed in useless play. Ray uses speech montage to examine what lies beyond Outram's stringent, precise, and all-encompassing condemnation of Wajid to Weston.

The scene where Ray gives speech to Wajid opens onto an empty throne. Viewers are reminded of the earlier shots of Wajid's throne in the prologue of the film and hear the amused voice of the narrator saying, "But the King had other interests too." We hear Wajid's voice as the shot widens and the camera pulls back from the throne:

Wajid: Sarkar Bahadur (Honorable Government) how can we refuse to agree to your command? In the last hundred years which king of Awadh has had the temerity to say no to you?

The camera pans to the courtiers standing in a line, to Wajid himself in profile, his face turned away from the camera. Trained by nationalist discourse, we expect anger and accusations. Instead we witness self-abasement, the extravagant admission of Wajid's political impotence.[32] As a rhetorical strategy Wajid's exaggerated subservience sets the stage for Ray's meditation on the non-Western rhetoric of resistance. The rhetorical technique of exaggeration towards "Sarkar Bahadur" with which Wajid, the King, addresses the absent Outram resists British construction of Wajid as a free and willing participant. Excessive deference illuminates Wajid's actual political subordination vis-à-vis the real rulers of Awadh, the East India Company. Similarly, the posing of rhetorical questions suggests that Wajid apprehends that the annexation of Awadh by the British is, as Outram later puts it, "fait accompli," and therefore any resistance we might wish Wajid to show against the British, the real rulers of Awadh, is futile.

Wajid invokes the name of his ancestor, Shuja-ud-Daula, and tells the story of British "gentility" and "magnanimity" in sparing Shuja-ud-Daula's throne for money and land. After the film's prologue critiques the Company's repeated violations of British–Awadh friendship treaties, Wajid's reference to Shuja-ud-Daula underscores the rapaciousness of the empire builders.[33] Wajid's voice conveys the exaggerated gratitude of the humbled. In his speech Wajid performs abject humility:

Wajid: You even forgave unworthy kings! What does it matter that in return you took money and a little bit of land in compensation? I too am unworthy. I too will have to pay the cost of my unworthiness.

The courtiers cry out for mercy. As viewers we feel we should turn our eyes away from Wajid's self-flagellation. However, in the next moment Wajid's excess becomes a self-reflexive moment. He turns towards the camera and speaks:

Wajid: I know what I am saying. This letter is a mirror in which I see my truth reflected. Perhaps never before, but today I am in full possession of all my senses. I was never meant to be a king. I know I am unworthy. And I also know that you all have deceived me.

Wajid is neither unaware nor unable to face the harshest British critique. He admits to the harshest truth about himself unflinchingly. As a rhetorical strategy Wajid's excessive humility is neither a pose nor an exquisite courtesy. It is the rhetorical strategy of the feminised, the unequal, the powerless whereby Wajid finds the opportunity to resist and overturn a moment of overinscription and silence. By inflicting pain on himself in excess of the boundaries of shame and humiliation imposed by colonialist rhetoric, Wajid shifts the power relations and accrues to himself the power of self-description. His self-description releases his anger towards his courtiers.

Wajid's anger is slow in coming and occurs late in the scene. In the original screenplay of *Shatranj ke Khilari*, Ray opened the speech scene with Wajid accusing and blaming his courtiers. However, in the film, Ray's Wajid becomes angry after a lengthy admission of self-blame, the effect of this re-situating of Wajid's anger at his ministers is to contextualize it as part of the process of Wajid's self-reflection. Wajid says:

Wajid: You have deceived me. All of you. I loved you more than my own kin. I put my trust in you. I gave you all powers. What have you done except line your own pockets? Nothing. Sleeman Sahib had warned me against you. I paid no heed to him. Now I know he was right. And he was right about you too, Prime Minister... Why did you not throw this paper in the Resident's face?[34]

Wajid's anger, after his excessive humility and acknowledgement of worthlessness, is neither searing nor alienating. There is an intimacy in Wajid's words and tone so that even as he accuses his ministers of betrayal and self-interest, the accusation seems to arise from the bonds of love, trust, and regard between Wajid and his courtiers. This closeness and regard is particularly evident when Wajid asks Ali Naqi why he did not anticipate and express Wajid's own indignation and throw the Company's offer in Outram's face.

Rajbans Khanna accuses Ray of committing the "blunder" of historical inaccuracy in suggesting that Wajid left the affairs of the state in the hands of the ministers. According to Khanna, Ray ignored documents which refer to Wajid's personal supervision of the training and disciplining of his army. Khanna's charge is that Ray "puts into Wajid Ali's mouth the words – words mind you, which Premchand has not used." However, the historian prefers Ray's interpretation to Premchand's nationalistic interpretation, "To Satyajit Ray's credit it must be said that he did attempt to get away from the erroneous impression of the period under which Premchand laboured." Khanna astutely recognizes that Premchand's story "slavishly imitated the picture which official British propaganda had handed down to posterity" but he is unreflective in judging Ray's version of Wajid as "effete and effeminate," lacking "courageous(ness)."[35]

Ashish Nandy on the other hand argues that the very same dialogue of Wajid, where he upbraids his ministers, shows that "The criteria by which he [Wajid] judges his officers are no different from the criteria by which he himself is judged by Outram and Ray."[36] Nandy takes this to mean that "there are two Satyajit Rays," one who indicts Wajid for "not living up to his own declared values of masculine statecraft," and the other Ray who reveals Wajid in "full confidence in his own way of life and kingly identity."[37] I suggest that we do not need two Rays in order to understand that there were repeated attempts by the British to create consensus and hegemony amongst the populace of Awadh concerning Wajid's misrule and maladministration.[38] Generations of postcolonial Indians, including nationalist historians, assent to "the picture of a king sunk in unrestrained licentiousness and of a people groaning under unmitigated

tyranny."[39] Ray's Wajid is co-present with this discursive struggle. In the moment of anger, Ray's Wajid speaks the British critique and reveals that he struggles with it. I argue that the scene dramatizes a discursive struggle. The twists and turns of Wajid's speech reveal how he struggles to come to an understanding of his historical moment and himself.

Wajid's brief anger spent, he walks up to the throne and runs his fingers lovingly over its jewelled surface, reminding the viewer of the narrator's story about Wajid's love for his crown. Ray uses Wajid's gesture to underline Wajid's failure as king. Wajid alludes to the fact that he was never in the direct line of succession to the throne of Awadh, that he inherited the throne as a result of British co-optation of his grandfather Nasir-ud-Daula who after a bloody battle was crowned king in place of the heir-apparent. Wajid says, "It is all my fault. I should never have sat on the throne. But I was young, and I loved the crown, the robe, the jewels…I loved the pomp and the glitter." In Wajid's words and gestures, we glimpse the naive and hopeful youth who believed he could turn the tide of time and rewrite the doomed history of Awadh. As he recounts his efforts to act like "a true King" by reforming the army and holding daily parades, Wajid's prefatory phrase, "For a time at least" attests to the brevity of that particular delusion.

For a moment Wajid is lost in reverie. Then he describes the systematic stripping of the Awadh kingdom by the East India Company:

> But the Resident Sahib would have none of it!…He said, "Why bother with an army? Our British forces are guarding your border. You yourself are paying for them. So why bother?" "Very well, Richmond Sahib. Your word is law. I shall not bother." But what will I do? I ask you. If a King stops bothering about his realm, what is left for him to do?

These questions resound in the hushed silence around the key figure in the scene. Wajid does not expect an answer. In his questions we hear the echo of another rhetorical question that Outram asked of Weston in a prior scene, "And what kind of king do you think all this makes him, Weston?" Wajid's questions problematizes Outram's query, and foregrounds the history of the Awadh rulers' gradual disempowerment. Wajid's agonized, "what will I do?" subverts the colonialist/nationalist view of Wajid as "a bad king. A frivolous, effeminate, irresponsible, worthless king." This is not the tale of a king lost in licentiousness, but of a kingdom robbed by history and of a king in name only.

There is pride in Wajid's voice as he says, "I found the answer. Richmond Sahib never told me. No one told me. I found it myself." We are unaware

that we are being led to an extraordinarily bold moment of rhetorical and filmic reversal which records an alternative statecraft and cultural resistance. We are still in the grip of Wajid's tormented questions when Ray sets up Wajid's discovery of the answer with an oblique gesture of vanity. Wajid turns to Ali Naqi and asks an apparently irrelevant and unrelated question:

Wajid: Do you remember that song of mine?
Ali Naqi: Which one, your Majesty?
Wajid: Tarap tarap sagari raen gujari . . . Kaun desa gayo, sanwariya!
Ali Naqi: I remember, Sire.
Wajid: Do you know when I composed it, and where?
(*Wajid points to the throne.*)
Wajid: It was here – on this very throne – that too in full court. The moment is a picture before my very eyes. A man with hands tied stood in front of me while his petition was being read out.

Wajid walks past the camera. The camera stays on the vacant throne. On the soundtrack a voice reads out the complaint. Wajid's answer is shocking. In one fell swoop, Wajid's answer robs the scene of all appearance of justice and fair play. It is as if Wajid had deliberately destroyed our faith in the humanity of man towards man, cheating us of our most cherished beliefs about justice and integrity. We are the poor unsuspecting petitioner in the awesome presence of the ruler, presenting a complaint to the highest court of justice, in expectation of justice from an oblivious king. Ray intensifies the experience of injustice, he deliberately frames Wajid's flashback in the colonialist indictment crafted and popularized by Sleeman in his report, "The present sovereign never hears a complaint, or reads a petition, or report of any kind. He is entirely taken up in the pursuit of his personal gratifications."[40]

Wajid's narrative of how he discovered an answer to his predicament as king echoes Mirza's words, "Meer Sahib, for every problem there is a solution. One must know where to seek it." The chess players' solution is to play chess with an assortment of nuts, spices, and vegetables as their chess pieces. Like Wajid's answer, Mirza's solution is unapologetic and oppositional. But Mirza's comical solution makes us pity Meer and Mirza for their desperation. We are comfortably distanced.

Wajid is neither a claimant for our pity or our anger. He violates the time and call for justice. He abdicates his role as the adjudicator and in doing so voids the rule of law, the rights and obligations that govern the reciprocity of relations between the ruler and the ruled, the norms

that decree Wajid's very right to rule. Furthermore Wajid's answer is a transgression against the conception of statecraft that we, as western-educated postcolonial subjects, have internalized.[41] Consequently it is the very reproduction of ourselves as postcolonial subjects that is at stake in our rejection of Wajid. Wajid's answer is unassimilable in either economies – colonialist as well as nationalist – so Wajid is completely othered.

The camera cuts from the vacant throne to Wajid in full regalia sitting on the throne, facing camera. Bowed back, the petitioner faces Wajid. Wajid's voice on the soundtrack reminisces in wonderment: "And suddenly a very extraordinary thing happens. His voice fades and instead..." Wajid pauses in mid-sentence. The camera closes up on Wajid's distracted face. The song in the background comes to the fore, "Time passes in torment...Which country has my beloved gone?" Wajid's eyes flit from side to side in the throes of poetic composition, he closes his eyes and moves his head imperceptibly in appreciation, "Bewitched eyes fill with tears...My veil is tormented." He opens his eyes and looks into the distance. As the song continues, the camera focuses on Wajid, his eyes closed, singing, "When your horses went past my door...I lost my bearings, enchanted. Time passes in torment...Which country has my beloved gone?" The camera circles around Wajid revealing the ministers lined up behind him, and as he finishes, the ministers exclaim their appreciation.

As postcolonial viewers we are most disaffected from Wajid when we come upon him in the act of creation. Ray's interpretation of Wajid can be gauged by Robinson's anecdotal account of Ray's feelings for Wajid's character as he prepared for the film. Robinson describes it thus:

> Very early on in his extensive research for *The Chess Players*...Ray ran into his own antipathy for the King, which was mixed with admiration. At several points he felt like giving up altogether and wrote to say so...On one occasion Shama (Ray's Urdu collaborator) had written to Ray offering to translate Wajid Ali's autobiography for him, in which the King describes his sex life from the age of eight. "Manikda said – don't tell me all this because then I'll dislike him even more,"...Satyajit says now: I think there were two aspects to Wajid Ali Shah's character, one which you could admire and one which you couldn't. At one point I wrote to Shama that I just could not feel any sympathy for this stupid character...But then finally, after long months of study,...I saw the King as an artist, a composer.[42]

Ray's "early" antipathy and later "dislike" of Wajid and his sexual excesses reveal the fierce and discordant feelings aroused by Wajid. In order to deal with his conflict, Ray had to take the unusual step of splitting the Wajid character into "two": the "stupid" Wajid for whom he felt active dislike; the artist-composer that he could admire. Ray's introduction of Wajid the poet-king is placed precisely at the moment when we are most on guard and most distanced from Wajid in our dislike of him. It is in this way that our viewing experience mirrors Ray's own ambivalence about Wajid.

Robinson's account illuminates Ray's directorial strategy. Ray the filmmaker and craftsman outstrips Ray the man. Throughout the unexpected twists and turns of Wajid's rhetorical argument, Ray strategically cultivates our surprise and unfamiliarity with Wajid. In the moment of Wajid's disavowal of justice and law, like the culmination of an Indian classical raag, Ray brings our alienation to a crescendo. It is from this vantage point of difference that Ray allows us into the miraculous moment of Wajid's creation, defamiliarizing Wajid, the composer, and Wajid, the King of the people. As a result we confront our own colonization, our internalization of repression. In encountering Wajid's alterity from the other side of the breach, we cannot domesticate or negate its difference and inassimilability. This Brechtian alienation makes us recognize that our dislike of and aversion to Wajid is our own estrangement from the transformative power of indigenous cultural production.

The fact of the matter is that Wajid's answer re-enacts the surrender of juridical and political power to the East India Company. Wajid exposes the folly in the expectation of justice from a king stripped of all his powers, a king who is himself in the position of the petitioner, a puppet ruler who is being compelled to go through the motions of dispensing justice. The open durbar, Bishop Heber reports in 1828, was a practice that was not native to Awadh. It was a populist practice imposed by the British Resident Ricketts on the puppet King Nawab Ghaziuddin, ostensibly to dispense direct and swift justice. In reality it was devised as an instrument to foster the impression of Nawabi misrule amongst the Awadh populace.[43] Through Wajid's enactment of juridical misconduct in the royal court, statecraft is revealed to be a farcical performance by a puppet king with dummy courtiers.

The awe in Wajid's voice as he speaks of the "very extraordinary thing" that happened to him creates a sense of mystery about the moment and the man. The opening refrain of the song is muted in the monotonous cadence of the clerk's voice in the flashback. Ray executes a close-up of Wajid's inward-turned face. Wajid is elsewhere. Wajid's poetic composition,

in the dialect of the people, constitutes a profound response to the historical moment. In his verse Wajid takes on the disempowered feminized voice to speak about the impossible position he is placed in. In the poetic persona, Wajid inhabits the longing of a desirous woman whose yearning is destined to remain unfulfilled. The simple song recalls the Gopi-Krishna play of the dance sequence; however, this time the longing for the beloved signifies the love for country and political freedom. The repetitive refrain of the song, "Time passes in torment... Which country has my beloved gone?", invokes the experience of exile, Wajid's longing for the freedom to dispense his *insaaf*, his justice, but his inability to do so. Wajid switches the code through his composition: instead of worrying and working through his political problem, he meditates on love, and the impossibility of possessing love. Thus Wajid moves away from the farcical darbar where the political arena is masterminded by the British colonialist. For the postcolonial viewer, Wajid's rhetoric of anti-colonial resistance is most elusive and haunting precisely because he reduces or distills politics to love. The cinema of the seer, Deleuze tells us, outstrips our sensory-motor capacities and makes us grasp "something intolerable and unbearable... too powerful, or too unjust, but sometimes also too beautiful."[44] In the manner of the sufi poets, Wajid contextualizes the worldly durbar with the godly durbar, the court of love.[45] As puppet king and woman, Wajid addresses God. In doing so he becomes the petitioner, the *faryaadi*.[46] Unbridled, unmerciful, tormenting time hurls to the forefront.

Unlike the Outram–Weston scene where Wajid's composition interrupts the master discourse and asserts alterity, in the speech scene Wajid's song transmutes self-abnegation into the accession of self for the colonized. This is evident after the song, as Wajid repeats the phrase, "I was never meant to rule," each time Wajid emphasizes his inadequacy and culpability. The phrase is repeated three times in the speech, and each time it is ever so slightly differently phrased. After the flashback Wajid inflects the phrase to signify his acknowledgement that he is the people's poet-King whose songs are sung by his own people. Wajid's cultural production and leadership are unintelligible in the colonialist discourse of enterprise and work/play dichotomies.

For the first time Ray shows Wajid fully inhabiting his difference and claiming his place in history. Wajid's place in history is defined less by his failure to lead his people to armed combat, and more by his compositions which articulate the impossible conditions of colonialism, and record his resistance to colonial discourses by animating an alternative vision of statesmanship. Wajid challenges the Company's claim to be

the saviour of the common people of Awadh. He disputes the British version of reality. Wajid asks: "If my people are badly ruled, why have they not fled to a realm you own? Why do they not cross the frontier and ask you to save them from my misrule?" Wajid contends that the people of Awadh are neither oppressed nor in panic, they are strong and brave. He asks, "Is it not strange Prime Minister ... that my 'poor, oppressed people' should make the best soldiers in the Company's army?" Wajid also mobilizes his own history as a popular King:

Wajid: I have never hidden my true self from them. I was not afraid to show how I was. And they loved me, in spite of that. Even after ten years I can see the love in their eyes. They love my songs. They sing them.

This is a far cry from Wajid's opening gesture of extravagant humility. For the first time Wajid asserts his alterity in the name of the love, acceptance, and endorsement of his people.

Wajid shifts the very grounds and terms of the colonialist argument, from the rule of military dominance to the rule of acceptance, love, popularity, and art. Wajid throws down the gauntlet, "Go and ask the Resident Sahib: how many Kings of England have written songs? Ask if Queen Victoria has composed songs which her people sing." Wajid's improbable challenges are in excess of the neat categorizations of work and play. Wajid makes his playing-at-being king, the site of both his resistance and his claim to cultural leadership. The worthless throne of the puppet King becomes the place of Wajid's crowning achievement and his claim to immortality. Throughout the film Ray's screenplay jeopardizes the distinctions between work and play. For instance, Meer designates his inability to play chess his "idleness," and by implication, his play as his work. In the lens of colonialist discourse it may appear that Wajid plays with his work of kingship. However in the speech scene we witness how Wajid works at his play, that which Outram sarcastically calls his "various accomplishments." Wajid invests them with sobriety, responsibility, and indigenous enterprise.

The alterity of Wajid's vision of leadership is underscored by a later scene in which Outram has an interview with the Queen Mother, Aulea Begum, and where the Begum asserts that Wajid's kingship is derived from the Islamic notion of divine kingship "and nobody else." Wajid's own alternative vision of leadership derives its power neither from divinity, nor from class privilege, or even from nationalist–colonialist principles of kingship, but from the erased Hindu–Muslim folkloric and subaltern

elements of creativity, popularity, and affection for the people. Note that Wajid articulates this alternative vision of leadership precisely at the point when the colonial discursive overinscription of Wajid as a military-administrative failure seeks to isolate him as the ruler from the people of Awadh. Ray's Wajid assents to the colonial critique of his kingship. However, he resists colonial discourse when that discourse estranges him from his own people and describes his relation with his people as oppressive. Wajid's refrain in the speech scene, "I was never meant to rule," acknowledges his culpability and failure and at the same time it proclaims his proximity with his people who share with him the common burden of colonialism. He is a puppet King without any power; they are a people without voice; colonial discourse speaks them both.[47]

Ray ends the aural montage of the speech scene with Wajid walking up to the throne, turning around and addressing Ali Naqi, "Prime Minister, please go and tell the Honourable Resident my throne is not theirs for the asking." He sits down, gripping the armrests of the throne with his hands and declares, "If they want it, they will have to fight for it." Ray mobilizes the relations of power from this alternative articulation of creative and cultural leadership to deepen the time-image of Wajid and re-engage the postcolonial viewer. Each forking of time beguiles the postcolonial viewer into an expectation of the movement-image.[48] Although we know that Awadh is the site of failed resistance, we cannot break free from the expectation of some form of military resistance from Wajid.

Ray's Wajid as time-image: Ray's Outram as movement-image

Ray frames Wajid in time-image, and he frames colonialist enterprise in movement-image. Ray does not construct the vulgar stereotypical representation of the Englishman as the man of action and Wajid as the man of thought. He resists this stereotyping by showing Colonel James Outram in a private moment of reflection.[49] In a scene that mirrors Wajid's speech scene, Ray shows Outram racked with self-doubt at the Company's decision to annex Awadh.[50] The tempo of the scene is fast-paced. Outram confesses his lack of appetite for food and asks Dr Fayrer for advice. Fayrer suggests that it is stress that troubles him, Outram disagrees and says, "It's conscience." Having decoded the colonizer's symptoms of stress as the working of conscience, Ray shows that Outram's scruples about the unjustified annexation of Awadh are self-referential

and short-lived. The Englishman worries that the unjustified annexation of Awadh "won't redound to the credit of John Company." In case Indians offer resistance, British officers will be faced with "the dilemma" of asking their sepoys to fire on their brothers. His qualms arise not from the illegality of colonial occupation itself, but from the technical illegality of the Company's decision to annex. He says that he "fully endorse[s]" Sleeman's account of the "execrable" administration of free Awadh, therefore the British are "entitled" to take over the administration, but they cannot depose the King or appropriate the revenue.[51] In effect Outram is perturbed by the question of legitimation; he states "a treaty is a treaty"; the "inexcusable omission" of the Company consists in neglecting to inform Wajid that the earlier treaty had been invalidated by the Court of Directors; in Outram's view these administrative omissions undermine the legality of the new treaty. Outram's self-doubts about the confiscation of Awadh arises from his need as the military-administrative representative of British enterprise in the colony to believe in the legitimacy of colonial rule.

