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World Literature, the Text, and the Critic: Re-reading *The Country and the City*, Re-situating Raymond Williams

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Abstract

The essay reads Williams's *The Country and the City* to argue for the centrality of imperialism and global unevenness engendered by the capitalist mode of production as key aspects of the text. It focuses on Williams's method in the penultimate chapter of the text to show him formulating, if idiosyncratically, a reading strategy that is comparative and global in scope, and one that anticipates the globaletics of Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o. It deploys Williams's method, and his delineation of the pastoral and counter-pastoral landscapes, to illustrate their usefulness for reading the poetic landscapes in the works of Bankim Chandra Chatterji and Rabindranath Tagore from nineteenth- and early twentieth-century colonial Bengal. In sum, the essay seeks to situate Williams as a key figure within the tradition of materialist anti-colonial theorising and *The Country and the City* as an important, if unremarked, resource for World and Comparative Literature.

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In Memoriam
Prof. Swapan Kumar Chakravorty

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Calling Raymond Williams's magnum opus, *The Country and the City*, 'possibly the most moving book of literary criticism ever written in the English language', Aijaz Ahmad goes on to state that it

went over the same territory that had been marked earlier by [F. R.] Leavis, *remapping it in highly original, radical and persuasive ways*. By the time Williams died, in 1988, he had *revamped the very terms* in which English Studies had conceived of the relation between literature, culture, society, and history.¹

Though Ahmad's is a glowing assessment, he does not spell out the exact nature of his intervention, and raises the question, what aspects of Williams's critical

and theoretical practice in *The Country and the City* make it ‘highly original’ and ‘radical’? Additionally, with the present context in mind, we could also ask what, if anything, does the study offer to scholars of World or Comparative Literature? This essay reads – or, more properly, re-reads – *The Country and the City* to delineate Williams’s reading method and underline the text as an important, if unremarked, resource for World and Comparative Literature. The first section shows Williams highlighting the exploitation of the colonies by England as the condition of possibility for the improvement of English life since the sixteenth century, a key aspect of the study that his critics either read tendentiously or miss completely. Focusing on Williams’s critical, if somewhat idiosyncratic, engagement with a range of Commonwealth (Postcolonial, Global Anglophone, or World Literature, in today’s parlance) texts in the penultimate chapter of *The Country and the City*, it illuminates the profoundly *globalectical* character of Williams’s reading strategy.² The section, thus, shows Williams *anticipating* the deployment of uneven development as an analytical tool on the one hand, while on the other enacting a literary comparativism on a global scale that has been called for in more recent attempts to unthink the Eurocentrism of Comparative Literature.³ Moreover, Williams’s study examines the changing conceptions of the countryside and the city in English literature between the sixteenth and twentieth centuries, locating these changes in relation to the consolidation of the capitalist mode of production and the development of the landscape aesthetic. The second section of the essay engages Williams’s conceptualisations of pastoral and counter-pastoral landscapes and takes them far afield to nineteenth- and early twentieth-century colonial Bengal. Deploying the category as a materialist hermeneutic framework, it reads Bengali poetic landscapes in the works of Bankim Chandra Chatterji and Rabindranath Tagore before suggesting that Williams should be seen as a figure within the tradition of materialist anti-colonial theorising.

The Global Williams

At first glance, *The Country and the City* appears to be solely about England and English literature, which encourages its being read as an attempt to craft ‘a radical narrative of English national identity’.⁴ Tristram Hunt’s comment, from the introduction to the recent Vintage reissue of *The Country and the City*, is simply a restatement, with certain ‘radical’ characteristics adduced no doubt, of an earlier position most stridently articulated by Gauri Viswanathan that imagined Williams at the head of ‘a critical approach that consistently and exclusively studies the formation of metropolitan culture from within its own boundaries’.⁵ That *The Country and the City* engages with the colonial

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world in only one, the penultimate, chapter could well appear to add heft to these charges. Edward Said had called that chapter a ‘few tantalizing pages’ to suggest that imperialism was ‘peripheral to the book’s main idea’.⁶ These critics, however, miss the fundamentally *global* scope and scale of Williams’s critical project in *The Country and City* and characterise the ‘strange, profound, [and] unclassifiable work’ as national and sectarian instead – that is, as *precisely* what it is not.⁷ This becomes quite apparent when we examine those ‘tantalizing pages’ a little more closely and carefully.