Outram's moral dilemma occurs a little too late in the film to be wholly convincing. He is well aware of the Company's designs towards free Awadh when the film opens, and he is also well-versed in the stock arguments in Awadh's defence. Ray shows the colonial administrator in a moment of private reflection and on the public stage. The film implies that the English colonizer's private conflicts in no way impinge on his public personae. In one scene Outram curtly brushes aside Ali Naqi's protestations and tells Weston who is translating, "Just sum it up." In the same scene Outram deftly diverts Ali Naqi's questioning of the need for a new treaty by invoking the colonialist argument that the Company intervenes because there is maladministration in Awadh which causes "considerable distress" to the common people. Ali Naqi challenges this misrepresentation, Outram cites Sleeman's report and impatiently dismisses the translation of Ali Naqi's complex ethical-political arguments against Sleeman, "Mr. Khan there is no use wasting words. The Governor-General's decision is irrevocable."[52] In contrast, in Wajid's political economy words are not a waste, a poem can name the essence of the political experience of colonization.

Ray situates Outram as a man of action in the time of enterprise. His troubled conscience and stress does not translate into an attempt to change the Company's decision. The annexation is inevitable, he tells Fayrer, "To all intents and purposes, we're already standing on British territory." His thoughts and actions are directed towards finding ways to fulfill his role in the illegal annexation. He confesses that the question

that agitates him is not whether Wajid will abdicate, but whether he can "ensure a peaceful takeover" so "we don't lose face while we gain a kingdom." Like the true man of enterprise he focuses on the task at hand thinking through all the ways to achieve his objective. This includes an interview with the Queen Mother, Aulea Begum, whom he describes as "a very sensible woman." He has a pragmatic use for her, he tells her to give her son the "good advice" of signing the new treaty. Outram's self-confession to Fayrer ends with these troubled words:

Outram: I'm damned if I know what defines good advice in the present instance, Fayrer. Good for whom? Good for him? Good for us? Good for the Company? Good for the people? And why should she intercede on our behalf? Why shouldn't she take the King's side? After all, he is her son, and we're throwing him out, are we not? I don't like it, Fayrer. I don't like it at all, and yet I have to go through with it. That's the problem. And that's my complaint Doctor, and there's nothing you can prescribe for it. Nothing.[53]

Outram's self-doubt is a dissimulation. In colonial capitalism the benefits accrue to the colonizing power. His hand-wringing cannot obscure the fact that a peaceful takeover would ensure that British officers do not face a mutiny from Company sepoys of Awadh. Colonial politics extracts payment from Ray's Outram as it does from Ray's Wajid, but not in the same coin. Herein lies the crucial difference. Outram, the man of enterprise, is conscience-stricken but neither his composure nor his ability to act is affected: he carries out the task of annexation without stumbling. Ray's Wajid ingests the British critique and his shame disables him, robbing him of his ability to act.

An instance of the movement-image is the interview scene between Outram and the Queen Mother. It is in this scene that the discourse of enterprise, self-doubt, and questioning are separated from, and anterior to, the time of action. In the time of action Outram does not admit to any hesitation or qualms. In the time of action Outram, the enterprising Englishman, is single-minded and ingenious about achieving his objective. By turns he speaks the discourse of friendship and the discourse of the colonial master. He couches his request for the Queen Mother's help in the conventions of British–Awadh friendship. However, when Aulea Begum takes literally the protestations of friendship, Outram's response is unambiguously threatening. To Aulea Begum's question, "What if I were to advise my son to order his troops to take up

arms against the British forces?" Outram unhesitatingly replies, "That, if I may say so, would be most imprudent."

It is Aulea Begum's turn to argue from the rhetorical conventions of friendship. She calls out the injustice of the new treaty by invoking the duties and responsibilities of partnership. She reminds Outram that Wajid was enthroned with the consent of the Company. She asks why the Company did not come to his aid as a friend when he did not prove to be a good king. Why was a sudden decision reached after ten years? She switches into the mode of shame friendship and implores, "Has my son ever disrespected the Honourable Company in any way?" She appeals to Outram, reminding him of the warm welcome he received when he arrived in Lucknow a year ago. But Outram's reactions indicate that the Company has moved beyond the stage of partnering and negotiating. He is deaf to all her claims and entreaties. He impatiently stops Weston from translating, indicating that the Begum's protestations are unimportant, he has heard it all before. In the time of action the man of enterprise is deaf to everything except the task at hand. He personifies single-minded action, he has "only one purpose" which is to ensure the signing of the new treaty. He asks, "Does the Begum Sahiba appreciate that His Majesty is being offered most generous compensation for the action that our Government is forced to take against him?" In the master discourse of the colonizer, land hunger is disguised as the Englishman's civilizing mission, and the illegality of occupation is enforced by paying off the inconvenient native. Aulea Begum responds by putting a series of questions to Outram that are designed to rob the master discourse of its power of definition, re-establish the proper hierarchy, and mark the injustice and illegality of the decision to annex Awadh. She says:

Aulea: Resident Sahib, tell the Governor-General that we do not want money. We want justice. If the Queen's servant cannot give us justice, we shall go to the Queen herself and ask for it.[54]

Aulea Begum's final decision discomfits Outram. The man of enterprise does not calculate on the conviction and enterprise of the native elite. By designating Governor-General Dalhousie as the servant of Queen Victoria, Aulea Begum rhetorically claims to be co-equal with Queen Victoria.[55]

Ray enhances the forking of time through Aulea Begum's decision to take the fight to England and Wajid's refusal to give up the throne without a fight. The forking of time defamiliarizes us from Wajid and constructs another moment of our postcolonial subject-production. It is

evening and in the rays of the setting sun Wajid sits in the balcony of his palace, looking off camera. He is oblivious to the courtiers grouped behind him. In a hushed voice Ali Naqi informs him about Outram's audience with the Queen Mother and her decision to travel to England to seek justice. Wajid does not respond. The Finance Minister Balkishen tells Wajid that the landlords of Awadh await his word to raise an army of 100,000 men and 1000 pieces of artillery. Wajid is silent. In the red glow of the setting sun, Wajid is bathed in an unearthly light.[56] The sun sets on Wajid and Awadh, underscoring the passing of an era. Wajid's non-responsiveness and silence is discomforting, time forks once again and other possibilities open up.

Finally Wajid opens his mouth. He sings softly, "*Jab chhorh chaley Lakhnau nagari*." We feel we have entered the realm of madness. His words make no sense. Our alarm is echoed by the apprehensive looks exchanged between Ali Naqi and Balkishen. Oblivious to them Wajid continues, he repeats the line and we realize it is a refrain from what has now become a famous *thumri* or light classical song. The words gain in meaning. Haltingly Wajid completes the couplet:

Wajid: Jab chhorh chaley Lakhnau nagari / When leaving behind Lucknow city Kahen haal . . . kahen haal hum par kya guzeri / How to recount . . . how to recount what I had to bear Jab chhorh chale Lakhnau nagari / When leaving behind Lucknow city.

Ray's Wajid composes a couplet that speaks to the unbearable, unspeakable, and non-narrativizable trauma of exile. Yet when we come upon Wajid in the act of creating his most famous couplet, he seems to have entered the realm of madness.[57] Ray brings us face to face once again with the fact that our postcolonial subjectivity is the subject-effect of repression.

Ray's forking of Wajid's time-image – by outlining other rhetorical possibilities through Wajid's last words in the speech scene as well as Aulea Begum's challenge to Outram – seduces with the possibility of action. But Ray's Wajid foils our expectations. He cannot or will not react to the events reported by Ali Naqi and Balkishen. Instead his seer-like sight becomes the place of creation. He meditates on the gravity of the political situation by composing a couplet about the pain of exile. Wajid has moved into a realm of thought where the viewer senses rather than knows the direction of Wajid's thoughts. He speaks for the first time in the scene. He begins with a question, "Company Bahadur! You can take away my crown, but how will you make me bow my

head?" He addresses himself to Ali Naqi, "The Company has offered me a handsome allowance. As a citizen of Oudh, if not as its King, I must show my gratitude." He then orders Ali Naqi to inform Outram that he will receive him at eight the next morning. He asks that before the meeting the soldiers should be instructed to disarm themselves and dismount all guns, and the people advised to offer no resistance to the Company's troops as they enter Lucknow.

Ray ruptures our familiarity with Wajid because Wajid's decision is inexplicable in the framework of the movement-image. The advocacy of collective political passivity cannot be incorporated into the logic of the sensory-motor schema of the movement-image, it marks a break with the economy of enterprise. The self-repression of the postcolonial viewer makes it difficult to come to terms with the alterity of Wajid's resistance. Wajid's decision is outrageous, it challenges the favourite pieties of colonialism and nationalism. Wajid's rhetoric disputes the valorization of conflict, competition, and superior military might in the discourse of enterprise. Wajid's oppositional rhetoric is also estranged from the valorization of armed resistance and mass mobilization by nationalism. Whereas Outram, the man of enterprise, carries out his orders of annexation despite his conviction that it is an unjust decision, Wajid the poet-King's conviction that he is an unworthy ruler will not allow him to jeopardize the lives of his soldiers and citizens. Given that Wajid's decision also militates against nationalism's demand for armed resistance, nationalist discourses inscribe Wajid's decision with lack: lack of "passion for politics" and "national valor" and lack of manliness: "The Nawab took leave of his kingdom in exactly the kind of weeping way that a young bride leaves home."[58] In nationalist histories the place of lack is the place of national shame.

Ray reinscribes the site of national shame with alterity. The two compass points by which Ray maps the alterity of Wajid's decision are the hundred years of British–Awadh friendship and Wajid's identification with the citizenry. Wajid says, "As a citizen of Oudh, if not as its King, I must show my gratitude." It is at the precise moment when Wajid refuses the illusion of kingship and affirms his status as a puppet ruler that he becomes the cultural leader of his people. In naming himself as citizen of Awadh, Wajid interrupts the discourse of enterprise. He refuses to concede that the Company has prevailed, nor does he accept defeat as his share. When Wajid claims citizenship for himself he can then question the right of the British colonizers to exile him. His is the politics of survival. As a cultural leader he opts for the survival of Awadhi cultural values. It is Wajid, and not Outram, who rules out the

possibility of asking brother to fight brother in the two armies. Awadhi culture in the reign of the Nawabs stood for peaceful co-existence, friendship, and reciprocity between Shia and Sunni as well as Hindu and Muslim communities. As the poet-king he affirms Awadh's place as the last refuge of artists and artistic cultural production in British India.[59]

Alterity in the final encounter between colonizer and colonized

The alterity of Ray's Wajid is in excess of, but not outside of, the discourses that govern colonial relations. Wajid couches his identification with the common people of Awadh in the vocabulary of shame friendship by expressing his gratitude for the "handsome allowance" the Company has decided to give him. If Ray had ended the film here, positioning Wajid's alterity in the in-betweenness of Awadhi cultural values and the shame friendship between Awadh and the Company, his film would be contained within nationalist historiography. Postcolonial historians rehabilitate Wajid by arguing that he was an effective military administrator but was hamstrung by colonial appropriation of military matters in Awadh.[60] But Ray takes the proposition further. He registers Wajid's alterity as the place from which to resist shame friendship and assert equality in friendship. Ray juxtaposes this moment of Wajid's alterity with Meer and Mirza's exile from the city. Thus it is a moment that in the film is temporally marked by the state of exile.

In *The Chess Players* the final encounter between the deposed native ruler and the conqueror is an overdetermined scene. Ray's plot revolves around the week before the annexation of Awadh. From the first scene Ray has prepared us for the British takeover of Awadh. Thus it would seem that the burden of the film rests on this scene of the official defeat of Awadh and Wajid. As postcolonial viewers we come to this scene with jaded senses because we know the outcome. Apart from the sadomasochistic curiosity about how Wajid performs his humiliation, there would seem to be no more surprises for us in this scene from official history. In spite of these odds Ray crafts the scene so as to shock viewers out of their ennui. He achieves this by rewriting Awadh's defeat as the long-awaited encounter between Outram and Wajid, and between English enterprise and native cultural resistance.

In a reversal of his directorial strategy in previous scenes, Ray inaugurates the scene with a waiting Wajid, to foster our familiarity with Wajid because we think we already know Wajid's decision. In all preceding scenes featuring Wajid, Ray cultivates the viewer's estrangement

from Wajid. This scene opens on the ubiquitous English clock on the mantelpiece of the Kaiserbagh Palace, about to strike eight in the morning. Viewer identification is facilitated by the fact that alongside Wajid and his courtiers we await Outram's arrival. On the soundtrack the sound of marching boots coincides with the chimes of the clock, announcing the arrival of enterprise time.

Wajid meets Outram at the doorway. Outram's stiff nod of greeting reminds us of his earlier remarks concerning his distaste for Wajid's androgyny. The memory sensitizes us to Wajid's demeanour, he walks over and embraces a stiff and unyielding Outram. To us as spectators the natural and unself-conscious greeting is embarrassing because it is performed by Wajid, a despised and defeated figure. Wajid silently invites Outram to sit, but Outram does not wait for Wajid to begin the conversation, and he takes charge. By taking charge, the man of enterprise indicates that native cultural time has been defeated and rendered mute, Awadh has entered enterprise time. In this ordering of time there is not a moment to waste, and no words can be wasted in expressing compassion towards the vanquished. Outram comes directly to the point, expressing the Company's appreciation of the "gesture" of disarming the soldiers. He says, "We regard it, we hope rightly, as evidence of his concern to negotiate a peaceful conclusion of the treaty." Wajid silently looks at Outram and does not reply.

Outram's behaviour reveals the function of conflict in English enterprise. Outram's moral-ethical reservations about the new treaty do not intrude upon or rupture his performance in the public sphere. His conflict, far from making him irresolute or hesitant, reinforces his coercion. With assurance he interprets Wajid's decision to refrain from armed resistance as victory. The colonial expanded cultural critique has won the exclusive right to represent Awadh as well as Wajid. His frame of reference is shame friendship, he confidently asserts this in the suggestion that Wajid suffers from anxiety or, "concern" for friendship with the Company. This is formulated not as question but as statement. Outram makes "a personal request" that Wajid "formalize" the abdication by signing the treaty. Despite Wajid's silence Outram persists in his strategy to force Wajid into doing his bidding. He has tried to persuade, now he threatens, "His Majesty shall have three days for deliberation. After which the Company shall assume the administration of Oude." Wajid remains silent. From the beginning of the film, Ray's Outram discursively articulates the Company's takeover of Awadh as the rule of law. Wajid is discursively represented as the aberration to the rule of law. Outram's threat posits Wajid as the mute, vanquished, inert body.

But British enterprise has uses for this silenced and subjugated body: it is useful for one last payment on shame friendship, for Wajid must legitimate the Company's illegal takeover of Awadh by signing the new treaty. Within English enterprise Wajid is rendered the automaton.[61]

We see Wajid's silent distraught look at Outram as he begins to speak, but we do not register it. We are attuned to Outram's brusque and controlling presence. The change in power relations within the film is so imperceptible that we are not aware when we sense that Wajid's silence disrupts Outram's discourse. Wajid's wounded look marks the human cost of colonial enterprise. Wajid's demeanour transgresses against Outram's attempt to preclude all emotion from surfacing in the scene even if that means the erasure of his own humanity. Outram has been able to ignore Wajid's silence and lack of assent. But the man of enterprise is unnerved by Wajid's silence; he requires the automaton Wajid to perform the action of signing the treaty. It is only when Outram lapses into silence, waiting for an answer from Wajid, that we become aware that Wajid has not spoken a word. In this scene Ray shifts viewer expectation that resistance is only possible through military power and opens up the possibility of resistance through non-compliance, an absence of aggression and silence. Wajid's silence alarms Outram. His anxiety is evident in the question he asks, "I hope the King has understood what I've said." As Weston translates, Wajid turns towards Outram and fixes him with a look eloquent with accusation and pain. Outram looks uncomfortable. By fully inhabiting his silencing and his pain, Wajid has transformed the place of silence from the place of shame to the place of resistance. His silence exposes English enterprise and Outram. Neither by word nor by gesture will Wajid mask the fact that English enterprise is unethical and uncivilized.

Wajid's gaze turns to Weston. The man who attempted to negotiate the cultural divide is shamed, he is unable to meet Wajid's eyes. Wajid rises from his chair and slowly approaches Outram. Outram stands up. In a culturally resonant gesture, Wajid takes off his turban and silently holds it out, offering it to Outram.[62] Wajid's gesture paradoxically signifies surrender and impertinence; in baring his head Wajid publicly enacts his defeat and declares himself the inferior; at the same time it is a gesture that is more properly made in the presence of God where it implies one's humility towards the creator. Through its very excess Wajid's gesture is a self-critique and criticizes the East India Company; by stripping himself of his crown Ray's Wajid underscores the worthlessness of his crown; by offering his crown to Outram Wajid calls attention to the covetousness of British enterprise.

Wajid's gesture recalls the prologue. In the prologue, Wajid's crown caused the Governor-General of India to openly declare the Company's predatory intentions towards Awadh. In the final encounter, the same crown is deployed in Wajid's refusal to play Friday. Outram is alarmed, he asks, "What is this?" Wajid stands silently looking at Outram with his hands outstretched in offering. Outram tells Weston: "Would you tell His Majesty that I have no use for that." Wajid's gesture foils Outram's attempt to mask the ritual of takeover in administrative officialese. Outram is forced to disclose that the coveted object of British enterprise is the land and revenue of the colony. The end term of the metonymy of crown, head, and cherry is "land," the land of Awadh; land hunger drives British enterprise.

The viewer's position in the final encounter is supremely uncomfortable. Outram displays disgust for Wajid's person, and he is suspicious of Wajid's artistic accomplishments. Outram abhors Wajid's perfume, his excess weight as well as his insistence on greeting Outram with a hug. As postcolonial viewers we screen Outram's dislike of Wajid through our training in self-repression, and understand it as the virulent antipathy of an unimaginative military man for the artistic life. But in the takeover scene Ray's directorial strategy is to exceed the boundaries of our own disciplining, and make the scene of Wajid's humiliation and shaming take on the form of nightmare. Outram's disregard of Wajid's suffering and his outrage at Wajid's offering his turban instead of his signature become the denial of Wajid's humanity.

Outram's refusal of Wajid's humanity marks the nadir of shame friendship. In its own cultural context, Wajid's gesture of divestment asserts his humanity. The addressee is obliged to pay attention to Wajid's pain. The confession of one's humanity confers humanity on the addressee. Outram's dismissal of Wajid's gesture as mere histrionics is a proclamation that, as Deleuze puts it, "There have never been people here." It is at this psychological point in the film that as postcolonial viewers we are put in crisis. Our viewing pleasure is a function of our difference from Wajid. We are constituted as postcolonial subjects by our ambivalence to our past. But Outram's refusal to acknowledge Wajid's humanity interferes with our safe distancing from Wajid. Our repression is founded on the belief that our education and acculturation in the ways of the colonizer has made us the equal of the master. Ray makes us confront Wajid's alterity.

Ray recalls an older unrepressed culture which, despite a hundred years of training in shame friendship, adheres to its own view of friendship. In a voice laden with emotion Wajid tells Outram, "I can bare my

head for you, Resident Sahib, but I cannot sign that treaty." With these words Ray's Wajid divests himself of shame friendship and fully inhabits his alterity. Wajid's mute gesture of stripping himself is the stuff of nightmares. It appears to be complicit with colonialist discourses of unequal friendship: Wajid seems to negotiate with the colonizer and therefore remains within the realm of unequal relations of colonialism. But Wajid's words render the gesture unfamiliar. Wajid insists on speaking the discourse of Awadhi friendship, and in doing so he holds up a mirror to Outram and the discourse of British enterprise. Wajid attempts to treat Outram like a friend, he says he can bare his head for him, implying that the place of the friend is next to God. In the moment of being stripped Wajid is undefeated, for he finds the strength to refute British enterprise by subscribing to the highest principles of friendship. In the moment of winning, Outram is lost and British enterprise prevails by intimidating and paying the friend into signing on as a full partner to the Company's rapacity, injustice, and illegality. Wajid demonstrates the exalted position of the friend. A friend is a pact with the best in us.

In the last scene of the film, Kalloo complains to Meer and Mirza that not a single shot was fired when the Company troops marched into Lucknow. The narrator's mocking voice echoes Kalloo's sentiments:

Narrator: You're right, Kalloo. No fighting, no bloodshed. Wajid Ali Shah has made sure of that. Three days from today, on February 5th 1856, the Kingdom of Oudh will be in British hands, Wajid Ali Shah will leave his beloved city, for all time, and Lord Dalhousie will have eaten his cherry.[63]

In order to conclude his formulation regarding friendship, the narrator of the Lakhnavi tall tale is deployed by Ray to suggest that if the British takeover of Awadh is an act of cannibalism, then Wajid is a pacifist. The narrator ascribes the peaceful takeover of Awadh to Wajid's decision to leave "his beloved city, for all time" in order to ensure that there is no bloodshed, no battle. Ray is certainly no proponent of martial valour or jingoism. Therefore his emphasis on Wajid's responsibility for the lack of bloodshed in the takeover of Awadh has to be interpreted in the light of the bloodshed of Muslims and Hindus by the British Company forces just a year later in 1857. Wajid Ali Shah's leaving his beloved city of Lucknow without bloodshed is, in my view, a text of neither cowardice nor apathy, it is a text of pacifism and non-violence.

Notes

1 The discourse of colonial enterprise and its representation of the other through the expanded cultural critique

1. I use the term "enterprise" in a delimited manner to specifically denote the colonial enterprise of capitalism and corporate enterprise of multi-nationals under global capitalism. I also examine the subversion of the colonialist capitalist enterprise through the deployment of indigenous enterprise in Chapter 4. It is not within the purview of my project to examine the history of the usage of the term "enterprise" in its medieval and military context.
2. Syed Hussein Alatas in a 1977 study documents and analyses the origins and function of what he calls the myth of the lazy native from the sixteenth to the twentieth century in Malaysia, Philippines, and Indonesia. See his *The Myth of the Lazy Native* (1977). I pay tribute to this excellent study; however, my own work differs from Alatas in the following respects. Alatas treats colonialist labour practices as an ideology or a patently false "myth" not as discourse. Unlike Alatas my own study of labour practices is oriented towards discourse analysis. This difference in tools leads to a more fundamental theoretical divergence: Alatas foregrounds the myth of the lazy native without investigating the binary half of the industrious European that sustains the former. Contrarily I argue that the colonized native's unproductive work and play within the expanded cultural critique cannot be discussed without taking into account the normative labour and leisure practices in post-Enlightenment enterprise.
3. My choice of the Defoe text, as well as my locating the colonial capitalist discourses of labour in the English Enlightenment is influenced by Marx's brief but intriguing interpretation of Defoe's *Crusoe*. Marx says: "All the relations between Robinson and these objects that form his self-created wealth are here so simple and transparent . . . And yet those relations contain all the essential determinants of value" (*Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, Vol. I, intro. Ernest Mandel, trans. Ben Fowkes [1977] 170). In the *Grundrisse* Marx coins the word "Robinsonades" which for him means utopias along the lines of Robinson Crusoe. He says:

   > The individual and isolated hunter and fisherman, with whom Smith and Ricardo begin, belongs among the unimaginative conceits of the eighteenth-century Robinsonades, which in no way express merely a reaction against over-sophistication and a return to a misunderstood natural life, as cultural historians imagine. As little as Rousseau's *Contrat social*, which brings naturally independent, autonomous subjects into relation and connection by contract, rests on such naturalism. This is the semblance, the merely aesthetic semblance, of the Robinsonades, great and small. It is, rather, the anticipation of "civil society", in preparation since the sixteenth century and making giant strides towards maturity in the eighteenth. In this society of free competition, the individual appears detached from the natural bonds etc.

> which in earlier historical periods make him the accessory of a definite and limited human conglomerate. Smith and Ricardo still stand with both feet on the shoulders of the eighteenth-century prophets, in whose imaginations this eighteenth-century individual – the product on the one side of the dissolution of the feudal forms of society, on the other side of the new forces of production developed since the sixteenth century – appears as an ideal, whose existence they project into the past. Not as a historic result but as history's point of departure. (Karl Marx, *Grundrisse Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy*, trans. and Foreword, Martin Nicolaus [1973] 83)

4. Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) has inspired a host of re-readings. In a modern anti-apartheid novel a white woman writer, Nadine Gordimer, reverses the master-protector/protected subject-people hierarchy by imagining a beleaguered white family protected by their servant. As Defoe's Friday is named after a day, Gordimer's African servant is named after the month of July in *July's People* (1981). A white South African male teacher of English literature invokes Defoe's cast of characters far more explicitly than Gordimer. Coetzee re-invents Friday as an eighteenth-century Englishwoman's project of giving voice to the other in *Foe* (Coetzee, 1986). Toni Morrison explains the phenomenon of Clarence Thomas by performing a textual reading of the Crusoe–Friday relationship (*Race-ing Justice, En-gendering Power Essays on Anita Hill, Clarence Thomas, and the Construction of Social Reality*, 1992). These re-readings appropriate Defoe's text for a wide variety of projects in cultural studies.
5. All the quotations from *Robinson Crusoe* are from Daniel Defoe's, *The Life and Strange and Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe (1719) An Authoritative Text/Backgrounds/Sources/Criticism*, ed. Michael Shinagel (1975) 58.
6. Ibid.
7. See Pierre Macherey's interpretation of Crusoe's gaze at the destitute landscape in *A Theory of Literary Production* (1978).
8. Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe*, op. cit., 94.
9. Ibid., 5.
10. Ibid.
11. The eighteenth-century scholar-critic Ian Watt notes that "Crusoe lives in the imagination mainly as a triumph of human achievement and enterprise," "Robinson Crusoe as Myth", *Eighteenth Century English Literature: Modern Essays in Criticism*, ed. James L. Clifford (1959) 159. Watt praises Defoe's fictional travelogue as "his epic of individual enterprise" and notes that Defoe's Crusoe "has been endowed with the basic necessities for the successful exercise of free enterprise", *An Authoritative Text/Backgrounds/Sources/Criticism*, ed. Michael Shinagel (1975) 296, 297.
12. Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe*, op. cit., 11.
13. Ibid., 26.
14. Ibid., 29.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid., 30.
17. Ibid., 5.
18. I refer to one of my chief influences, Ranajit Guha's, *A Rule of Property for Bengal: An Essay on the Idea of Permanent Settlement* (1963). Guha has consistently pointed to the Enlightenment as an important watershed of European ideas,

discourses, and philosophies for the making of Britain's colonial capitalism in India. While he studies the eighteenth-century physiocrats, I use a text that has become part of the colonial imagination, Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, because it became part of the European imagination, giving rise to multiple variants and reinventions of the ur-narrative of the "man on the island."

19. Here I make alliances with Said's essay "The Pleasures of Imperialism" in *Culture and Imperialism* (1994) which is, in my view, Said's most suggestive work after *Orientalism*. I extend Said's notion further by suggesting that there should be an element of auto-critique in the examination of the aesthetic pleasures of imperialism. The critic should implicate herself in her own inquiry by asking what are her own sources of readerly pleasure in the imperialist text, a question I have tried to address in my discussion of Defoe in Chapter 2.
20. Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe*, op. cit., 37, 40.
21. Ibid., 45, 49.
22. Ibid., 50.
23. Ibid., 174.
24. John Bowring, *A Visit to the Philippine Island* (1859) cited in Syed H. Alatas, *The Myth of the Lazy Native*, op. cit., 59.
25. Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe*, op. cit., 51.
26. It is noteworthy that in three of the four Hollywood films I have chosen, the embodiments of American colonialist enterprise are actors who have played iconic roles: John Wayne, Clint Eastwood, and Harrison Ford. Harrison Ford as a modern Crusoe is a good casting choice, as he brings to bear on this role his iconic status from *Star Wars* (1977), *The Empire Strikes Back* (1980), *Raiders of the Lost Ark* (1981), *Return of the Jedi* (1983), *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom* (1984), *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* (1989) and so on, as the good American with an inviolate moral centre who fights corruption even in its most familiar and insidious form.
27. The film is based on Paul Theroux's *The Mosquito Coast* (1982).
28. Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe*, op. cit., 37.
29. Ibid., 40.
30. Recent ecologically oriented studies of history have shown that the world ecology was significantly affected from the fifteenth century onwards by Western colonial capitalism. Specifically in India, the changes brought about by colonialism and the exploitation and control of Indian national resources had a profoundly unsettling effect on different populations and their habitat. Elizabeth Whitcombe's pioneering study, *Agrarian Conditions in Northern India, Vol. 1: The United Provinces under British Rule, 1860–1900* (1971), is one such example. In this study Whitcombe shows how the introduction of colonial capitalist market-oriented agriculture led to enormous changes and hardship in the rural economy of Doab. Similarly in Kumaun district from 1893 to 1921 the British takeover of the forests and introduction of commercial forestry brought about a transformation of social relations whose repercussions continue to date. This is documented by Ramchandra Guha in "Forestry in British and Post-British India: A Historical Analysis," *Economic & Political Weekly* (29 Oct. and 12 Nov. 1983); reprinted as "Forestry and Social Protest in British Kumaun, c. 1893–1921", in *Subaltern Studies IV*, ed. Ranajit Guha (1985).
31. Guha, *A Rule of Property*, op. cit., 26.

32. Alexander Dow, *The History of Hindostan from the Death of Akbar to the . . . Settlement of the Empire under Aurungzebe . . . A Dissertation on the Origin and Nature of Despotism in Hindostan . . . An Enquiry into the State of Bengal*, Vol. 3, 1768–1772, 33.
33. Ibid., 35.
34. It is noteworthy that both the Bengali zemindar class and Wajid Ali Shah were placed in their position of power by the British themselves. The discourse regarding their unproductivity was as much a British construct as the discourse of colonial British enterprise.
35. Interestingly the two sites, Bengal and Awadh, are also linked by way of military history and resistance. Not only were the Company's Bengal regiments primarily composed of men from Awadh, the 1857 armed resistance (variously termed the Mutiny, Rebellion or First War of Independence) by the sepoys of the Company began in the Bengal stations of Berhampore and Barrackpore. For a full account of events see John Pemble, *The Raj, the Indian Mutiny and the Kingdom of Oudh 1801–1859* (1977) 165–248. Earlier in the 1764 Battle of Buxar fought by Shuja-ud-daula, then Nawab of Awadh, he led the combined forces of Shah Alam (the fugitive Mughal Emperor of Delhi) as well as Mir Quasim (the nawab of Bengal after Mir Jafar). One of the objectives of the Battle of Buxar was to restore the territories of Bengal, Bihar, and Orissa to Mir Quasim. When the combined forces of Shuja-ud-daula lost the battle, and he was again repulsed in the Battle of Kara where he fought the Company forces with the help of the Marathas, he entered into treaty in 1765 with the Company whereby the nawabi of Awadh was restored to him on the payment of fifty lakh rupees to the Company as compensation. At the same time, Governor-General Clive also negotiated a treaty with Emperor Shah Alam, the Treaty of Allahabad (1765) by which the diwani of Bengal, Bihar, and Orissa was granted to the Company by the Mughal Emperor, and the nawabs of Bengal became the titular rulers of Bengal. It was the beginning in Bengal of the dual government, a strategy that the Company was to follow later in Awadh. Through the friendship treaty of 1801 half of Awadh became Ceeded Territories under Company rule. On the Battle of Buxar, see Surendra Mohan, *Awadh under the Nawabs* (1997) 98–128. For a detailed account of Awadh and Company relations Richard B. Barnett, *North India Between Empires: Awadh, the Mughals, and the British, 1720–1801* (1980); Michael H. Fisher, *A Clash of Cultures: Awadh, the British, and the Mughals* (1987).
36. James Mill, *The History of British India*, intro. William Thomas (1975) 478.
37. The Subaltern historian Ranajit Guha argues that British scholarship, under the pressure of administrative needs and in order to reinforce its apparatus of ideological control, investigated, recorded, and wrote up the Indian past. In the case of Bengal the British did not understand the structure of landed property well enough to be able to collect the revenue on behalf of the nawab and the relations of power which had accumulated over time, so they undertook the function of the historian and rewrote the Indian past. See his "Dominance Without Hegemony and Its Historiography," *Subaltern Studies VI* (1989) 210–309.
38. Historians have widely accepted the fact that land as private property was not a prevalent concept in pre-British India. See Irfan Habib, *The Agrarian System of Mughal India* (1963); Asiya Siddiqi, *Agrarian Change in a Northern*

Indian State Uttar Pradesh 1819–1833 (1973); Thomas R. Metcalf, *Land, Landlords, and the British Raj* (1979); Anil Chandra Banerjee, *The Agrarian System of Bengal 1582–1793* (1980); W. H. Moreland, *The Revenue Administration of the United Provinces* (1911 [1984]).

39. Guha, "Dominance without Hegemony", op. cit., 211.
40. The Permanent Settlement was imposed by the British in 1793 in India in order to solve the problem of land ownership and rent collection in Bengal in favour of the British Crown. This system was premised on the creation of a class of landlords with hereditary rights to the land who would ensure that the British received taxes and rents which were permanently fixed. Therefore, the permanence of the Permanent Settlement referred primarily to the notion of the permanence of British dominion over India. Secondarily it referred to the permanence of the landlords' proprietorship which derived from the Physiocratic principle of the right to private property. Sumit Sarkar, the Subaltern historian argues that instead of becoming a vehicle for the improvement of the estates of the landlords, the Permanent Settlement created "constructed conditions of stagnation." He writes, "Within the next generation, the Bengali 'middle class' was rapidly squeezed out of even comprador-type business activities, and left dependent on the professions, services, and land – almost entirely divorced, in other words, from productive functions, since thanks to the Permanent Settlement rent-receipts flowed in with a minimum of entrepreneurial effort. Bourgeois-liberal values remained bereft of entrepreneurial effort. Bourgeois-liberal values remained bereft of material content." ("Rammohun Roy and the Break with the Past", *Rammohun Roy and the Process of Modernization in India*, ed. V. C. Joshi (1975) 62.)
41. I refer to the devastating Bengal famine (1772) the likes of which had not been witnessed in recorded history before.
42. Chattrapati Singh notes:

    It is evident that till the end of the last century and in all historical periods before that, at least 80 per cent of India's natural resources were common property, with only 20 per cent being utilised. . . . This extensive common property has provided the resource base for a non-cash, non-market economy. A whole range of necessary resources has been freely available to the people. Thus commonly available wood, shrubs and cowdung have been utilised for cooking and heating; mud, bamboo and palm leaves for housing, wild grass and shrubs as animal fodder, and a variety of fruits and vegetables as food. (Chattrapati Singh, *Common Property and Common Poverty* [1985] 2)

43. Samir Amin, *Unequal Development: An Essay on the Social Formations of Peripheral Capitalism*, trans. Brian Pearce (1976).
44. The political power of the landed classes enabled the enactment of legislation that privatized enclosures. The history of the English enclosures throws a shadow on the agricultural revolution that preceded and facilitated the Industrial revolution.
45. This was one of the problems that exercised Marx in his reflections on the nature of pre-colonial "Asiatic" society. In the *Grundrisse* he emphasizes the obstacle that the village community presents in the way of the development

of capitalism, because in the absence of private property in land, it is the village community that has collective ownership of the land. See Marx, *Grundrisse*, op. cit., 491–499.

46. In contemporary ecological debates in India, wastelands and common property resources (land, water, air, and forests) have become a major political issue. The scholarly, historical debates centre around the colonial British definition that designate common property resources as wastelands because they did not generate revenue for the colonial government, regardless of their value as a common subsistence resource for the poor, local population. The postcolonial state inherits from its colonial past a range of persuasive/coercive strategies that continue to disinherit the poor from their traditional homelands by turning them into ecological refugees by privatizing the ownership of commons for the purpose of "development" and "progress." This development has been characterized as enriching a very small segment of the population and creating poverty for the rest. The most recent examples of this struggle between the government and the people is to be witnessed in the political, legal battle that is being fought against the building of the Sardar Sarovar dam(s) in the Narmada Valley. See Arundhati Roy, *The Cost of Living* (1999); Vinay Krishin Gidwani, " 'Waste' and the Permanent Settlement in Bengal," *Economic and Political Weekly* (25 Jan. (1992) PE 39–46; S. Jodha, "Waste Lands Management in India Myths, Motives and Mechanisms," *Economic and Political Weekly* (5 Feb. 2000) PE 466–473; Vandana Shiva and J. Bandyopadhyay, *Ecology and the Politics of Survival Conflicts over Natural Resources in India* (1991).
47. John A. Voelker who prepared a report on the improvement of Indian agriculture for the edification of the British stated:

    > On one point there can be no question, viz., that the ideas generally entertained in England, and often given expression to even in India, that Indian agriculture is, as a whole, primitive and backward, and that little has been done to try and remedy it, are altogether erroneous . . . At his best the Indian raiyat or cultivator is quite as good as, and, in some respects, the superior of, the average British farmer . . . nowhere would one find better instances of keeping land scrupulously clean from weeds, of ingenuity in device of water-raising appliances, of knowledge of soils and their capabilities, as well as of the exact time to sow and to reap, as one would in Indian agriculture, and this not at its best alone, but at its ordinary level. It is wonderful, too, how much is known of rotation, the system of "mixed crops," and of fallowing. Certain it is that I, at least, have never seen a more perfect picture of careful cultivation, combined with hard labor, perseverance, and fertility of resource. (*Report on the Improvement of Indian Agriculture* [1893] 10–11)

48. Andrew Robinson, *Satyajit Ray: The Inner Eye* (1989); Marie Seton, *Portrait of a Director: Satyajit Ray* (1971).
49. My own thesis concerning Ray's portrayal of the idle landlord class in *The Music Room* is in consonance with the re-evaluation of the colonialist/nationalist terms of Indian feudalism. There is an ongoing debate amongst Marxist historians about the nature of Indian feudalism. In recent times Harbans Mukhia's 1981 article, "Was there Feudalism in Indian History?" challenged the notion that pre-colonial India could be categorized as feudal in the West-European

sense. He argued that while in medieval Europe the whole peasantry had a structured dependence upon the lords, pre-colonial Indian society was characterized by self-dependent or free peasant production. Mukhia's article sparked off a range of responses by other Marxist historians like R. S. Sharma and Irfan Habib that are documented *in Feudalism and Non-European Societies*, ed. T. J. Byres and Harbans Mukhia (1985). This debate raised three distinct concerns that are still being discussed: first the acceptability of an Asiatic mode of production as outlined by Marx; secondly, the applicability of feudalism in the context of pre-colonial non-European societies and lastly, if not feudalism, then what were to be the new terms with which to theorize pre-colonial Indian mode of production?

50. M. N. Pearson explores the complicated relationship of the Mughal landlord to his land. He identifies variations in land tenure and the proprietorship of land to make the argument that the zemindari class under Mughal rulers was not a uniform phenomenon but encompassed a variety of different relationships and functions. He suggests that the colonialist historians did not appreciate the "almost mystical relationship" between the land and the Mughal landlord. Pearson also questions the colonialist construction of the Mughal zemindars as extravagant and wasteful and shows that only one-quarter of the zemindar's total salary was available for living expenses and much of this was spent in a way which generated production, albeit of luxury goods. See Pearson's "Land, Noble and Ruler in Mughal India" in *Feudalism: Comparative Studies*, ed. John Ward (1985).
51. The nationalist critique of the landlord system created in Bengal and Bihar after the introduction of the Permanent Settlement in 1793 is perhaps best summarized by Jawaharlal Nehru in *The Discovery of India* (1946, 1985). Nehru commenting on the system writes, "A new class, the owners of land, appeared; a class created by, and therefore to a large extent identified with, the British Government. The break-up of the old system created new problems.... The extreme rigour applied to the collection of revenue resulted, especially in Bengal, in the ruin of the old landed gentry, and new people from the monied and business classes took their place" (304). He goes on to say, "It was also considered necessary to create a class whose interest were identified with the British.... The fear of revolt filled the minds of British officials in India and they referred to this repeatedly in their papers. Governor-General Lord William Bentnick said in 1829: 'If security was wanting against extensive popular tumult or revolution, I should say that the Permanent Settlement, though a failure in many other respects, has this great advantage at least, of having created a vast body of rich landed proprietors deeply interested in the continuance of British Dominion and having complete command over the mass of the people' " (304–305). Nehru's comments are illuminating because they illustrate the complicity between the colonialist view of the landlord's loyalty and function and the nationalist critique.
52. Robinson, *Satyajit Ray: The Inner Eye*, op. cit., 115.
53. Ibid., 115.
54. Tarashankar Banerji, "Jalsaghar" in *Noon in Calcutta: Short Stories from Bengal*, ed. Krishna Dutta and Andrew Robinson (1992).
55. Ibid., 50.