In the penultimate chapter (suggestively titled ‘The New Metropolis’), Williams notes that the major industrial societies are often described as metropolitan and that this, at ‘first glance’, seems a ‘simple description of their internal development’. He soon disabuses readers of this simplistic view, noting that ‘the “metropolitan” states, through a system of trade, but also through a complex of economic and political controls, draw food and, more critically, raw materials from these areas of supply, this effective hinterland, that is also the greater part of the earth’s surface and that contains the great majority of its people’.⁸ And this produces the colonial world-system:

The ‘metropolitan’ societies of Western Europe and North America are the ‘advanced’, ‘developed,’ industrialised states; centres of economic, political and cultural power. In sharp contrast with them [...] are societies which are seen as ‘underdeveloped’: still mainly agricultural or ‘under-industrialised’.⁹

Bringing the country-city analytic to bear on European imperialism, he writes:

Much of the real history of city and country, within England itself, is from an early date the history of the extension of the dominant model of capitalist development to include other regions of the world. And this was not, as it is now sometimes seen, a case of ‘development’ here, ‘failure to develop’ elsewhere. What was happening in the ‘city’, the ‘metropolitan’ economy, determined and was determined by what was made to happen in the ‘country’; first the local hinterland and then the vast regions beyond it, in other people’s lands. What happened in England has since been happening even more widely, in new dependent relationships between all the industrialized nations and all the other ‘undeveloped’ but economically important lands. Thus one of the last models of ‘city and country’ is the system we now know as imperialism.¹⁰

Notice how similar Williams’s comments are to the words of Frantz Fanon who speaks of the colonial world-system as a world divided into compartments:

The oppressor, in his own sphere, starts the process, a process of domination, of exploitation and of pillage, and in the other sphere the coiled, plundered creature which is the native provides fodder for the process as best he can, the process which moves uninterruptedly from the banks of the colonial territory to the palaces and the docks of the mother country [...] raw materials are ceaselessly transported, justifying the presence of the settler: and all the while the native, bent double, more dead than alive, exists interminably in an unchanging dream.¹¹

In these extracts, Williams is refuting the notion that the ‘underdevelopment’ in the colonies is their ‘failure to develop’ but instead proposing we understand it as a process of Primitive Accumulation (‘What happened in England’) that continues, as imperialism, on a global scale (‘has since been happening even more widely’). He is pointing to the process that historical materialist analysis has characterised as *uneven development* and to the colonial provenance of our one and unequal world.¹² Crucially, he does not leave out the brutal reality of slavery but connects it as an integral aspect of the capitalist mode of production. To meet the rising demand for exotic commodities, Williams writes,

European societies and their immigrant settlers were beginning to organize increased production [...] [I]n tropical regions, they began organizing ‘labour’: that polite term for the slave trade from Africa – anything from three million slaves in the seventeenth century to seven million in the eighteenth. The new rural economy of the tropical plantations – sugar, coffee, cotton – was built at this trade in flesh, and once again the profits fed back into the country-house system: not only the profits on the commodities but until the end of the eighteenth century the profits on slaves. In 1700 fifteen per cent of British commerce was with the colonies. In 1775 it was as much as a third.¹³

But the most crucial aspect of Williams’s discussion of imperialism is his insistence that imperialism was not something that happened elsewhere – in South Asia, Africa and the Caribbean, for instance – but a process that connected the colonies to the metropole in an unequal relationship of extraction and exploitation. He makes it clear that the English did not acquire their colonies in a fit of absent-mindedness (to remind ourselves of John Seeley’s odd formulation made popular through repetition). Rather, Williams notes that ‘the nature of British society’ changed owing to an ‘*organized colonial system and the development of an industrial economy*’ that emerged out of ‘an intricate process of economic interaction, supported by wars between trading nations

for control of the areas of supply'.¹⁴ Said and Viswanathan notwithstanding, these words do not suggest a theorist for whom the 'imperial experience [...] [was] quite irrelevant'.¹⁵ Williams's contention that British society benefited and transformed *precisely because of* colonialism shows him gesturing towards the connected histories of the metropole and the colony, a view that raised – and continues to raise – the hackles of Euro-American scholars and laypersons alike.

Significantly, the penultimate chapter of *The Country and the City* is not only an insightful foray into imperialism but also an engagement with non-western literary texts. In that chapter, Williams reads, if somewhat idiosyncratically, the works of several authors from the global periphery such as Chinua Achebe, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (referred to by his earlier name, James Ngugi), R.K. Narayan, Mulk Raj Anand, Wilson Harris, George Lamming and Han Suyin through the country-city analytic. There are several issues to consider here. First, by engaging with these texts of what was then called 'commonwealth' or 'Third World' literature, Williams brings critical attention to them at a time when they were seldom studied seriously and occupied a marginal position within the discipline. Recall, *The Country and the City* was published in 1973, much *before* the establishment of postcolonial studies as an academic field, and about half a decade before the publication of Said's *Orientalism* (1978).¹⁶ Moreover, these texts are not read as 'other' tales from distant places. Rather, Williams encourages readers to move beyond thinking of the 'particularity of [...] [the non-western] stories as merely exotic' and read them in a materialist vein, keeping in mind that a 'social process is happening there, in an initially unfamiliar society' to illuminate a 'connecting process, in what has to be seen ultimately as a common history'.¹⁷ This is a methodological injunction to read *dialectically* (in terms of the 'connecting process') where the critical practice keeps in view, and in tension, the logics of difference ('particularity') and sameness ('common history'). This is precisely the kind of reading Williams engages in as is evident in the following extract:

What is impressive about [Achebe's] *Things Fall Apart* is that as in some English literature of rural change, as late as Hardy, the internal tensions of the society is made clear, so that we can understand the modes of the penetration which would in any case, in its process of expansion, have come [...] The alien law and religion are bitterly resented and resisted, but the trading-station, in palm-oil, is welcomed, as an addition to the slash-and-burn subsistence farming of yams [...]