56. Robinson, *Satyajit Ray: The Inner Eye*, op. cit., 113.
57. Ben Nyce, *Satyajit Ray: A Study of His Films* (1988) 49.
58. One reason for Ray's experimentation with the supervaluation of music in *Jalsaghar* in the absence of land has to be understood through Ray's own relationship to music. To a large extent Ray was self-taught in both Western and Indian classical music. In his early films he collaborated with some of the greatest exponents of North Indian classical music like Ravi Shanker, Vilayat Khan, Imrat Khan, Begum Akhtar, Bismillah Khan, and Ali Akbar Khan. After *Jalsaghar*, Ray composed his own music for his films. Ray has also claimed that his love of music was greater than his love of films. In response to Robinson's question concerning Ray's indifference to the Bengal famine of 1943 which he witnessed, Ray said that among other things that occupied him then, there was his "intense absorption" in Western music which left him little time for anything else (*Satyajit Ray: The Inner Eye*, op. cit., 60). Later on he went on to make a movie whose subject was the Bengal famine of 1943 *Asani Sanket* (*Distant Thunder*, 1973) in order to come to terms with his "guilt" about this. Clearly Ray indicts himself for his non-involvement during the famine yet there is also a suggestion here that his own absorption in music is perceived by him as coeval with being socially and politically committed.
59. Ray's description of the function of music in the last *jalsa* is interesting: "that was the high point of the film, where music comes into the foreground almost" (ibid., 116–117). Interview with Satyajit Ray by Dhritiman Chatterjee, "Towards an Invisible Soundtrack?", *Cinema Vision India*, Vol. 1, No. 4 (Oct. 1980) 16.
60. Marie Seton, *Portrait of a Director: Satyajit Ray*, op. cit., 144; Ben Nyce, *Satyajit Ray: A Study of His Films*, op. cit., 49.
61. According to John Pemble, "in 1856 the British were averse to repeating the experiment of 1793" (146). He suggests that the failure of the Permanent Settlement in Bengal was followed by the discovery of the village coparcenary communities of north-western India which came to be regarded by the British as the "missing key," the ignorance of which had led them to misrecognize the zemindars of Bengal as the English freeholder when in fact they were "the modern and alien phenomenon . . . thrown up by the distorting convulsions of the Mughal empire's death throes" (147). Thus began a short-lived romance of British district officials like Martin Gubbins, Sleeman, and Outram with the authentic unit of Indian rural society, "the coparcenary village, immutable and primordial" (ibid.). In this they were again wrong of course. But by following an official policy based on an oversimplified understanding of the relationship between the two British officials villified and punished the taluqdars through rack-rents and championed the cause of small village shareholders. This policy led, according to Pemble, to the destabilizing of the Awadh countryside and the banding together of the taluqdars and the small shareholdes and peasants in the events of 1857. See J. Pemble, op. cit. (1977) 119–164. For an informed and historical account of the revenue arrangements and policies of the British in Awadh see Imtiaz Husain, *Land Revenue Policy in North India the Ceded & Conquered Provinces, 1801–33* (1967).
62. The success of Awadh as the paradigmatic site of the expanded cultural critique can be gauged by the fact that Awadh became, in popular memory and folklore, the signifier for native excess in play. As late as 1901 Rudyard Kipling in his novel *Kim* refers to Awadh (modern day Lucknow) in the following terms:

> There is no city – except Bombay, the queen of all – more beautiful in her garish style than Lucknow, whether you see her from the bridge over the river, or from the top of the Imambara looking down on the gilt umbrellas of the Chutter Munzil, and the trees in which the town is bedded. Kings have adorned her with fantastic buildings, endowed her with charities, crammed her with pensioners, and drenched her with blood. She is the centre of all idleness, intrigue, and luxury, and shares with Delhi the claim to talk the only pure Urdu. (*Kim*, ed., intro. and notes, Edward W. Said [1989] 168)

63. The British press still remembered Burke's celebrated speech in Parliament castigating the corruption of Warren Hastings and the East India Company in the treatment of the Begums of Oudh. To the English press and to Indians, the East India Company had to demonstrate that the conquest of Oudh was not a display of English corruption, but a disinterested blow against Awadhi corruption.
64. W. H. Sleeman, *Sleeman in Oude: An Abridgement of W.H. Sleeman's Journey Through the Kingdom of Oude in 1849–50* (1858), ed. and intro. P. D. Reeves (1971).
65. Bishop Heber, *Narrative of a Journey through the Upper Provinces of India (1828)* in *Selections from Heber's Journal*, ed. M. A. Laird (1977) 172, 182.
66. For an almost contemporaneous account of this cultural renaissance, see Abdul Halim Sharar, *Lucknow: Last Phase of an Oriental Culture*, trans. and ed. E. S. Harcourt and Fakhir Hussain (1976); for more contemporary evaluations of Awadh as a composite Hindu–Muslim culture, see Surendra Mohan, op. cit. (1997); Rosie Llewellyn-Jones, "Lucknow, City of Dreams" in *Lucknow: Memories of a City*, ed. Violette Graff (1997) 49–66; and Amaresh Misra, *Lucknow: Fire of Grace* (1998).
67. Robinson, ed., *The Chess Players and Other Screenplays* (1989) 18.
68. Ibid., 18, 21.
69. Ibid., 20–21.
70. Muta marriages or temporary marriage contract is permissible in the Shia Muslim sect, the sect to which the nawabs of Awadh belonged, but considered illegal by the Sunni sect.
71. Ibid., 19–20.
72. Ibid., 20.
73. Sleeman, *Sleeman in Oude*, op. cit., 101–102.

2 Childhood: Work, play, and shame friendship in the discourse of enterprise

1. There has been an efflorescence of novels from India on the theme of postcolonial childhood. In my view the focus on postcolonial childhood and the children of empire in the postcolonial novel testifies to the need for a literary-theoretical investigation of the discourses of childhood and the political function of children's play. See Ardeshir Vakil's *Beach Boy* (1997) and Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* (1997), and Chitra Bannerjee Devakurni's *Sister of My Heart* (1999).
2. Edward Said brought critical attention to the novel *Kim* in his introduction to the 1987 Penguin paperback. Said's essay is also reprinted in *Culture and*

Imperialism (1994). See also S. P. Mohanty's "Kipling's Children and the Colour Line", *Race and Class*, 31, No. 1 (1989) 21–40; Edward Said's *Out of Place: A Memoir*, New York: Knopf, 1999; Sudhir Kakar, *The Inner World: A Psychoanalytic Study of Childhood and Society in India* (1978); Roderick McGilles, *Voices of the Other: Children's Literature and the Postcolonial Context* (2000); Timothy Morris, *You're only Young Twice: Children's Literature and Film* (2000).

3. Said (1994).
4. Ibid., 138.
5. Ibid., 137.
6. *What is Cinema?* [1949] 1971, 53–54.
7. *Cinema*, Vol. I (1989) 3.
8. Andrew Robinson, *Satyajit Ray: The Inner Eye* (1989) 71. Ray also took from *Bicycle Thief* the notion that film should be freed from the studio set and resituated in outdoor locations, as well as the possibility of making a film on a shoe string budget with non-actors. In his 1982 lecture Ray described the viewing of *Bicycle Thief* as a formative moment, "I came out of the theater my mind firmly made up. I would become a filmmaker" (71). I tend to agree with the ways Martin Scorsese defines the difference and similarity between Ray's cinema and Italian neo-realism, he recalls the experience of viewing the Apu trilogy at the age of eighteen, he was taken aback by the style of the films "at first so much like the Italian neorealist films, yet surprising the viewer with bursts of sheer poetry" (cited in Bidyut Sarkar, *The World of Satyajit Ray* [1992] 109).
9. The classic text of this divestment and recompense in child's play is of course Freud's case study of his one and a half year old grandson playing with a wooden reel the *fort*! (gone) *da*! (there) game in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle (1919)*, trans. James Strachey (1959) 33–38.
10. Daniel Defoe, *The Life and Strange and Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe (1719)*, ed. Michael Shinagel (1975) 43.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid., 150.
13. Although Crusoe refers to the goats, parrots, dogs, and cats on the island as "my little family," his relation to his family replicates the relation between British monarchy and its colonial subjects. As a Whig dissenter, Defoe was opposed to the absolute power of the British monarchy and favoured parliamentary controls over the British monarch, however, in his fictional travelogue Crusoe plays the "I am the king" child's game. The text hints at the ways in which a solitary child plays this game, "Then to see how like a king I din'd too all alone, attended by my servants." This child's game depends on making someone or something into servants and exercising arbitrary power by playing, as Crusoe says, favourites among his servant-like subjects. Part of the pleasure of the game is in the child's self-naming as "the Prince and Lord of the whole island" who "had the lives of all my subjects at my absolute command." Part of the pleasure of the child's game also lies in exercising monarchial absolutism over other living things, "I had the lives of all my subjects at my absolute command. I could hang, draw, give liberty, and take it away, and no rebels among all my subjects" ([1719] 1975, 108). In this "I am the king" game the pleasures of domination derive from the arbitrariness of power; Crusoe decides which animals are useful to him and shoots the cats who are troublesome.

14. In *Home Alone* (1990) and *Home Alone 2: Lost in New York* (1992) the themes of child's play and survival strategies in the Robinson Crusoe myth are explored and updated. Like the fantasy scenario of Crusoe's shipwreck the child in both films achieves his fantasy of ridding himself of his large and affluent family. The success of the film depended in great part on the Crusoe-like ingenuity and enterprise of Macaulay Culkin who guards his home against two thieves, and through his enterprising actions turns his home into a fortress. In the sequel he not only guards the toy store against the same two villains, but he also turns his uncle's home into a strategic fortress and manages to entrap the intruders and run away. In both films we see the comic process by which the thieves/intruders are turned into savages, they are torched and burned and beaten, so that when the police takes them at the end they physically look like savages. At a time when American schoolchildren's test scores in maths and sciences do not compare favourably with other countries, these two films provide the reassuring message that the children of middle-class white America have not become too "soft" nor have they forgotten their survival skills. In a crisis (the discourse of enterprise is elaborated in cultural texts as exemplary resourcefulness and level headedness in crisis) they can defend their home and outwit the enemy.
15. *Robinson Crusoe*, op. cit., 151.
16. For a critique of the theme of paternalism in Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, see Toni Morrison, ed. and intro. *Race-ing Justice, En-gendering Power: Essays on Anita Hill, Clarence Thomas, and the Construction of Social Reality* (1992).
17. "Consumptive Fictions: Cannibalism and Defoe", *The Body in Swift and Defoe* (1990) 149.
18. *Robinson Crusoe*, op. cit., 146.
19. In the field of postcolonial theory interest in the colonialist implications of the Crusoe myth was sparked by the publication of J. M. Coetzee's *Foe* (1986). Coetzee reinterprets the main outlines of Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, by adding bits and pieces of the mother–daughter theme in Defoe's *Roxana*, Moll's discovery of her parentage in the New World in Defoe's *Moll Flanders*, and an encounter between the author Defoe and Susan in London. In Coetzee's novel the exclusively male colonialist myth of Crusoe–Friday and the island is represented through the female protagonist, Susan Barton, who is shipwrecked on Crusoe's island. Through Susan's eyes readers gaze at a landscape that is denuded rather than beautiful, at a Crusoe who is an ageing and querulous man with no interest in anything apart from his obsession with his island kingdom. Coetzee debunks the myth of the enterprising Crusoe through Susan's gaze. She says, "Growing old on his island kingdom with no one to say him nay had so narrowed his horizon – when the horizon all around us was so vast and majestic! – that he had come to be persuaded he knew all there was to know about the world" (1986, 13). Much of Coetzee's narrative revolves around the strange relationship between Susan Barton and Friday, as she tries to penetrate his silence.
20. *Robinson Crusoe*, op. cit., 150.
21. Ibid.
22. Ibid., 152, 162.
23. Ibid., 162.
24. G. O. Trevelyan, *The Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay* (1877) 2, 383.

25. Ray's unmade film *The Alien* is a marvellous example of the particular significances that Ray attaches to the child's curiosity. The subaltern child in Ray's 1966–1967 screenplay for *The Alien*, Haba, is a poor village boy in a Bengal village who forages for food. He is the only human who forms a bond with the alien creature. Ray said that the Nepalese boy-child in *Kanchenjungha* (see my discussion of this child character on page 116–117 of this chapter) stayed in his mind. Ray draws out the kinship between the subaltern child, the Nepalese boy in the 1962 film *Kanchenjungha* and the alien creature in the screenplay of *The Alien*, "The Alien and the child in *Kanchenjungha* could be very close, because the [Nepalese] child is the only one who belongs to Darjeeling but is unaware of the fact. He's the only one who's free, who has no problems" (Robinson [1989] 288). Like human children, the alien creature has a playful curiosity and mischief, the difference is that the alien has magical powers through which he can satisfy his curiosity. Thus the two key themes in the Apu motif, creative curiosity and the child's access to agency, are elaborated in Ray's science fiction screenplay. In terms of the connections this chapter draws between postcolonial childhood and Hollywood films, it is worth noting that Steven Spielberg has publicly denied that his film *ET – The Extra-Terrestrial* (1982) has in any way been influenced by Ray's *The Alien*, although it is well known that copies of Ray's screenplay were available to Spielberg at Columbia Pictures.
26. *Portrait of a Director: Satyajit Ray* (1971) 114.
27. Interview with Alaknanda Dutta and Samik Bandyopadhyay, eds, *Satyajit Ray: A Film by Shyam Benegal* (1988) vii.
28. Ray's Lakhnavi tall tale is conveyed by the narrator's voice-over in the animation sequence of the prologue. Ray's casting choice for the narrator is significant for the meanings ascribed to it by Indian viewers. *The Chess Players* was welcomed as Ray's moving out of his familiar Bengal audience to make a Hindi–Urdu language film for a pan-Indian audience. Indian viewers richly appreciated Ray's casting choice for the narrator's voice, principally because the voice belonged to the leading mainstream actor of the 1970s (Amitabh Bachhan) who is well known as an exponent of the ethnic humour of Uttar Pradesh, the modern name for ancient Awadh. The mainstreaming effect of Bachhan's voice reinforces rather than detracts from the theme of subaltern modes of history, because the narrator is the main vehicle in the prologue for conveying the language associated with Awadh, the resources of Urdu wit and the lazy drawl in which the tale is told in a meandering and leisurely fashion. Urdu wit comprises an urbane style that consists as much in what is left unsaid as in how a thing is said. Ray's casting choice conveyed a double meaning to the Indian viewer: the mainstreaming effect conveyed the directorial intention of intervening in the popular and populist Indian culture: furthermore, the matinee idol's voice first effectively conveyed Premchand's savage irony: then the narrator reversed viewer expectations, by estranging viewers from Premchand's nationalist satire and connecting viewers to Ray's comical perspective and cinematic satire through the subtleties and ironies that are possible in the Urdu language.
29. Ray's *Agantuk* (1991) is a fascinating take on the discipline of anthropology. The child of a wealthy Calcutta family hears from his parents that his mother's uncle, who has disappeared for years, is expected as a house guest. Ray's critique

of the insider/outsider anthropological binary in *Agantuk* focuses, not on the Western outsider and the Indian insider, but on a critique of the Indian elite family who treat the long-lost uncle with suspicion and distrust. Once again Ray makes the child's perspective central to his exploration of a discipline that has historically been closely associated with colonialism. It is through the boy-child's avid and hungry interest that we gaze at the stranger (Utpal Dutt). Viewers are introduced to the field of anthropology from the uncle's point of view, as a site for exploring other cultures, learning about them and living with them in a spirit of love and admiration. However, Ray does not forget that this core impulse of curiosity and genuine admiration for other cultures in the anthropologist is deformed by the power relations between those who study and those who are studied. He highlights the fact that anthropologizing the other is not only done by the West to the non-West, but also by the indigenous elite to those fellow-Indians who jeopardize them or are a threat to their class interests.

30. Sergei Eisentein, *Methods of Montage* (1929).
31. *The Inner Eye*, op. cit., 17.
32. Ray's non-Indian friends date from his adolescence and early youth, long before he embarked on his filmmaking. As an adolescent he made friends with the American GIs stationed in Calcutta in order to view American films that were screened for the soldiers, he also made friends with the American soldiers who shared his passion for Western classical music. In 1949 he met the French director Jean Renoir and began a lifetime's association with him. His British friends included Lindsay Anderson and Norman Clare, whom he met when they visited Calcutta. After he began making films, the circle of Ray's non-Indian friends included Marie Seton and the science fiction writer Arthur C. Clarke.
33. *The Inner Eye*, op. cit., 70.
34. In the 1970s, Ray consistently refused the offers made by the Indira Gandhi government to make propaganda films praising her tyrannical state apparatus, and paid the price for refusing to work as an ideologue for her. Ray's experiences of shame friendship vis-à-vis Hollywood directors is more comical. In 1964 Ray was at the Berlin Film Festival and found himself the puzzled recipient of overtures of friendship from the famed Hollywood producer David Selznick. After promising Ray total directorial freedom in their future joint ventures, Selznick sent a memo to Ray's hotel room in which Selznick outlined the speech Ray was to deliver at the award ceremony. After Ray gave his own speech, he heard no more from Selznick.
35. Ray, "My Wajid is not Effete and Effeminate!", *Illustrated Weekly of India* (31 Dec. 1978) 50.
36. Ibid., 49–51.
37. See Premchand's short fiction in Chapter 3 for a representative example of nationalist analysis of Awadh's defeat at the hands of the East India Company in 1856.
38. Ashis Nandy comments on the Brahmo tradition that formed Satyajit Ray's world-view, "By the time Satyajit was born, the family culture had become, through the Brahmo connection with late Victorian culture, aggressively rationalist, anti-hedonistic, and despite their nationalism, Anglophile" ("Satyajit Ray's Secret Guide to Exquisite Murders: Creativity, Social Criticism, and the

Partitioning of the Self", *The Savage Freud and Other Essays on Possible and Retrievable Selves* [1995] 242–243).

39. Ray, "My Wajid is not effete", op. cit., 50.
40. Robinson, *The Inner Eye*, op. cit., 17–18.
41. Ray, "My Wajid is not effete", op. cit., 50.
42. Seton, *The Inner Eye*, op. cit., 244.
43. Penny Marshall is part of a generation of female cultural workers in America in the 1980s and 1990s (Roseanne and Rosie O'Donnell are included among this generation) who used the medium of television to aggressively sustain working-class culture, celebrate its world view as well as debate the political positions of the working class on issues like the family, sexuality, employment, man–woman relations, women's rights and children's rights. Penny Marshall came into prominence when her brother Garry Marshall cast his sister and her co-star Cindy Williams in the television comedy of the 1970s *Laverne and Shirley*, in which Penny played Laverne DeFazio. There is a strong relation between the television comedy *Laverne and Shirley* and *Big*: the former explored the problems and dilemmas of two single working-class girls and the latter explores the world of the working-class male child. Other notable Penny Marshall films are *A League of Their Own* and *The Preacher's Wife*. See the unauthorized biography of Penny Marshall by Lawrence Crown and Louis Chunovic, *Penny Marshall: Director and Comedienne*, 1999.
44. A number of film reviewers credit the magic of the film *Big* to the screenwriters, Gary Ross and Anne Spielberg. My own view is that the film manages a disturbing level of social commentary without jeopardizing the placid and enchanting visual surface of the film. It is witty without being clever, and that may have to do with the creative partnership between Tom Hanks, Penny Marshall, and the screenplay writers. Gary Ross is a very interesting phenomenon of a new kind of screenwriter, as his recent film *Pleasantville* (1998), which he has both written and directed, indicates. His scripts recall the great screenwriters of Hollywood of the 1930s and 1940s, he brings an old-fashioned political engagement to the task of re-inventing the staple narratives of American life while playing with the clichés and tropes of mainstream Hollywood cinema.
45. The film does not go so far as to imagine minority men or women in the board meeting, even though it is set in New York.
46. Speaking of her childhood in a working-class neighbourhood of the Bronx, Penny Marshall says, "It was an Italian–Jewish neighborhood. But community and friends were very important" (Showbiz, 2000, Disney Enterprises).
47. The political implications of Tom Hanks's career are relevant to my interpretation of the political function of the child in *Big*. In fact I would argue that some of the most significant political commentary in mainstream cultural production in America occurs at the mythic level of children's films. Just as Soumitra Chatterjee was the face that viewers identified with Satyajit Ray's Apu, Tom Hanks is the face linked to America's self-representation in the 1990s in terms of who Americans think they are and who they would like to be, both to themselves and to the rest of the world. It is appropriate that Bill Clinton publicly expressed the desire that any film based on him should cast Tom Hanks in the role of Clinton. One can learn a good deal about the insularity, political hypocrisy, disillusionment and betrayal of minorities

caused by the 8-year tenure of the Democratic Party in the Clinton era from studying the cultural work of its most talented representative and iconic symbol, Tom Hanks. Like Clinton's political persona, Hanks brought a screen persona to life that was recognized by viewers as woman-friendly rather than woman-hating, that was completely at ease with ethnic minorities and the rights of gays even while Hanks retained the screen identity of white heterosexual middle America, that was charismatically boyish and retained that boyishness even if the film was mediocre and campy. The trouble is that the radical potential of Tom Hanks' cultural work was quickly absorbed, appropriated and mainstreamed into corporate ideology. For example the working-class fable of *Big* metamorphoses into *Toy Story* (1995) and *Toy Story 2* (1999) where the actor associated with the magic of child's play is re-associated with the voice of a toy rather than a child. Hanks' screen persona, which began as a political alternative to corporate America in *Big* and to homophobia in *Philadelphia* and to racism in *The Green Mile*, ended up as politically centrist in *Forrest Gump* and *Cast Away*. In *Cast Away* he reincarnates the Robinson Crusoe myth in order to suggest that middle America has not lost its survival skills or its enterprise in the twenty-first century.

48. Showbiz, 2000, Disney Enterprises.
49. John Travolta's image of the working-class male in *Saturday Night Fever* carries undertones of sexual aggressiveness and despair, and is the darker side of the Tom Hanks image of American masculinity in the 1980s.
50. In different seasons the toy of the season is the Tickle-Me-Elmo soft toy, the latest Barbie and Ken dolls, Nintendo games, Pokémon cards, the Harry Potter books, and Playstation.
51. By analysing *Big* in relation to *Two*, I am not suggesting a simple opposition between consumerism and non-consumerism. Rather I am drawing attention to the place of play in what Ray sees as the creative process. Play can be enhanced by toys, but for Ray gadgetry and technology do not constitute the source of play. This aspect of play as part of the creative process in children's lives is emphasized in his films like *Pather Panchali* (1955) and *Sonar Kella* (1974).

3 Towards a theory of subaltern and nationalist genres: The post-1857 Lakhnavi tall tales and their nationalist appropriation in Premchand's "The Chess Players" (1924)

1. Social reformers like Rammohan Roy, Ishwarchand Vidyasagar, Dayanand Saraswati, B. G. Tilak and G. K. Gokhale gave primacy to the cultural struggle against empire in the debates about *sati* (widow self-immolation), widow remarriage, age of consent and the education of women. For an informed account of the transition from the cultural and social to the political movements and debates see Radha Kumar, *The History of Doing: An Illustrated Account of Movements for Women's Rights and Feminism in India, 1800–1990* (1993) 7–52.
2. An example of this inattention to genre is Susie Tharu and K. Lalita's assertion that women's nationalist writings in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries "are best read as documents" and these texts "document the many faceted and often contradictory configuration of the nation-in-process even as they shape it." Even though Tharu and Lalita make a token gesture to

Indian women's nationalist writings as imaginative constructs, their unmistakable suggestion is that nationalist literatures are historical documents which do not require careful attention to the literary–rhetorical features ("The Twentieth Century: Women Writing the Nation", *Women Writing in India, Vol. II: The Twentieth Century*, ed. Susie Tharu and K. Lalita [1993]) 43–44. When genre analysis has been executed, there is a latent ethnocentrism in the notion that the dominant literary genres are First World in origin, for instance Timothy Brennan's exclusive attention to First World literary forms like the novel in order to theorize the work of British Indian authors like Salman Rushdie, see "The National Longing for Form" in Homi K. Bhabha ed., *Nation and Narration* (1990) 49–56. In contrast see Shahid Amin's *Event, Metaphor, Memory: Chauri Chaura 1922–1992* (1995) which provides a good example of the attention paid by postcolonial scholars to the historiographical narratives concerning an instance of subaltern pre-Independence resistance.

3. This is an issue that has assumed great significance, especially as the institutional inheritor of pre-Independence nationalism, the Indian nation state, has displayed its genocidal violence towards subaltern classes from the 1970s onwards.
4. Subaltern Studies historians have made it axiomatic that postcolonial analysis of the discourses and ideologies of Indian nationalism cannot be conducted without at the same time paying attention to the subaltern communities and classes, histories and forms of resistances that are excluded and depriveleged by elite nationalism. The best example of the critical examination of Indian nationalism in relation to subaltern classes is provided by Ranajit Guha's *A Disciplinary Aspect of Indian Nationalism* (1991).
5. We cannot engage with the specific historical development of a literary genre without demarcating those features of the genre that are transhistorical and shared by other world cultures. The Lakhnavi tall tale bears some resemblance to oral narratives in other cultural traditions like "Irish blarney" or the African-American "talk junk"; there are common features of exaggeration, humour and audience participation.
6. Some of the best-known post-Independence literary and cinematic celebrations of Lucknow culture are Urdu language novels like Qurratulain Hyder's *I too Have Idols* (*Mere Bhi Sanamkhane*, 1949) and *The Heart's Sorrow's Afloat* (*Safinae Ghame Dil*, 1952) and Attia Hossian's English language novel, *Sunlight on a Broken Column* (1961); as well as the film *Chaudvin ka Chand* (1962).
7. I see no need for Partha Chatterjee's preoccupation with the distinctions between First World nationalism and the specific development of Third World nationalisms, in terms of whether the latter is a "derivative" formation that owes its history of ideas to Western political thought, or can be said to have innovative and creative features of its own (see his *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse* [1993]). This preoccupation with the binary of derivative/innovative features of Indian nationalism is played out in postcolonial theorists' ongoing dialogue with Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (1983).
8. Sudipta Kaviraj, "The Imaginary Institution of India", *Subaltern Studies VII*, ed. Partha Chatterjee and Gyanendra Pandey (1993).
9. Jennifer Wicke and Michael Sprinker, "Interview with Edward Said", *Edward Said: A Critical Reader*, ed. Michael Sprinker (1992) 221–264.

10. Bill Ashcroft *et al.*, eds, "Introduction to Nationalism", *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader* (1995) 151.
11. Surendra Mohan refers to *pehle aap* as an idiom exemplifying the basic "ambience of Awadh" and calls it "a philosophy of co-existence" (op. cit. [1997] 18) and Amaresh Misra refers to the "*pehle aap* tehzeeb of the city" (op. cit. [1998] xv).
12. Sharar, ibid., 194. He also notes: "With an equal . . . If you go anywhere with him, you will keep behind and let him go before you. In accordance with correct etiquette, he will also insist that you should go first, and it may be said over and over again, 'Sir, you first' " (194).
13. A marvellous example of the provocative and surprising connections between subaltern genres and postcolonial Indian cinema can be found in director/producer Raj Kapoor's citation of the "After you" Lakhnavi tall tale. In Kapoor's blockbuster film *Bobby* (1973) which began a cinematic trend of films made on teen lovers, one of the songs "Pehle tum" (You first) memorializes the Lakhnavi tall tale by recalling it in the context of the diffidence experienced by teen lovers in declaring their love until one of them recalls that this civility caused two Lucknow nawabs to miss the train. While Kapoor's reference to the Lakhnavi tall tale contrasts two conceptions of civility in love – the outmoded feudal values of the two nawabs versus the modern urgency of teenagers – the director Raj Kumar Santoshi's reference in *Andaz Apna Apna* (1994) contains a double joke, the first joke is about cultural citation, the Lakhnavi tall tale is recalled as "Raj Kapoorji has taught us." Secondly the Santoshi and Dilip Shukla script anchors the reference to a comical scene about male competition and indigenous enterprise, where the two heroes try to board the bus at the same time and then switch their aggression into an inverted competitiveness by insisting that the other board the bus first.
14. In Lucknow the Railways were introduced in 1862 and the foundation stone for the Charbagh Railway station was laid in 1921. See Violette Graff, ed., *Lucknow*, op. cit., xviii–xix.
15. The term "subaltern condensation" requires explanation. A number of North Indian subaltern genres – humour, anecdotes, repartee, and history-telling – achieve a level of condensation that is unparalleled in mainstream literatures. It is worth speculating whether this degree of condensation arises from the dialect languages of North India which transmit oral genres, or from conditions of censorship.
16. There is a significant difference in the cultural associations of train travel in British pulp fiction and films made for television on the one hand, and Indian cinema and literature on the other. For instance, in Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes mysteries (1887–1927) and Agatha Christie's mystery novel *Four o'clock at Paddington* (1957), train travel signifies the efficiency, punctuality and thorough surveillance of transportation in imperial England, so that the killer is often identified by charting his movements through train timings. In marked contrast, Indian cinema has evolved a complex grammar for train travel and railway platforms; in *Achuut Kanya* (Director: Franz Osten [1936]) and *Pather Panchali* (Director: Satyajit Ray [1955]) the train represents the modernity due to the penetration of the countryside by the British Empire. Yet the literary-cinematic grammar of train travel also came more and more to represent a space of community, exemplified in the unpredictability of

people thrown together in sudden proximity or lovers meeting each other again and again in trains as in *Pakeezah* (Director: Kamal Amrohi [1975]). The railway platform in postcolonial literature and cinema assumes a specific significance of a non-regulated democratic space where couples are reconciled in *Swami* (Director: Basu Chatterjee [1977]), feuding families end their quarrel in *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* (Director: Aditya Chopra [1995]), the hero or heroine declare their love in *Sirf Tum* (Director: Priyadarshan [1999]).

17. W. H. Sleeman, *Oude: An Abridgment of W.H. Sleeman's A Journey Through the Kingdom of Oude in 1849–50 [1858]* [1971] 101.
18. Nineteenth-century Awadh had a number of British supporters, men and women who fell in love with the civilization and did not subscribe to the official Company view of Awadh. E. M. Forster's *A Passage to India* (1924) describes such doomed encounters without giving up the possibility that here and there individual men and women can and did connect in friendship.
19. For a sound discussion of de-industrialization in colonial India see Amiya Kumar Bagchi, "De-Industrialization in India in the Nineteenth Century: Some Theoretical Implications", *Journal of Development Studies*, Vol. 12 (1975–1976) 135–164.
20. For a discussion of the connection between satire and shamanism, see Robert C. Elliott, *The Power of Satire* (1960).
21. For the best English language commentaries on Premchand, see "Introduction", Nandini Nopany and P. Lal, trans., *Twenty-four Stories by Premchand* (1980) 1–34; David Rubin, trans., *The World of Premchand* (1969); S. R. Bald, *Novelists and Political Consciousness: Literary Expressions of Indian Nationalism 1919–1947* (1983); Norman H. Zide *et al.*, *A Premchand Reader* (1962); Govind Narain Sharma, *Munshi Premchand* (1978); Robert O. Swan, *Munshi Premchand of Lamhi Village* (1969); and Madan Gopal, *Kalam ka Mazdoor* (1965).
22. Here I make alliances with Aijaz Ahmad, who notes the need to "explore some of the difficulties" we encounter "in constructing" Indian literature as a theoretically coherent "category" for the language-literature clusters in India. See his *In Theory* (1992) 243. See also Homi K. Bhabha's *The Location of Culture* (1994).
23. The notion of sedimented genres and narratives in a text has been deployed most productively by Fredric Jameson in "Magical Narratives: On the Dialectical Use of Genre Criticism", *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (1981).
24. George Trevor, "Oude", *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, Vol. LXXXIII, No. DXI (May 1858) 634.
25. Premchand's "Shatranj ke Khilari" (1924) translated as "A Game of Chess", by Saeed Jafri, *The Chess Players and Other Screenplays*, intro. Andrew Robinson (1989) 62, 67, 68.
26. Ibid., 73.
27. Ibid., 73–74.
28. Ibid., 73.
29. *Seva Sadan* (1918); *Nirmala* was serialized in *Chand* (1925–1926) and *Godaan* (1936). He edited the following journals: *Maryada* (1922); *Madhuri* (1927–1931); *Jagran* (1932–1934); *Hans* (1930–1936).
30. According to Premchand's biographer Amrit Rai, Premchand's representation of Lucknow in "Shatranj ke Khilari" in the time of the nawabs draws on Ratan

Nath "Sarshar's" colorful portrait of the city of that time. When Premchand wrote the short story in 1924, he had just finished translating Sarshar's *Fasana-e-Azad* into Hindi, an abridged version titled *Azad-Katha* (op. cit., 208–209). Govind Narain Sharma points out that Premchand's early reading and writing was in Urdu, and in addition to Sharar and Sarshar he was influenced by Urdu novelists like Mirza Ruswa and Bankimchandra's novels in Urdu (op. cit., 62). See Premchand's essay "Sharar and Sarshar" in his *Vividh Prasang* (Miscellanous Thoughts) compiled and ed. Amrit Rai Vol. I (1962) 59–72. See Sarshar's *Fasana-e-Azad* in Premchand's Hindi translation, *Azad-Katha* (The Story of Azad) 2 Vols (1925–1926) 6th edn (1972). Also see Feroz Husain, "Life and Works of Sarshar", Urdu PhD thesis, London University (1964).

31. For an excellent account of the ways in which British administrators dismantled the Hindu–Muslim model of assimilation and replaced it with a new discursive construction of communalism see Gyanendra Pandey's *The Construction of Communalism in Colonial North India* (1990) and his "Partition and Independence in Delhi: 1947–48", *Economic and Political Weekly* (6 Sep. 1997).
32. Heber, *Narrative of a Journey*, op. cit., 177.
33. Ibid., 181.
34. Like "*Kafan*," "*Poos ki Raat*," "*Akbari Lota*," "*Paschatap*," "*Sadgati*" (another short story that was turned into a film by Ray in 1981), "*Bare Ghar ki Beti*" and "*Chimta*."
35. An index of the ways in which the cultural renaissance in nineteenth-century Awadh percolated through all the social classes was the popularity of "Dastan goi," a term that denotes the skill of storytelling practised by the people of Awadh in their everyday life. For a fascinating account see Sharar, *Lucknow: The Last Phase*, op. cit., 91–94.
36. For an excellent discussion of Gandhi's instructions for crowd control and his hostility towards the subaltern mob see Ranajit Guha, "Discipline and Mobilize", *Subaltern Studies VII*, ed. Partha Chatterjee and Gyanendra Pandey (1993) 69–120.
37. Amrit Rai, *Premchand: Kalam ka Sipahi* (1962), trans. Harish Trivedi, *Premchand: His Life and Times* (1991) 387.
38. See Parita Mukta, *Upholding the Common Life: The Community of Mirabai* (1994).
39. "The Chess Players", op. cit., 70.
40. Rosie Llewellyn-Jones writes:

    > The Company had already done very well out of Awadh even before the takeover. The Nawabs had been debtors to the Company since the mid-eighteenth century and the days of Shuja-ud-daula. In addition, they had also been cajoled into making very substantial loans to the Calcutta Government, which would not now have to be paid back. (*Engaging Scoundrels: True Tales of Old Lucknow* [2000] 126)

41. *Premchand: His Life and Times*, op. cit., 74. A measure of Premchand's enormous influence on his contemporaries is the number of memoirs written about him. Apart from Amrit Rai's biography, Rai's collection of literary reminiscences in Amrit Rai, ed., *Premchand Smriti* (1959); see also the famous Hindi poet Jainendra Kumar's reminiscences of Premchand in *Premchand: Ek Kritt Vyaktitva*

(1973); and Premchand's wife's Shivrani Devi's memoir *Premchand: Ghar Men* (1956).

42. See Antonio Gramsci's "Some Theoretical and Practical Aspects of Economism" (1928–1935), *Selections From the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*, ed. and trans. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (1971) 160–168.
43. See Partha Chatterjee's analysis of Nehruvian nationalism. Chatterjee characterizes Nehruvian nationalism as according "a primacy to the economic determinants" (*Nationalist Thought in the Colonial World*, op. cit., 144). The term "Nehruvian nationalism" describes the writings, political career, and enormous influence on cultural production of India's first prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru (1889–1964), in the decades when he was prime minister (1947–1964). Like the political figure of Parnell in twentieth-century Irish literature, Nehruvian nationalism bespoke a certain political idealism. The sources for this political idealism were Nehru's sympathy with Soviet and Chinese Marxism and his belief in artistic and political freedom.

    The constitutive element of Nehruvian nationalism lay in the notion that the socialist model as well as Western style industrialization could be adapted to Indian realities. Nehruvian nationalism derived its persuasiveness from the aspirations of the nationalist elite to assert their claim to indigenous enterprise, a claim that was predicated on alienating themselves from the image of the unenterprising Indian. To this end Nehruvian nationalism confidently repudiated the colonialist binary which posited the overwhelming presence of enterprise in the West and the glaring absence of enterprise in the East. Instead of this colonial narrative of Occidental enterprise/Oriental absence of enterprise, Nehru offered a new historiographical narrative in *The Discovery of India* (1946) which disseminated the Nehruvian approach to Indian history to several generation of Indians.

    In Nehruvian historiography there are cycles, from the earliest times in Indian history to the twentieth century, which are marked by periods of enterprising activity and periods of decline and torpor. It may strike a discordant note that Nehru, as the leader of one of the successful anti-colonial agitations in the world, was prepared to win the argument concerning indigenous enterprise by applauding the imperialist enterprise of the Gupta Empire in ancient India. In the *Discovery of India* the expanded cultural critique has been transmogrified into an Asiatic civilizational process, "And yet for all these bright patches, an inner weakness seems to seize India, which affects not only her political status but her creative activities" (221). The politics of Nehruvian expanded cultural critique is to designate the state, exemplified by the Gupta monarchs, as the agent of change that will convert unenterprising Indians into efficient citizens. In the everyday perception of postcolonial Indians, the Nehruvian populist slogan "Indolence is criminal/anti-national" (*Aaram haram hai*) meant that indolence was anti-national, and correspondingly the indigenous enterprise of modernization and industrialization was extolled as the chief civic virtue. In state-centred Nehruvian nationalism, what was left open and unresolved was bourgeois nationalism's power to criminalize and exile groups, classes, and communities as anti-national, unproductive, and indolent Indians.
44. "The Chess Players", op. cit., 62.
45. Trevor, "Oude", *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, op. cit., 634. Sleeman also spoke on behalf of the Awadh peasantry and lower classes, in order to

emphasize the point that the East India Company's enterprise was beneficial for the lower classes of Awadh.

46. "The Chess Players", op. cit., 62.
47. "The Chess Players", op. cit., 67. Note how this sentence by Premchand echoes Sleeman's statement, "The present sovereign never hears a complaint, or reads a petition, or report of any kind" (*Sleeman in Oude*, op. cit., 101).
48. "The Chess Players", op. cit., 62.
49. Ibid., 69.
50. Ibid., 70.
51. Ibid., 74.
52. British colonialism prescribed a specific set of attributes for the male colonizer like aggression, violence, denial of the affective self, and sexual restraint. There was a strict code of appropriate manly behavior which was circumscribed with prohibitions concerning activities and social behaviour that were deemed "unmanly." Ashish Nandy suggests that unlike Spanish, Portuguese, and French colonialisms the English colonial discourse was marked by upper-class notions of "sexual distance, abstinence and self-control" and the "built-in fears about losing potency through the loss of activism and the ability to be violent" and "the fantasies which underlie these fears ... castration and counter-castration" (*The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self Under Colonialism* [1983] 10, 55). See also Mrinalini Sinha, *Colonial Masculinity: The "Manly Englishman" and the "Effeminate Bengali" in the Late Nineteenth Century* (1995).
53. *Sleeman in Oude*, op. cit., 101.
54. Ibid., 110.
55. Ibid., 67.
56. "The Chess Players", op. cit., 62.
57. Ibid., 67.
58. Premchand was not alone in ascribing specifically colonial ideas to the common people. Bharatendu Harishchandra, often known as the father of modern Hindi language, gave a famous speech at a meeting organized by the Arya Deshopkarni Sabha at the Dadri Mela in Ballia November in 1884 titled "How can India progress?" In this nationalist speech Bharatendu made frequent reference to the colonial discourse of the lazy Indian, his rhetorical strategies in all these references was to make it appear that the colonial discourse of lazy Indians was in fact the common sense and good sense of the people. For the full text of this speech in its original Hindi and English translation see Gyanendra Pandey, *The Constructions of Communalism*, op. cit., 267–278. Pandey's interpretation focuses on the communalist dimension of this speech.
59. Fundamental to Gandhian thought was the rejection of the colonial British model of enterprise, and the revival and resuscitation of indigenous modes of productivity symbolized in the Gandhian *charkha* or spinning wheel. Partha Chatterjee has described Gandhi's critique of the West as the Gandhian "critique of civil society" ("Gandhi and the Critique of Civil Society", *Subaltern Studies III*, ed. Ranajit Guha [1984] 153–195).
60. "The Chess Players", 71.
61. Ibid., 73.
62. Ibid., 73–74.
63. Ibid., 71.

64. Kumkum Sangari and Sudesh Vaid's anthology of essays examine the colonial "recasting" of indigenous patriarchal formations in *Recasting Women: Essays in Indian Colonial History* (1997, 3rd edition). Radha Kumar focuses on the contributions of social reform movements "in the formation of a new set of patriarchal gender-based relations, essential in the constitution of bourgeois society" (*The History of Doing*, op. cit., 8).
65. Trevor, "Oude", op. cit., 634.
66. Also see Suresht Renjen Bald, "Power and Powerlessness of Rural and Urban Women in Premchand's Godan", *Journal of South Asian Literature*, op. cit., 1–15.
67. There was a marked ambivalence in the nationalist discourse of the 1920s between the secular exhortations for Hindu–Muslim unity and an increasing strain of anti-Muslim rhetoric. See Uma Chakravarti's "Whatever Happened to the Vedic *Dasi*? Orientalism, Nationalism and Script for the Past", *Recasting Women*, op. cit., 27–87.
68. "The Chess Players", op. cit., 63.
69. Ibid., 62, 69.
70. Ibid., 69–70.
71. For an informed political analysis of the evolution of chess see Marilyn Yalom's *Birth of the Chess Queen* (2004) where she describes how the transformation of the chess piece known as Vizier into the Queen reflects the rise of power of female European monarchs as chess travelled from India through Islamic conquests to Europe.
72. Ibid., 63.
73. Ibid., 62.
74. Ibid.
75. In this context see Carlo Coppola, "Premchand's Address to the First Meeting of the All India Progressive Writers' Association: Some Speculations", *Journal of South Asian Literature*, op. cit., 21–39. There is also a tradition of Marxist literary criticism of Premchand's text. In Hindi language criticism I specially recommend Manmath Nath Gupta, *Premchand: Vyakti aur Sahityakar* (1961).
76. Ibid., 62.
77. Ibid.

4 Comic representations of indigenous enterprise in Daniel Mann's *The Teahouse of the August Moon* (1956) and Satyajit Ray's *The Chess Players* (1977)

1. British and American reviewers of the film recognized that in *The Chess Players*, Ray foregrounds chess as an exemplar of the traditional innovations and inventions of India, even though most of them were unimpressed by Ray's cinematic analysis of British rule over India. See David Ansen's review in *Newsweek*, 1978 and Robert Hatch in *The Nation*, 1978 cited in Chidananda Das Gupta ed., *Film India: Satyajit Ray; An Anthology of Statements on Ray and by Ray* (1981).
2. Robinson describes this period in Ray's life: "he (Ray) was also keenly interested in chess. Over the next ten years or so this became an addiction – the main bond (along with Western classical music) between him and his first English friend, an RAF serviceman with time on his hands in Calcutta in 1944–1946... After this friend was demobbed, Ray found himself without a partner and

took to playing solitaire chess. Over the next few years he became engrossed in it and bought books on the subject, which he would soon decide to sell to raise money to shoot pilot footage for his first film *Pather Panchali*. His passion for chess disappeared only with the onset of a greater passion: film-making" (cited in Andrew Robinson, *Satyajit Ray: The Inner Eye* [1989] 4).

3. Ray, *The Chess Players and Other Screenplays*, vii.
4. This cultural cross-fertilization is typified by the film's director Daniel Mann. Mann was closely associated with the New York-based Actor's Studio, he directed two highly successful film adaptations of Broadway plays, and was considered to be an outsider in Hollywood.
5. Vern Snieder's novel is generally considered the best-known American work about Okinawa, despite being a work of fiction. Sneider wrote another novel about Okinawa, titled *The King from Ashtabula* (New York, 1960). John Patrick not only wrote the Broadway version and the screenplay for the film, he also wrote the television version.
6. In 1955, *Independent Film Journal* named Brando Hollywood's top money-making star. Brando's clout can be gauged by the fact that his MGM contract gave him the right to select the film's director. I invoke Brando in my analysis of the film as an activist and oppositional cultural worker who has consistently critiqued American imperialism at home and abroad. The available biographies of Brando record the fact that he publicly expressed his disenchantment with the film's aesthetics and politics. See Peter Manso, *Brando The Biography* (1994); Bob Thomas, *Marlon: Portrait of the Rebel as an Artist* (1973).
7. John Patrick's adaptation of Vern Sneider's novel won the 1954 Pulitzer Prize for Drama and the 1953–1954 New York Critic's Circle Award for the best American play. David Wayne won the 1953–1954 Antoinette Perry Award for the Best Performance for his role as Sakini in Patrick's play. The film was a box-office success but considered an artistic failure in terms of Brando's performance, and his make-up and hair was generally critiqued.
8. Okinawa has been in the news in the last decade because of the continuing military occupation of the island by the US military. After the United States ended its occupation of Japan in 1952, it maintained US sovereignty over Okinawa till 1972. In the words of the American general Douglas MacArthur, Okinawa functioned as the keystone of the Pacific for the United States. Thereafter the United States continued to maintain military bases in the island despite the objections of the Okinawans. The rape of a 12-year-old Okinawan schoolgirl by three US servicemen in 1995 and the recent news of another rape by a US serviceman in 2001 foreground the violence that continues to be perpetuated by the continuing military presence of the United States. Okinawa was in the news this year also for the disparaging remarks made about the Okinawans by a US military personnel. For a general account of American–Japanese relations see Walter LaFeber's, *The Clash: U.S.–Japanese Relations Throughout History* (1997); Gerald Astor, *Operation Iceberg: The Invasion and Conquest of Okinawa in World War II – An Oral History* (1995).
9. All quotations of the dialogue are from John Patrick, *The Teahouse of the August Moon*, A Play by John Patrick. Adapted from the novel by Vern Sneider New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons (1952) because the John Patrick screenplay is almost identical to the John Patrick play, except for the final interpolation which belongs to the screenplay.

10. In texts, indigenous enterprise is always represented in the genre of comedy, and the representation always begins with asserting the failure of indigenous enterprise. In the film, two of the most exquisitely slapstick funny scenes depict Okinawan enterprise; the first shows the incredible commodiousness of Fisby's military jeep in accommodating an old woman, an old man, three children, a goat, Sakini, Fisby, and mountains of luggage; the second episode is a prolonged sequence in which Lotus Blossom, the Geisha girl, displays her work ethic and intrepid determination by forcibly attempting to undress a reluctant Fisby in order to persuade him to don his bathrobe as a substitute Kimono. Brando is reported to have said after viewing Patrick's play, "I laughed so hard I almost ended up beating the hat of the lady in front of me" (Thomas, *Marlon: Portrait of the Rebel*, op. cit., 110–111).
11. Patrick, *The Teahouse of the August Moon*, op. cit., 13.
12. Ibid., 174.
13. In the film the Okinawan activities of tea drinking, watching the sun go down at dusk, and catching your own lucky cricket are examples of Okinawan unproductive play, until the two American characters Captain Fisby and MacClean are converted into practising it.
14. Patrick, *The Teahouse of the August Moon*, op. cit., 51–52.
15. The film's liberal politics, its self-avowed project of anti-colonial critique, has to be evaluated within the context of its reconciliatory conclusion. In other words, every colonial stereotype is foregrounded in the film only in order to debunk it as an easily cleared misunderstanding, and the possibilities of co-existence and cooperation under colonial conditions are triumphantly celebrated in the happy ending.
16. Patrick, *The Teahouse of the August Moon*, op. cit., 176–177.
17. One of the lesser-known political contexts of Ray's *The Chess Players* is the political event that came to be known as the Emergency years, denoting the Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's declaration of a country-wide emergency in June 1975 till early 1977. It is generally acknowledged that Ray's oppositional stance is articulated in the film he made in the Emergency years, titled *Jana Aranya* (*The Middle Man*, 1975), in which there is a caricature of Indira Gandhi on the wall in one of the scenes of the film. Ray called this scene in *Jana Aranya* "the most explicit criticism of Congress ever put into a film" (207). In these Emergency years of nationwide repression of the intelligentsia and oppositional parties and activists, Ray was also composing the screenplay of *The Chess Players*. Ray comments that his film *The Chess Players* is "a timeless comment on non-involvement" (245). It is possible that Ray found, like many other oppositional intellectuals, that his critique of the apolitical intellectual in the state terrorism of the Emergency years would be more persuasive if he located his critique in a story about another era. Certainly this is the direction of Ray's melancholy observation, "I find the contemporary scene doesn't lend itself to crystallization" (cited in Andrew Robinson, *Satyajit Ray: The Inner Eye* [1989] 207).
18. Ray's politics is evident from his film on the Bengali youth who suffered unemployment in the post-Independence years in *Pratidwandi* (*The Adversary*, 1970). In this film the hero's brother represents the disaffected youth that spearheaded the Naxalite movement. In his letter to his biographer and friend, Marie Seton Ray describes *Pratidwandi* as "the first truly contemporary

film made here – and basically though not blatantly – pro-revolution – because I feel nothing else can set the country up on its feet" (cited in Andrew Robinson, *Satyajit Ray: The Inner Eye* [1989] 204). As an independent-minded fellow traveller of the left wing in Bengal, Ray articulated his own understanding of key themes in Subaltern Studies historiography: the cynicism of the postcolonial urban youth *Jana Aranya* (*The Middle Man*, 1975): the critique of state repression by Indira Gandhi's government (*Hirak Rajar Deshe* [*The Kingdom of Diamonds*], 1980), Ranajit Guha identifies this period of state repression as crucial in the formation of the political consciousness of the Subaltern Studies collective (*A Subaltern Studies Reader 1986–1995*, ed. Ranajit Guha [1997] xi); It is clear that Ray was familiar with their work and drew on Sumit Sarkar's critique of Swadeshi Movement in *The Home and the World* or *Ghare Baire* (1984). See Andrew Robinson, *Satyajit Ray: The Inner Eye* (1989) 265.

19. *Subaltern Studies*, Vols I–VII (1982–1989).
20. "Dominance Without Hegemony and Its Historiography", *Subaltern Studies*, VI (1989) 212.
21. Ibid., 213.
22. "My Wajid Ali Is Not 'Effete and Effeminate'!", *The Illustrated Weekly of India* (31 Dec. 1978) 51.
23. Ray, *The Chess Players and Other Screenplays*, ed. Andrew Robinson (1989) 3.
24. Ray pays filmic tribute to several regional Indian cultures (his filmic tribute to the city of Benaras in *Aparajito* [1956] and *Joi Baba Felunath* [1978], his appreciation of the hill station Darjeeling in *Kanchanjunga* [1962], his fascination with Rajasthan in *Abhijan* [1962] and *Sonar Kella* [1974], his documentary films on Sikkim [1971] and on a leading exponent of the classical dance form of South India *Bala* [1976]).
25. Andrew Robinson, *Satyajit Ray: The Inner Eye* (1989) 241.
26. Chidananda Das Gupta, *The Cinema of Satyajit Ray* (1980) 161–162.
27. Ibid., 114.
28. Robinson writes, " 'People just didn't know anything about the history of Lucknow and its nawabs', says Ray. 'The present generation knows absolutely nothing about this and it applies to most people. They know vaguely about the annexation of Oudh but nothing about what preceded it and the British–nawab relationship' " (*Satyajit Ray: The Inner Eye*, op. cit., 244).
29. Abdul Halim Sharar in *Hindustan Men Mashriqi Tamaddumn ka Akhri Namunah* in *Dilgudaz* (1887–1926), trans. and ed. E. S. Harcourt and Fakhir Hussain as *Lucknow: The Last Phase of an Oriental Culture* (1976) describes this period as "Lucknow's golden age" for the development of these features of sophisticated repartee, bandinage, and conversation (93).
30. Meer and Mirza's great-grandfathers claim to have served in the army of Burhan-ul-Mulk, the founder of the dynasty of Awadh nawabs. In return for their services they were rewarded with estates which are still enjoyed by his great-grandsons. Burhan-ul-Mulk or Saadat Khan's family came from Iran and he is best known for his military exploits in the court of Delhi, then as the Mughal Governor of Awadh. He and his army are credited with crafting modern-day Awadh by subduing and bringing under control the various rebellious chiefs, rulers, and zamindars of Awadh who were semi-independent and refused to pay revenue to the Mughals. For a detailed assessment see

Surendra Mohan, op. cit., 24–45; also see Muzaffar Alam, "The Awadh Regime, the Mughals and the Countryside" and Michael H. Fisher, "Awadh and the English East India Company" in *Lucknow*, ed. V. Graff, op. cit., 16–48.

31. By subaltern cultural workers I mean nomadic bards and wandering minstrels, everyday storytellers, street performers, beggars, prostitutes, itinerant singers of devotional songs, regional theatre and dance groups, folk artists and musicians, puppeteers, circus workers, specialized artists for religious festivals, craftsmen and artists located around temples and pilgrimage sites, wedding dancers and orchestra, and professional mourners.
32. Marie Seton, *Portrait of a Director: Satyajit Ray* (1971); Alaknanda Datta and Samik Bandyopadhyay, ed., *Satyajit Ray: A Film by Shyam Benegal* (1988).
33. Robinson, *Satyajit Ray: The Inner Eye*, op. cit., 52–53.
34. Ibid., 316 for Robinson's account of Ray's views on the influence of the jatra companies on his use of music in film.
35. The rams are named Sohrab and Rustom, Meer bets on Rustom and loses. Rustom and Sohrab are two characters in a popular tale about tenth-century Persia, the country to which the Shia rulers of Awadh traced their origin. Rustom was the King of Persia whose son Sohrab was born and brought up in his absence, and unaware of their relationship they confront each other in the battlefield. Rustom defeats Sohrab and feudal patriarchy is affirmed. Ray uses the Rustom–Sohrab reference to layer the scene with reference to the old days of Muslim martial glory where father fought son. This martial reference is juxtaposed to the present day where the Royal proclamation orders the populace to desist from resistance. Meer's betting on Sohrab and losing forewarns the viewer that like Meer, Awadh is on the losing side.
36. Ray chooses these particular objects – nuts, spices and vegetables – as a metonymy. The objects refer to the history of colonialism: the Company came trading for luxurious items like spices and took over the country. Also Ray humourously uses them to signify the native correlate of British "improvement" of the chess game by making it a faster game. Moreover the episode refers to Ray's theoretical position on indigenous enterprise, which is based on his practice as an artist who continually invents and adapts to postcolonial realities. For instance Ray could not afford to lose shooting days due to the monsoon, yet for his Benaras house set in *Aparajito*, (The Unvanquished, 1956) he wanted the realism of natural light. The traditional courtyards of Benaras houses are open to the sky and convey a peculiarly diffused daylight. Therefore Ray and his cameraman Subrata Mitra invented shadowless bounce lighting. Mitra reflected the lights on a wooden frame above the courtyard, stretching cheap cotton cloth over the frame. Thus Ray proved that indigenous innovation in the film medium can be produced, not through enormous funds, but in the material circumstances of sheer necessity and the need for economy because Ray's films always operate on a shoestring budget. For an excellent account of the Ray–Mitra innovation of bounce lighting see Marie Seton, *Portrait of a Director: Satyajit Ray* (1971) 118–119.
37. For instance, the use of this trope to signify the plundering, corruption, and betrayal of the citizenry by the postcolonial male elite in Senegal in the Senegalese novelist and filmmaker Ousmane Sembene's *Xala* (1976). By using the term "aphanisis" (disappearance) to refer to sexual impotence in colonialism, I recall the sense in which Ernest Jones first used it as the disappearance of

sexual desire ("Early Development of Female Sexuality" [1927], *Papers on Psychoanalysis*, 1948) as well as the sense in which Lacan uses it, as synonymous with the term "fading" of the subject in the process of alienation (*The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis* [1978] 208).

38. The period of Awadh's ascendancy produced great exploration and innovation in the arts of pleasure like gastronomy, music, dance, poetry, and drama as well as dress, jewellery, entertainment, and erotic love. For instance, Abdul Halim Sharrar notes the exalted position of courtesans as practitioners of the arts of poetry and theatre in addition to singing and dancing and their *kothas* (houses) as repositories of culture where singers and poets gathered and presented their latest compositions (*Lucknow: The Last Phase of an Oriental Culture*, op. cit., 145–147). Therefore Ray includes a scene of marital lovemaking between Mirza and Khurshid that is not in Premchand's story but which in part suggests that the women and men of the era were neither prudish nor unversed in the arts of lovemaking and accepted it as an enjoyable aspect of life. It is interesting to note that while Ray refused to explore Wajid Ali Shah's amorous adventures for the film because it would play into the myth of the oriental despot, he is unembarrassed about exploring the sexuality of the two nawabs and their wives, and exploration of marital relationships is a theme that runs through his movies like *Apur Sansar* (*The World of Apu*, 1959); *Kapurush* (*The Coward*, 1965); *Mahanagar* (*The Big City*, 1963) and *Ghare Baire* (*Home and the World*, 1984).
39. I find that Franz Fanon's work is pertinent here not only because he belonged to the first wave of psychoanalysts who inaugurated the field of what has now come to be known as the psychopathology of colonialism; but as the early inheritor of the Negritude movement, his concern is less with the colonizer and more with the pathology of the colonized peoples. For instance, he explores the differential effects of colonization on the gendered sexuality of the colonized and notes the self-hatred and self-loathing practised by the coloured Martinique woman who desires the white man for a "bit of whiteness in her life" (42); while the desire of the man of colour for the white woman proves to him that he is "worthy of white love. I am loved like a white man" (63). See *Black Skin, White Masks* (1967).
40. Through Khurshid's words Ray gestures at the custom in Lucknow for upper-class women households to employ *dominis* to entertain them with mimicry, stories, dancing, and singing to help them keep awake through the night of vigil on festive occasions. Andrew Robinson notes that Fakhir Hussain, one of Sharar's translators, wrote a letter to Ray that every detail of the film *The Chess Players* was correct (241).
41. One of the words most often used for sexual intercourse in Hindi/Urdu is *kaam*, a word that literally means work.
42. For Freud the term "disavowal" is linked to psychosis and denotes "a specific mode of defense which consists in the subject's refusing to recognize the reality of a traumatic perception" (Jean Laplanche and Jean-Bertrand Pontalis, *The Language of Psycho-Analysis*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith [1974] 118). For example, when children first discover the absence of penis in the girl, they disavow it and believe they do see the penis. I deliberately use the term "disavowal" in connection with Khurshid to indicate that her normative

sexual desire in the context of the social-political upheaval taking place in Lucknow is the refusal to recognize the reality of a trauma.

43. Fanon explains the function of the scapegoat in the context of colonialism thus:

> each individual has to charge the blame for his baser drives, his impulses, to the account of an evil genius, which is that of the culture to which he belongs (we have seen that this is the Negro). This collective guilt is borne by what is conventionally called the scapegoat. Now the scapegoat for white society – which is based on myths of progress, civilization, liberalism, education, enlightenment, refinement – will be precisely the force that opposes the expansion and the triumph of these myths. This brutal opposing force is supplied by the Negro.
>
> In the society of the Antilles, . . . the young Negro, identifying himself with the civilizing power, will make the nigger the scapegoat of his moral life. (*Black Skins, White Masks*, op. cit., 194)

Fanon's astute observation is that for the white society as well as for the young man of colour the scapegoat function is served by the "nigger." Analogously the two nawabs of Awadh (as well as Wajid Ali Shah) serve as the scapegoats at whom the colonialist as well as nationalist direct their ire. It is in this sense that turn by turn Meer and Mirza occupy the place of Wajid.

44. Ray, "My Wajid Ali Is Not 'Effete and Effeminate'!" *The Illustrated Weekly of India* (31 Dec. 1978) 51.
45. Cowardice is another resonant trope in colonialism. Fanon notes the occurrence of this trope in Aime' Césaire's writings. He writes: "While he was in France, studying for his degree in literature, Césaire 'discovered his cowardice.' He knew that it was cowardice, but he could never say why." Fanon analyses the sudden onset of this fear and cowardice to the fact that in France Césaire had to establish that "there was nothing in common between himself" and the "Negro in the streetcar [who] was funny and ugly" (193). Therefore for Fanon, Césaire's cowardice was the result of the fact that the "Negro is forever in combat with his own image" (*Black Skins, White Masks*, op. cit., 194).
46. I move between two allied genres, the Lakhnavi tall tale and the Urdu sexual farce because the tall tale borrows elements from the culture like the sexual farce and associates it with the central historical event which is continually re-enacted in the tall tale which is the annexation of Awadh by the British.
47. By the death of desire I do not imply the death of the subject. By the phrase "death of desire" I draw attention to two features of colonialism: colonialism exacerbates the alienation of the subject and sets the desire of the colonized into infinite displacement and play, Meer and Mirza's desire is displaced onto an obsession with chess. As a consequence Meer and Mirza display the underlying structure of the obsessional neurotic. The obsessional neurotic is preoccupied with the question which is "a question which being poses for the subject;" it is the question about Death, " 'To be or not to be?,' 'Am I dead or alive?' or 'Why do I exist?' " (Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar: Book III: The Psychoses, 1955–56*, trans. Russell Grigg [1993] 174, 179–180). The obsessional responds to the question with guilt and a feverish desire to justify his existence, therefore the obsessional performs some compulsive ritual, like Meer and Mirza's

games of chess. Also see Dylan Evans, *An Introductory Dictionary of Lacanian Psychoanalysis* (1996) 126.

48. See Shahid Amin's excellent work on rumor, "Gandhi as Mahatma: Gorakhpur District, Eastern UP, 1921–2" in *Subaltern Studies III: Writings on South Asian History*, ed. Ranajit Guha (1984) 1–61.
49. Premchand, "Shatranj ke Khilari", trans. Saeed Jaffrey, "A Game of Chess" in Satyajit Ray's *The Chess Players and Other Screenplays*, ed. Andrew Robinson (1989) 69–74.
50. The *Bara Imambara* or House of Imams is one of the only buildings that remains of the original Lucknow, built by Asaf-ud-Daula in 1784, the time of the great famine, to give work and money to the rich and poor alike. Its arched roof, built without the support of a single beam, is the largest of its kind in the world and the workmanship therefore is counted amongst one of the wonders of the world. See Sharar's, *Lucknow: The Last Phase*, op. cit., 47. "I have never seen an architectural view which pleased me more from its richness and variety, as well as the proportions and general good taste of its principal features" wrote Bishop Heber in *Narrative of a Journey Through the Upper Provinces of India (1828)* (*Selections from Heber's Journal*, ed. M. A. Laird [1971] 174). On the destruction of the city in the mutiny and its aftermath by the British, see John Pemble, *The Raj, the Indian Mutiny and the Kingdom of Oudh 1801–1859* (1977) 249–257.
51. The sound of the shehnai is sonorous and auspicious. It is played to mark auspicious beginnings and is associated with the sorrow of a bride departing from her natal home after marriage. Ray keeps alive both these associations in framing Meer and Mirza's departure from the city with this soundtrack.
52. *The Chess Players and Other Screenplays*, op. cit., 54.
53. Bishop Heber called the Awadh court "the most polished and splendid court at present in India" (182) and compared the city of Lucknow to European cities "Lucknow has more resemblance to some of the smaller European capitals (Dresden for instance) than anything which I have seen in India" (172, *Narrative of a Journey Through the Upper Provinces of India (1828)*, op. cit.). I want to thank Jonathan Arac for pointing out that Dresden is now itself a razed city. In Mirza's sarcastic suggestion that maybe the mosque has been "razed" to the ground by the British, Ray gestures at the 1857 war of independence after which all buildings in Lucknow, with very few exceptions, were razed to the ground by the British and a whole new method of city planning and municipal works came into being with the army cantonments outside the city. In Meer's admission, "That mosque was in Cawnpore, I saw it as a child," Ray reminds us of the place where the massacre of 200 English women and children in 1858 by the mutineers excited savage revenge from the British troops in Awadh, while the media in London as well as Calcutta, the British Parliament and public figures such as Charles Dickens called for even more ruthless reprisals. See Pemble, *The Raj, the Indian Mutiny*, op. cit., 177–179. Through Meer's comment Ray suggests that childhood memories are co-present in the dreamspace moment alongside the ravages of the 1857 war.
54. One of the best-known cinematic statements about the relation between Lakhnavi culture and the language of friendship is Guru Dutt's *Chaudvin ka Chand* (1960). The film's plot draws from an oral legend about the nawab who discovers that the woman that he has been in love with is the wife of

his friend. He prefers to kill himself rather than betray his friend. As a Marxist and nationalist critic of feudalism, Guru Dutt is critical of the excesses of the culture like the purdah system, but Dutt's film is an affectionate and loving tribute to Lakhnavi friendship. See Ashish Rajadhaksha and Paul Willemen's write-up of Dutt, *Encyclopedia of Indian Cinema* (1999) 93.

55. Jacques Derrida observes that although the differential foundation of the friend/enemy opposition in certain idioms can never be reduced to a question of language or discourse, the opposition is never accidental or extrinsic because "It recalls the too-evident fact that this semantics belongs to a culture, to structures of ethnic, social and political organization in which language is irreducible" (89). Derrida makes this observation in the course of his meditation on the question of the politics of friendship in Greek and Judaeo-Christian history. In doing so he calls attention to Nietzsche's "In honor of friendship" noting that Nietzsche praised friendship as "the gift and the dependency – that is, this law of the other assigned to us by friendship, a sentiment even more sublime than the freedom or self-sufficiency of a subject" (63). Through an analysis of Nietzsche, Derrida shows that Nietzsche explored the politics and history of the world, a history of the political "*in its link to loving*, precisely, to friendship as well as to love – more precisely, to the Greek, Jewish and Christian history of this link, of the binding and unbinding of this link." Derrida credits Nietzsche with representing the history, memory, and culture of the Greek, Judaeo-Christian world within "the political example of the friend/enemy opposition" (79). See Derrida's *Politics of Friendship* trans. George Collins (1997) for a detailed and provocative re-examination of the politics of friendship issuing from a statement made by Montaigne quoting a remark attributed to Aristotle, "O my friends, there is no friend."
56. This is the main thrust of Ray's argument in his magazine article, he writes, "The *crux* of the theme [of the film] is to be found at the end of the film, in Meer and Mirza's *continuing* to play chess in the British way after they have cleared their conscience by admitting that they have been cowardly in their behaviour" ("My Wajid Ali Is Not 'Effete and Effeminate'!", op. cit., 51). In contrast, recall that in Chapter 1 in *The Music Room* Ray tells us the pre-history of this transformation, of the death of men like Bishwambhar Rai and the disappearance of old feudal patron/client relations and the emergence of the new capitalist entrepreneurs like Ganguly.
57. Ibid.

5 Refuting the expanded cultural critique: The construction of Wajid Ali Shah's alterity

1. In a recent film *Tarkieb* (2000) set in postcolonial India, an itinerant sherbet maker standing on a street tells the hero of the film that his sherbet is special because it is made by a recipe passed down by his great-grandfather who worked in the kitchens of Wajid Ali Shah. The heroine of the movie *Sunghursh* (1968), based on a story written by Mahashweta Devi and set in Benaras, is a courtesan and has gained her reputation at the court of the most famous patron of music, dance, and the arts in North India, Nawab Wajid Ali Shah.
2. In the Basu Chatterjee film *Naram Garam* (1981) the evocation of Wajid Ali Shah is to emphasize the incongruousness of a rich old man attempting to

secretly arrange his marriage to a poor girl of his daughter's age. To stitch his wedding clothes he calls for a tailor from Lucknow whose family is known to have stitched the wedding clothes of Wajid Ali Shah. In a recent film *Hadh Kar di Aapne* (2000) Wajid is evoked when the lawyer of a husband involved in vicious divorce from his wife, denying rumours that his client is involved in affairs with a number of different women, asks the judge, "Is he the great grandson of Nawab Wajid Ali Shah?"

3. Wajid Ali Shah was trained in classical music and was so talented that he innovated new raginis. See Abdul Halim Sharar, *Lucknow: The Last Phase of an Oriental Culture*, trans. and ed. E. S. Harcourt and Fakhir Hussain (1976) 138. Wajid Ali Shah's pen-name was Akhtar under which nom de plume he wrote over forty works, mainly poetic compositions in various genres, and prose of a scholarly nature. He composed over four hundred *thumris*, or light classical compositions, under the name of Kadar Piya. Finally he is credited with innovating a style of the classical dance of North India, the *Kathak* dance.
4. Wajid is evoked as the figure of tragedy and patron of arts in *Mera Naam Joker* (1970) which was an autobiographical film of the actor-director Raj Kapoor. Each artistic producer works out the fatal flaw in Wajid. Raj Kapoor's analysis is that like Wajid the hero Raju loves too much and too well. For instance, Raju imparts all his artistic knowledge to Meenu, his protégée and lady-love, and becomes redundant in her life as she begins to scale new heights of fame. In this context it is interesting to recall that Raj Kapoor was an admirer of Satyajit Ray and once invited him to direct a film for him, an offer Ray never took up.
5. Rajbans Khanna, "Ray's Wajid Ali Shah", *The Illustrated Weekly of India* (22 Oct. 1978) 49.
6. Amaresh Misra, "Satyajit Ray's Films: Precarious Social–Individual Balance", *Economic and Political Weekly* (16–23 May 1992) 1053. For a more insightful analysis of the film see Suranjan Ganguly, "Poetry into Prose: The Rewriting of Oudh in Satyajit Ray's The Chess Players", *Journal of Commonwealth Literature*, Vol. 30, No. 2 (1995) 17–23.
7. Khalid Mohamed, "Shatranj ke Khilari", *The Illustrated Weekly of India* (30 April 1978) 39.
8. Andrew Robinson, *Satyajit Ray: The Inner Eye* (1989) 250; Ben Nyce, *Satyajit Ray: A Study of His Films* (1988) 170.
9. The use of the pronoun "we" in this chapter is designed to assume my own subject position as the postcolonial viewer of Ray's film. Rather than invisibilize my subject position I theorize it in this chapter. In the early phase of First World feminist film theory, the gaze in classical Hollywood cinema was theorized as a gendered and male gaze in order to distinguish the ways in which the female viewers are inserted into the film text. Similarly I think it is important to make the postcolonial viewer's gaze central to the theory of spectatorship in postcolonial cinema. This does not mean that I am positing an essentialist or exclusionary theory of the postcolonial gaze, my work shows that the post-colonial viewer can occupy a number of conflicting and contradictory positions in relation to the film text and it is worthwhile to explore what some of these positions might be in order to enlarge our understanding of postcolonial films.
10. Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Robert Galeta, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press (1989) 216.

11. Ibid., 215–224. Deleuze makes a single derogatory reference to India, to the hegemony of Indian tele-serials in the Third World which present obstacles to the Third World political filmmaker who wishes to address his illiterate audience (217).
12. Ibid., 217.
13. One of the few sites where Muslim cultural workers are not erased is the Bombay film industry. The film industry is located in a city which (in the aftermath of the 1992 destruction of the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya by Hindu zealots) was rocked by riots targeting the Muslim community in 1993. For many decades the city has been controlled by the Shiv Sena, a Hindu regionalist fundamentalist political party, and the political partner of the ruling pan-Indian Hindu fundamentalist political party, the Bhartiya Janta Party. Despite the political influence of this party the Bombay film industry remains one of the last bastions of the Hindu–Muslim syncretic culture of Awadh. Currently the three top male actors are Indian Muslims, as are the most popular lyricists, music directors, and story writers. Whatever the ideology of the hegemonic cultural texts, the work practices of the Bombay film industry are culturally assimilationist.
14. Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, op. cit., 222.
15. Ibid., xi–xii.
16. Deleuze quoted by Hugh Tomlinson, ibid., xvi.
17. Third World cinema has also been referred to by some as "third cinema." The term goes back to a conference held in 1986 in Edinburgh, United Kingdom, to debate the concept of Black and Third World films as third cinema. Out of this conference emerged an important collection of essays titled, *Questions of Third Cinema*, ed. Jim Pines and Paul Willemen (1989). The book made an important contribution to the ongoing theoretical and critical debate about third cinema in terms of the questions regarding oppositional critical practice, theory, and aesthetics posed by independent Black filmmakers and Third World films. Some of the issues raised are: (i) the nature and elitism of theories emerging from "Third World" film cultures; (ii) the validity of theoretical work based on Western critical traditions; (iii) the need to avoid essentialist paradigms in evaluating the processes of struggle against cultural imperialism; and (iv) critical evaluation of concepts such as ethnicity, nationalism, cultural nationalism, and populism versus globalism and cosmopolitanism. See also Gabriel H. Teshome, *Third Cinema in the Third World* (1982). While I am in broad sympathy with the project of third cinema and the theoretical issues raised by this debate, my own critical interest lies not only in the avowedly oppositional cinema text but equally in the mainstream and the popular cinematic text.
18. See Frederic Jameson, "Postmodernism and Consumer Society" in *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture*, ed. Hal Foster (1983) 111–125.
19. Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, op. cit., 222. Deleuze himself notes this difference. For instance, while discussing a French or, Japanese film, it is the signs of sounds other than dialogue and signs of light, camera angles, shot composition, and so on that become significant. But in the case of third cinema like African cinema, Deleuze realizes that it is a cinema of the speech-act.
20. The notion of play or "leela" in Hindu religion and culture is a very supple and subtle concept. As activity play connects the human realm to the divine,

it is viewed as the act of creation. Leela constitutes creative activity at the level of the divine, the human child and adult. David R. Kinsley notes:

> Play itself, and many activities that share important characteristics with play, are central to Hindu cult, and particularly to the bhakti cults of North India. Play and playful activities such as dancing, singing, emotional frenzy, and madness signify that man has exploded the confines of his pragmatic, utilitarian nature and entered an "other" realm of freedom. (*The Divine Player: A Study of Krsna Lila*, Delhi: Motilal Banarasidass (1979) xi)

21. Deleuze traces the beginnings of post-war modern cinema in the neo-realist films and notes that for this new cinema "A new type of actor was needed." He describes this kind of actor as "'actor-mediums,' capable of seeing and showing rather than acting, and either remaining dumb, or undertaking some never-ending conversation" (20). To play the role of Wajid Ray chose a Muslim actor, Amjad Khan, who had recently gained acclaim in a villainous role in the popular movie *Sholay* (1975). Ray often picked his actors on the basis of whether they resembled his mental picture of the character. Ray waited for Amjad Khan to recover from an accident because he believed he had found his Wajid. For his part Amjad Khan delivered a peerless performance, using his body not as an instrument of action, but rather as what Deleuze calls "the developer of time," showing time "through its tirednesses and waitings" (xi).
22. Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, op. cit., 82.
23. Ibid., 79.
24. Ibid., 55.
25. Discussing the function of dance in Vincent Minelli's films, Deleuze writes that dance is not simply the fluid world of images, "but passage from one world to another, entry into another world, breaking in and exploring . . . into another's world, into another's dream and past" (63).
26. Ibid., 47.
27. *Cinema 2*, op. cit., 126.
28. Ibid., 18–19.
29. Ben Nyce, *Satyajit Ray: A Study of His Films* (1988) 167.
30. Eisenstein advocates that film montage must proceed by alterations, conflicts, resolutions, and resonances so that the activity of selection and co-ordination gives time its real dimension. See Sergei Eisenstein's *Film Form*, trans. Jay Leyda (1949).
31. In strictly technical terms depth of field refers to the range of distances before the lens within which objects can be photographed in sharp focus. In other words depth of field controls perspective relations by choosing what will be in focus. See David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson, *Film Art: An Introduction* (1993) 194. Deleuze explains that depth of field appears wholly necessary "in connection with memory" (109). It is the depth of field which substitutes the scene for the shot, the image ceases to be flat or double-faced, that is depth of field adds a third side to it (84–85).
32. Wajid fails, Ashish Nandy observes, by the criteria of English colonialist "martial hypermasculinity." See Ashish Nandy, "Satyajit Ray's Secret Guide to Exquisite Murders: Creativity, Social Criticism, and the Partitioning of the

Self", *The Savage Freud and Other Essays on Possible and Retrievable Selves* (1995) 212–213.
33. See Chapter 2 for a discussion of the colonialist construction of shame friendship.
34. Satyajit Ray, *The Chess Players and Other Screenplays*, ed. Andrew Robinson (1989) 39–40.
35. Rajbans Khanna, "Ray's Wajid Ali Shah", op. cit., 51, 53.
36. Ashish Nandy, "Satyajit Ray's Secret Guide to Exquisite Murders", op. cit., 213.
37. Ibid., 214, 213.
38. Through W. H. Sleeman's *A Journey through the Kingdom of Oude in 1849–50 (1858*); Bishop Heber's *Narrative of a Journey Through the Upper Provinces (1828)* and Governor-General Dalhousie's decision to annex. This is what Ranajit Guha means by the phrase "dominance without hegemony" in connection with the British. See his "Dominance without Hegemony and Its Historiography", *Subaltern Studies VI* (1989).
39. Rajbans Khanna, "Ray's Wajid Ali Shah", op. cit., 51.
40. W. H. Sleeman in *Sleeman in Oude: An Abridgement of W.H. Sleeman's A Journey through the Kingdom of Oude in 1849–50 (1858*) ed. and Intro. P. D. Reeves (1971) 101.
41. In *Anti-Oedipus* Deleuze and Guattari refer to the contradictory aspects of our subject construction in capitalism where "our intimate colonial education" works like a desiring-machine obeying "a binary law," producing us as subjects and teaching us to desire our own repression, giving us faith and robbing us of our power and authenticity. These lessons are especially pointed for the postcolonial viewer who is born of this forked history and whose identity is a subject effect of the internalization of this disciplining. Deleuze and Guattari make the connection between this historical inscription of desire and the social reproduction of subjects, "*social production is purely and simply desiring-production itself under determinate conditions* . . . [social production] is the historically determined product of desire." Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Robert Hurley *et al*. (1983) xx, 5, 29.
42. Andrew Robinson, *Satyajit Ray: The Inner Eye*, op. cit., 242.
43. Bishop Heber in *Bishop Heber in Northern India Selections from Heber's Journal*, ed. M. A. Laird (1971) 188.
44. Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, op. cit., 18.
45. The word "Sufi" is derived from the Arabic *suf* meaning wool. The Sufis were a sect of Muslim mystics originally from Persia in the tenth century who wore coarse woolen garments and lived very simply in silent protest against the luxuries of the world. Some Sufis rank among the most important poets and writers in Persian and Urdu literature.
46. Ray underlines this transposition of Wajid the petitioner by repeating the coda. In a scene that follows a little later in the film between Outram and the Queen Mother, Ray makes Aulea Begum articulate this coda when she says, "If the Queen's servant cannot give us justice, we shall go to the Queen herself and plead (*faryaad*) for it."
47. In this context it is noteworthy that during Wajid Ali Shah's reign, the last Mughal court in Delhi was also ruled by a poet-King Bahadur Shah Zafar

(1775–1862). He was a patron of many poets, the most notable being Ibrahim Zauq. After the first war of independence in 1857 which was fought in Delhi in the name of Zafar, he was arrested by the British and his sons murdered and their severed heads were reputed to have been hung on the Bloody Gate as a warning to the mutineers. Zafar was "tried" and exiled to Calcutta and then to Rangoon in Burma where he died. The most famous and popular of his couplets speaks of the experience of exile and the desire of the exiled to be buried in his beloved Delhi.

48. Deleuze defines the forking of time as "recapturing the moment when time could have taken a different course" (xii). Deleuze explains that it is not space but time that forks, he writes, "the forking points are very often so imperceptible that they cannot be revealed until after their occurrence. It is a story that can be told only in the past" (50).
49. Richard Attenborough's James Outram is a figure who stands out as the first major, honest as well as sympathetic, portrait of the Englishman in India by an Indian filmmaker. For this reason he stands out not only in Ray's portrait gallery but also in the history of Indian films.
50. Outram was no stranger to unmasking corruption in the native courts. Before Colonel James Outram was Chief Commissioner and Acting Resident of Lucknow he was British Resident at the court of Gaikwar in Baroda, Gujarat. The court gained notoriety for "chicanery and corruption" which, according to Cave Brown, was exposed by the "the dauntless Outram, the late Resident there." Outram was nicknamed the "Bayard of the East" by Charles Napier (see John Cave Brown, *Indian Infanticide: Its Origins, Progress, and Suppression* (1857) 30).
51. Surendra Mohan, op. cit., as well as John Pemble suggest that the case for the annexation of Oudh was made by Dalhousie to the London authorities based entirely on Sleeman's report. Further Pemble argues that Sleeman's report was "not the product of a calm, balanced and detached mind" (102). Regarding Outram's role in the annexation of Oudh, Pemble writes:

    > He [Outram] was instructed to institute an inquiry into the conditions of the country and ascertain whether its affairs continued in the state described by Sleeman. What in fact he did was something quite different. He merely rummaged in the vast ragbag of his predecessor's reports and dispatches and pieced together, in the space of few months, a report based entirely on the material he found there . . . What he provided, therefore, was in essence a picture of Oudh as Sleeman had seen it. Not surprisingly, that picture was very dark. (*The Raj, the Indian Mutiny and the Kingdom of Oudh 1801–1859* [1977] 103)

52. Ali Naqi argues: "Colonel Sleeman went on his inspection against His Majesty's wishes. Yet we bore the expenses for his tour, for all his eleven hundred people. Tents, elephants, provisions, everything . . . if he gave a bad report, that is our misfortune. If he had inspected the Company's Bengal . . ." It is at this moment that Outram cuts him off. Ali Naqi makes a complex argument: he starts by challenging the basic premise of Outram's argument that Oudh is ruled by Wajid. Through the fact that Sleeman flouted the King's wishes in undertaking an inspection of free Oudh, Ali Naqi underlines the fact that it

is the British who are in control of all of Oudh, not Wajid. Ali Naqi underlines this fact through describing the princely entourage of the unofficial inspection – eleven hundred people, tents, elephants, provisions. At the same time he underscores the shame friendship that regulates the relations between Wajid and the Company, even as Sleeman flouted Wajid's wishes, he accepted payment of his expenses and his unfavourable report is the betrayal by a friend, he says "that is our misfortune." Ali Naqi calls out the popular misconception propagated by the officials of the Company that Oudh is the most maladministered territory by suggesting that the Company's own territories like Bengal, annexed almost a century ago, would fare no better. It is at this point that Outram cuts him off.

53. Satyajit Ray, *The Chess Players and Other Screenplays*, op. cit., 44. My own interpretation of Ray's Outram is strongly opposed to Ashish Nandy's inference that, "Both Wajid and Outram are torn men" (Ashish Nandy, "Satyajit Ray's Secret Guide to Exquisite Murders", op. cit., 213). On the friendship between the nawabs of Awadh and the British residents, see Rosie Llewellyn-Jones, *A Fatal Friendship: The Nawabs, the British and the City of Lucknow* (1985).
54. Satyajit Ray, *The Chess Players and Other Screenplays*, op. cit., 52.
55. Wajid refused to sign the treaty and in June 1856, Aulea Begum, Wajid's eldest son, and his brother sailed to England to lay the case before the British Parliament. But soon after they arrived the news came of the mutiny and the fact that Wajid had been arrested as a suspected sympathizer. The political climate in England at the time did not favour the appeal. The Begum died in Paris in 1858. After the mutiny which went on from 1857–1859, when Wajid was released in 1859, he withdrew the petition and settled in Calcutta till he died in 1887.
56. For an interesting account of the differences in Ray's lighting, set design, and photographing of Outram as compared to Wajid see Suranjan Ganguly, "Poetry into Prose: The Rewriting of Oudh in Satyajit Ray's The Chess Players", op. cit., 19.
57. Andrew Robinson writes that Ray knew the tune of this particular *thumri* as a boy because a Brahmo song was based on it; however, it is only later that he learnt that it had been composed by Wajid. In his *Charulata* (1964) he has Amal hum the thumri indicating the widespread popularity of the composition.
58. Premchand, "Shatranj ke Khilari" (1924), trans. Saeed Jaffrey, "The Chess Players", *The Chess Players and Other Screenplays* (1989) 71, 73.
59. As postcolonial viewers we understand the full significance of Ray's montage in the prologue where we see Wajid beating the drum in a mohurrum procession (the mourning procession for the slain grandsons of Prophet Mohammed, Ali and Hussain) as well as participating in a rahas (dance dramas) of the rasleela as Lord Krishna. It signifies the era of true Hindu–Muslim amity. Postcolonial Lucknow is known for its Shia–Sunni clashes at the time of mohurrum, but Wajid who was a Shia Muslim himself, is reputed to have said "Of my two eyes, one is Shia and the other is Sunni." Awadh in the reign of the Nawabs was known as the refuge of the artists and cultural producers from all over India and abroad. Sharar writes that in the reign of Wajid, "In Lucknow alone there were more poets than the rest of India" (63).
60. Rajbans Khanna, "Ray's Wajid Ali Shah", op. cit., 53.

61. For Deleuze it is a truism that cinema limits itself to a dream-state induced in the viewer. "But the essence of cinema," argues Deleuze,"has thought as its higher purpose, nothing but thought and its functioning" (168). Therefore it is not in the name of a better and truer world that the sensory-motor breakdown makes man a seer who grasps the intolerable in the world. Rather it is in order to confront the unthinkable in thought, thinking through its powerlessness "without claiming to be restoring an all-powerful thought," that the movement-image gives way to the time-image (169–170). It is cinema's automatic image that distinguishes it from theatre and demands a new conception of thought itself. And it is in this sense that for Deleuze the "automaton" or the "marionette" becomes a confrontation with "the unthinkable in thought" (178).
62. In Bombay films this is a gesture often used by debtors in front of landlords and moneylenders and by fathers of daughters to humble themselves in appeal to the generosity of the son-in-law and his family as, for instance, in the case of non-payment of dowry.
63. Satyajit Ray, *The Chess Players and Other Screenplays*, op. cit., 60.

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Filmography

Abhijan (The Expedition), Director: Satyajit Ray, Cast: Soumitra Chatterjee, Waheeda Rehman (1962).

Achuut Kanya, Director: Franz Osten, Cast: Ashok Kumar, Devika Rani (1936).

Agantuk (The Stranger), Director: Satyajit Ray, Cast: Utpal Dutt, Mamta Shankar (1991) 100 min.

Andaz Apna Apna, Director: Raj Kumar Santoshi, Cast: Aamir Khan, Salman Khan (1994).

Aparajito (The Unvanquished), Director: Satyajit Ray, Cast: Soumitra Chatterjee, Karuna Bannerjee (1956) 113 min.

Apur Sansar (The World of Apu), Director: Satyajit Ray, Cast: Soumitra Chatterjee, Sharmila Tagore (1959) 106 min.

Bala, Director: Satyajit Ray (1976).

The Barbarian and the Geisha, Director: John Houston, Cast: John Wayne, Sam Jaffe, Eiko Ando (1958) 105 min.

Big, Director: Penny Marshall, Cast: Tom Hanks, Elizabeth Perkins (1988) 102 min.

Bobby, Director: Raj Kapoor, Cast: Rishi Kapoor, Dimple Kapadia (1973).

Castaway, Director: Robert Zemeckis, Cast: Tom Hanks, Helen Hunt (2000).

Charulata, Director: Satyajit Ray, Cast: Madhabi Mukerjee, Soumitra Chatterjee (1964).

Chaudvin ka Chand, Director: Guru Dutt, Cast: Guru Dutt, Waheeda Rehman (1962).

City Slickers, Director: Ron Underwood, Cast: Billy Crystal, Bruno Kirby, Daniel Stern, Patricia Wittig, Helen Slater, Jack Palance (1991) 109 min.

Devi (The Goddess), Director: Satyajit Ray, Cast: Chhabi Biswas, Soumitra Chatterjee, Sharmila Tagore (1960).

Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge, Director: Aditya Chopra, Cast: Shah Rukh Khan, Kajol (1995).

ET – The Extra-Terrestrial, Director: Steven Spielberg, Cast: Dee Wallace, Henry Thomas (1982) 115 min.

Forest Gump, Director: Robert Zemeckis, Cast: Tom Hanks, Sally Fields (1994) 142 min.

Ghare Baire (The Home and the World), Director: Satyajit Ray, Cast: Soumitra Chatterjee, Swatilekha, Victor Bannerjee (1984) 140 min.

Gunga Din, Director: George Stevens, Cast: Cary Grant, Victor McLaglen, Douglas Fairbanks Jr, Joan Fontaine, Sam Jaffe, Eduardo Clannelli (1939) B&W, 117 min.

Hadh Kar di Aapne, Director: Vimal Kumar, Cast: Govinda, Rani Mukerjee (2000).

Hirok Rajar Deshe (The Kingdom of Diamonds), Director: Satyajit Ray, Cast: Soumitra Chatterjee, Utpal Dutta, Tapen Chatterjee (1980).

Home Alone, Director: Chris Columbus, Cast: Macaulay Culkin, Joe Pesci (1990) 100 min.

Home Alone 2: Lost in New York, Director: Chris Columbus, Cast: Macaulay Culkin, Joe Pesci (1992) 113 min.

In the Line of Fire, Director: Wolfgang Peterson, Cast: Clint Eastwood, John Malkovitch, Rene Russo (1993).

Interview, Director: Mrinal Sen, Cast: Ranjit Mullick, Karuna Bannerjee (1970) 101 min.

Jalsaghar (The Music Room), Director: Satyajit Ray, Cast: Chhabi Biswas, Padma Devi, Pinaki Sen Gupta, Gangapada Bose, Tulsi Lahiri, Kali Sarkar, Waheed Khan, Roshan Kumari (1958) 100 min.

Joi Baba Felunath (The Elephant God), Director: Satyajit Ray, Cast: Soumitra Chatterjee, Santosh Dutta, Siddhartha Chatterjee (1978).

Kanchenjungha, Director: Satyajit Ray, Cast: Chhabi Biswas, Anil Chatterjee, Karuna Banerjee, Anubha Gupta, Subrata Sen, Sibani Singh, Alaknanda Roy, Arun Mukherjee, N. Viswanathan, Pahari Sanyal, Nilima Chatterjee, Vidya Sinha (1962) 102 min.

Kapurush (The Coward), Director: Satyajit Ray, Cast: Madhabi Mukerjee, Soumitra Chatterjee (1965) 74 min.

Kundun, Director: Martin Scorsese, Cast: Tenzin Thuthob Tsarong, Sonam Phuntsonk (1997) 135 min.

Laverne and Shirley (television serial), Cast: Penny Marshall, Cindy Williams (1976–1983).

A League of their Own, Director: Penny Marshall, Cast: Tom Hanks, Geena Davis, Madonna (1992) 128 min.

Mahanagar (The Big City), Director: Satyajit Ray, Cast: Madhabi Mukerjee (1963) 131 min.

Mera Naam Joker, Director: Raj Kapoor, Cast: Raj Kapoor, Simi, Rishi Kapoor, Padmini (1970).

The Mosquito Coast, Director: Peter Weir, Cast: Harrison Ford, Helen Mirren, River Phoenix, Conrad Roberts, Andre Gregory, Martha Plimpton (1986) 117 min.

Naram Garam, Director: Basu Chatterjee, Cast: Amol Palekar, Utpal Dutt, Swaroop Sampat (1981).

Out of Paradise, Director: Alan Parker, Cast: Dennis Quaid, Tamlyn Tomita, Sab Shimono (1990) 133 min.

Pakeezah, Director: Kamal Amrohi, Cast: Meena Kumari, Ashok Kumar (1975).

Pather Panchali (Song of the Little Road), Director: Satyajit Ray, Cast: Karuna Bannerjee (1955) 115 min.

Philadelphia, Director: Jonathan Demme, Cast: Jason Robards, Tom Hanks, Denzil Washington (1993) 119 min.

Pikoo, Director: Satyajit Ray, Cast: Arjun Guha Thakurta, Aparna Sen, Soven Lahiri (1980).

Pleasantville, Director: Gary Ross, Cast: Jeff Daniels, Joan Allen, William H. Macy (1998) 123 min.

Pratidwandi (The Adversary), Director: Satyajit Ray, Cast: Dhritiman Chatterjee, Indira Devi, Debraj Roy (1970) 110 min.

The Preacher's Wife, Director: Penny Marshall, Cast: Courtney Vance, Denzel Washington, Whitney Houston (1996) 124 min.

Sadgati (Deliverance), Director: Satyajit Ray, Cast: Om Puri, Smita Patil (1981) 52 min.

Saturday Night Fever, Director: John Badham, Cast: John Travolta, Donna Pescow, Karen Lynn Gorney (1977) 119 min.

Shatranj ke Khilari, Director: Satyajit Ray, Cast: Amjad Khan, Saeed Mirza, Sanjeev Kumar, Richard Attenborough, Shabana Azmi, Fareeda Jalal (1977).

Sholay, Director: Ramesh Sippy, Cast: Dharmendra, Amitabh Bachhan, Rekha, Hema Malini (1975).
Sirf Tum, Director: Priyadarshan, Cast: Sanjay Kapoor, Sushmita Sen (1999).
Sonar Kella (The Golden Fortress), Director: Satyajit Ray, Cast: Soumitra Chatterjee, Santosh Dutta, Siddhartha Chatterjee (1974).
Sunghursh, Director: H. S. Rawail, Cast: Dilip Kumar, Vyjantimala (1968).
Swami, Director: Basu Chatterjee, Cast: Shabana Azmi, Vikram, Preeti Ganguly (1977).
Tarkeib, Director: Ishmaeel Shroff, Cast: Nana Patekar, Tabu, Shilpa Shetty (2000).
The Teahouse of the August Moon, Director: Daniel Mann, Cast: Marlon Brando, Glenn Ford (1956) 115 min.
Toy Story, Director: John Lasseter, Voices: Tom Hanks, Tim Allen, Annie Potts (1995) 80 min.
Toy Story 2, Director: John Lasseter, Voices: Tom Hanks, Tim Allen (1999) 92 min.
Two, Direction and Screenplay: Satyajit Ray (1964) 15 min.
Wall Street, Director: Oliver Stone, Cast: Michael Douglas, Charlie Sheen, Daryl Hannah, Martin Sheen (1987).
Xala, Director: Ousmane Sembene (1976).

Index

Agantuk, 58
Alterity, 83, 185–7,193–4, 197, 198
  alternate time and space, 33–4
ambivalence, 68–9, 73–4
American
  capitalist enterprise, 71, 74
  culture and toy industry, 79
  military enterprise, 135
Amin, Samir, 13, 15, 16
anti-pastoral, 163
Aparajito, 20, 46, 54
aphanisis, 154,157
Apu motif, 45, 53, 56, 58–9, 83–4
  as satiric technique, 56–9
Arnheim, Rudolf, 60
Ashcroft, Bill, Gareth Griffin and Helen Tiffin, 89
Asiatic decadence, 39
aural
  critique, 22–5
  montage, 179
  -visual critique, 22, 60, 68
Awadh
  annexation, of, 60–1, 62, 64, 66–7, 81
  cultural renaissance, 31, 39, 64
  place of shame, 29–31
  sexuality, 154–61
  storytellers, 155–6

Banerji, Tarashanker, 20
banishment, 154
Barbarian and the Geisha, The, 7, 9
Bazin, Andre, 43–4, 60
Bengal, 55–6, 65
Bicycle Thief, The, 43–5
Big, 41, 43, 68–83
Brahmanical-scriptural traditions versus non-Brahmanical subaltern forms, 150
Brahmo Samaj, 64
Brando, Marlon, 132
British colonial enterprise, 11, 94, 96, 99, 101, 105, 111, 114–15, 189, 190–1, 194, 196, 197–8
British orientalist scholarship, 148

cannibalism, 51–2, 56, 58–60
Capital, Vol. 1, 75
carnivalesque, 80
centre-periphery, 16, 130
Charulata, 55
chess
  as displaced desire, 164
  as metaphor, 130, 131, 132, 147
  origin, 164
Chess Players, The, 20, 29, 41, 56–7, 61–2, 65–8
child/hood, 41–84
  as agent or witness, 44–6, 53
  as enchanted narrative, 41
  as passive, 46
  autonomy of, 48, 74
  and class, 44–6, 54, 73–4
  curiosity and play, 54
  in European cinema, 45
  films, 55
  and friendship, 61, 82
  girl-child, 56
  in imperialism, 51
  inner child, 76
  literature, 54
  and Marxism, 44
  in master/servant relation, 50
  and play, 47, 69–70, 79–83
  theft of, 73–4
  transformative possibilities of, 56
Cinema 2: The Time Image, 171
cinema of seeing versus cinema of action, 175, 176
cinematic time, 174, 175, 177, 186, 95
civilization/savagery, 58

colonialism/colonization
  accumulation, 16
  appropriation of land, 10
  as deforming impulse, 51, 64
  as pleasurable play, 48
  colonial capitalism, 16, 60
  critique of colonialist/nationalist discourses, 19, 28
  enterprise as, 3, 11, 32
  fantasy reinvented, 68
  making of, 1, 13, 31
  religio-moral dimension, 10
  and true inquiry, 31
comedy, 76
comprador, 23, 64
consent, 65
consumerism, 70
courtesy, 64
Crusoe, Robinson, 1–6, 8–11
  American Robinson Crusoe, 7–8
  as Enlightenment narrative, 18, 41, 46
  chair, 6–7, 9, 18–19
  and community, 47
  enterprise and apathetic Bengali landlord, 18
  and fear of the other, 72
  -Friday, 49–51, 66
  labour, 4–5
  and trope of childhood, 46–53
cultural
  colonized as political proof, 36
  contest, 81
  decadence, 36, 63, 67
  identity, 26, 28, 52–3, 63
  leadership, 21, 24, 26–7
  production and subaltern classes, 149
  production at centre/periphery, 83
  resistance, 178, 183
  shaming, 64–5

Dalhousie, Lord, 60
death of desire, 74, 156, 160
Defoe, Daniel, 1–6, 18, 46, 49–51, 53
Deleuze, Gilles, 45, 54, 171
Dickens, Charles, 73, 116
Dil Gudaz (Heart's Delight), 106
Discovery of India, 114
discursivity of time image, 174
displacement (process of), 20, 153
domination, 49, 50, 52, 63–5
Dow, Alexander, 12–13

economism, 111, 114
Eisenstein, Sergei, 60
empire, 61
English, 2, 11, 18
  cannibal, 56–60
  cantonments, 49
enterprise as discourse, 1–5, 8–9, 11, 30–2, 36–7, 41, 52, 57, 59, 61, 68, 71–2, 76, 81
  and Hollywood, 8, 10, 41, 69–84, 75, 79–80
  its other, 52, 66, 72
  and labour, 3–6, 61
  and unenterprising native, 3, 5, 18
excess, 39, 169, 180, 194, 196, 197
exile, 192, 194
  of indigenous enterprise, 161, 163
  politics of friendship in exile, 161, 163, 164, 166
expanded cultural critique, 10, 12–14, 16, 20–1, 28, 32, 39–40, 96, 97, 105, 115, 117, 123, 195

fantasy, 46–7, 51–2, 68, 70–1, 74, 77
Flynn, Carol H., 51
foreclosure, 2, 29
friendship, 29, 64–5, 74, 166, 190–1, 198
  between colonizer and colonized, 134, 137–8
  shame friendship, 49, 51–3, 61–8
feudalism (India), 14–16, 20, 28, 140–2

Gandhian non-violence, 122, 123
gaze, 54–6, 76–8
gendered postcolonial spectator, 171, 173
genre and nationalist literature, 85, 86
globalism, 41, 49, 73, 79, 81, 83
Godan (The Gift of a Cow), 106, 125
Goopy Gyne Bagha Byne, 55
Guha, Ranajit, 4, 12–13, 16, 140

Hank, Tom, 75
Heber, Bishop, 107
hierarchy, 51, 73, 81
Hindu communalist stereotype, 146, 157
Hindustan Men Mashriqi Tamaddum ka Akhri Namunah (The Last Example of Oriental Culture in India), 106
Hirok Rajar Deshe, 55
history, 2, 14–15, 59–60, 63, 66, 147, 152

ibadat (act of worship), 158
idleness, 154
images, 70, 75–9
imperialism, 42–3, 47, 49–50, 57
impotence, 154
indigenous enterprise, 11, 60, 115, 130, 131, 152, 158, 166, 68
  Awadhi enterprise, 99, 100, 131
  and imperial enterprise, 137, 139
  imperial enterprise as American "get up and go", 135, 138, 139
  Okinawan enterprise, 132–9
In Search of Kundun with Martin Scorsese, 55
In the Line of Fire, 10
individualism, 2, 47, 70
irony, 29–30, 35, 68, 75, 78
island, 6, 18
Italian neo-realism, 41, 43–5, 53

Jalsaghar, 18–28, 81, 143
Journey Through the Kingdom of Oude in 1849–50, A, 63, 66

Kanchenjungha, 82, 94
Kaviraj, Sudipta, 88
Khanna, Rajbans, 170, 181
Kipling, Rudyard, 42
Kundun, 55

labour, 6, 10–11, 28, 48, 73
lack, 82–3
Lakhnavi
  culture, 87
  musical tradition, 143
  tall tale (as subaltern genre), 60, 85–7, 90–8, 100, 104, 108–11, 114–15, 120, 152–60, 198
  tehzeeb (courtesy), 90, 142, 143, 145, 146, 248, 266
  tolerance, 146
land, 14–17, 20, 24, 26, 28–9
Laverne and Shirley, 75
Lawrence, D. H., 73
lazy native, 5

magical, 5, 47, 53–4, 68, 73, 75, 79–80
magnanimity, 64–5
male
  bonding, 70
  child, 46
  impotence, 38–9
  misogyny, 38
man Friday, 49–50
Mann, Daniel, 130, 132–9
margins, 41, 57, 81
Marshall, Penny, 41, 45, 68–9, 74
Marx and Gandhi, 141
Marx, Karl, 75
metonymy, 57–9, 60, 66, 81
Mill, James, 14
mise en scène, 26
Misra, Amaresh, 170
Mohamed, Khalid, 170
montage, 59–60
Mosquito Coast, The, 8–9
Mother, 60
music, 19, 21–2, 24, 28, 145, 152
Music Room, The, 14, 18–28

nationalism (Indian), 60–4, 85, 86, 107–11, 115–17, 119, 128–9
  and community, 88–9, 91, 128
  critique, 140
nationalist
  discourse, 193
  genres, 87–9, 91, 93, 112, 121
  historiography, 88, 89, 110–11, 121
  identity, 89, 115
  literature, 85, 127
  satire, 86, 102, 117, 144
  theory of art, 89–90
Nawabi, 62, 141–2
  misrule, 16, 37, 66, 185

Nehru, Jawaharlal, 114
Nirmala, 106
North Indian dialects, 105
Nyce, Ben, 21, 24

Oliver Twist, 73
Oriental despot, 12–13, 16, 31, 37–8, 66, 80
other, 11, 58–9, 63

pastoral versus the urban in Ray's Apu trilogy, 150
Pather Panchali, 45, 54, 55, 163
Permanent Settlement of Bengal, 12, 15, 18–19, 28–9, 81
Pikoo, 53
play, 29–30, 33, 37, 42, 43, 45, 49, 54, 68–9, 78, 80, 82–3
pleasure
- aesthetic, 30
- child's, 82
- of colonialist fantasy, 68
- of Crusoe as children's play, 53
- of imperialism, 50
- of labour, 6
- narrative, 4–5, 42
- viewer, 22–3

politics
- of friendship, 166
- of survival, 193

popular
- popular cultural forms, 151
- versus priestly, 150

postcolonial
- artist, 54
- constitution, 170, 171, 176, 184, 191, 192, 193, 197
- subject position, 97
- theory and cinema, 41, 45

Premchand, Munshi, 56, 85, 102–28
private property, 3, 15–16
proliferation of tall tales (*The Chess Players*), 149
psychopathology of colonialism, 131
Pudovkin, 60

raag Bhairon, 162
Rai, Amrit, 109, 113
ras leela, 175
Ray, Satyajit, 14, 18, 61–2, 64, 83–4
- aesthetics and politics, 152
- as postcolonial artist, 54, 62, 67
- cartoons, 61, 66–8
- and childhood, 41, 45, 46, 54, 57, 59, 81–4
- cultural capital, 149–50
- love of musical traditions, 150
- and nationalism, 59, 68
- and satire, 57–8

religious fundamentalism, 89
repetition, 2, 27, 48, 53, 61
resistance, 80, 68, 165
- silence as, 19, 21, 28

rhetoric of resistance, 91, 101, 179, 180, 186, 187, 193, 194, 196
Robinson, Andrew, 18, 21
Rosie O'Donnell Show, The, 79–80
Ross, Gary and Anne Spielberg, 74–5
rule of property, 4, 15
rumour as subaltern genre, 154, 161

Said, Edward W., 42–3, 50, 89
Sandesh, 54
Sanskritization, 151
satire, 56, 60, 61, 68
Saturday Night Fever, 74
scapegoat, 156
Scorsese, Martin, 55
secular artist, 150
servitude, 54, 63–4, 66
Seton, Marie, 18, 24, 54, 61
Seva Sadan, 106
Shah, Nadir, 111
shame
- and cannibalism, 51–2
- collective shaming, 67
- friendship, 49, 51, 61–8, 165, 191, 194–8
- refusal to be shamed, 83
- sexual, 72

Sharar, Abdul Halim, 91, 106
Sica, Vittorio De, 43–4
simulacrum, 117, 120, 126, 127
Sleeman, W. H., 38, 63, 66, 104, 110, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 124, 128
Soz-e-Vatan (The Dirge of the Nation), 113

space
  carnivalesque space, 80
  of music room, 19, 27, 28
  of the island in Crusoe, 47
  trapped in, 21
spectatorship, 57, 174, 177
speech
  body without, 22
  evacuation of, 28
Strauss, Claude Levi, 58
subaltern
  classes, 167
  genres, 91, 102, 107–9, 149
  raconteurs, 156
  resistance, 90
  studies, 140

Tale of Two Cities, A, 116
Teahouse of the August Moon, The, 131–9
third cinema as political art, 171–2
Third-Worldism, 18
thumri, 192
time
  -image, 68
  and music, 24–5
  /work/play, 36, 42
toys, 79–83
travelogue, 53
Trevor, George, 104, 110, 115, 120–1, 124–5, 128
trope, 41–3, 46, 70, 78, 81
Two, 41, 79, 81–4

Urdu
  sexual farce, 110, 126, 155, 160
  wit, 56–7, 68

value, 5–6, 8–9, 15, 18–19, 26–8
viewer interpellation, 23, 77–8
visual critique, 22, 25–8

Wajid Ali Shah, 13, 29, 32–5, 37–9, 56–7
Wall Street, 72
woman filmmaker, 77
work and play, 1, 29, 32, 34, 41–2, 44, 69, 70–3, 75, 77, 131, 136, 154
  dichotomy, 42, 46, 156, 186, 187

Zaidi, Shama, 67
zemindar, 13, 15, 18–19, 28
  as alternate possibility, 28
  as despot, 13
  as overinscribed figure, 20
  as representative of culture, 21, 24, 28
  critique of idle Bengali landlord, 19, 22, 28