We see the same complications, at a later stage and in different societies, in the resistance movements of the country people against English power,

in the Kenya of James Ngũgĩ's *Weep Not, Child* and *A Grain of Wheat*, or in the Malaya of Han Suyin's *And The Rain My Drink*.¹⁸

Notice the range of texts on which critical attention is brought to bear. The passage begins by engaging with *Things Fall Apart* by the Nigerian author Chinua Achebe, which is positioned in relation to Thomas Hardy. The reading illuminates the internal tensions of Umuofia, the village where the novel is set, which is being transformed by the twin scourges of colonialism and capitalism. The reading of Achebe's novel moves to a brief discussion on two works by the Kenyan author Ngũgĩ who is set alongside the Malay writer Han Suyin. The bringing together of the Nigerian (Achebe), Kenyan (Ngũgĩ) and Malayan (Han) authors with the English (Hardy) is methodologically unique. It disavows methodological nationalism while situating, and reading, authors from the global periphery in relation to English texts. Such a move simultaneously globalises the literary field while provincialising the national contexts of the individual authors. His reading method, at once illuminating and idiosyncratic, sets up the peripheral texts as supplements – I use the term both commonsensically and in a Derridean register – to the metropolitan ones, and illuminates the global literary field marked by the capitalist mode of production. Such a critical enterprise performs, and anticipates, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's *globelectical mode of reading* that seeks to make the unevenness of the world-literary space speak under erasure by embracing 'wholeness, interconnectedness, [and the] equality of [...] parts'.¹⁹ Significantly, Williams deploys uneven development as an analytic for studying these texts thus anticipating a specific tradition of materialist criticism that works with questions of unevenness and form. This tradition includes, but is not restricted to, literary critics and theorists such as Roberto Schwarz, Fredric Jameson, Franco Moretti, Timothy Brennan, E. San Juan Jr, and more recently, the Warwick Research Collective.

The dialectical *and* idiosyncratic reading protocol of *The Country and the City* also expresses itself in scattered references to the history of peasant revolutions that further shapes the text's peculiar singularity. Speaking of the 'long contempt, from very diverse sources, of the peasant, the boor, the rural clown' Williams notes that 'until the peasant socialist revolutions of China and Cuba, this reflex was habitual among the metropolitan socialists of Europe'.²⁰ Notice how Williams brings together, in an oppositional relation of thrust-and-parry, the 'metropolitan socialists of Europe', contemptuous of the peasant, with the revolutionary peasants of Asia ('China') and Latin America ('Cuba'). This move is repeated elsewhere in the book when readers are reminded that in the twentieth-century revolutionary transformation of society came

not in 'developed' but in the 'undeveloped' countries [...] In a whole epoch of national and social liberation struggles, the exploited rural and colonial populations became the main sources of continued revolt. In the famous Chinese phrase about world revolution, the 'countryside' was surrounding the 'cities'. Thus the 'rural idiots' and the 'barbarians and semi-barbarians' have been, for the last forty years, the main revolutionary force in the world.²¹

This juxtaposition of the non-west with the west, and the under-developed with the developed, and the transformation of the 'rural idiots' into the 'revolutionary force' of the twentieth century signals the dialectical tenor of the passage. This is also evident in the overall structure of the study, whose penultimate chapter, which focuses on imperialism and 'non-western' texts, serves as a supplement to the rest of the book, which is a discussion on England and the English canon. The text's dialectical structural logic as well as its idiosyncratic mode of reading marks the work with a stylistic tic that makes it decidedly Williams, and, in turn, makes *The Country and the City* singularly peculiar, and peculiarly singular.

The Country and the City, then, is a profoundly *anticipatory* and *idiosyncratic* text that demonstrates Williams's 'knack of pre-empting intellectual positions' and reading protocols, especially those pertaining to world literature studies.²² Williams's former pupil, Terry Eagleton sums up this aspect of Williams succinctly, even as he provides an uncharitable assessment of Williams's work that he would subsequently put down to 'the brisk impatience of relative youth'.²³ He writes that it is 'a curious feature of Williams's intellectual career that, working by his own devious, eclectic and idiosyncratic route, he has consistently pre-empted important theoretical developments'.²⁴ Eagleton's comments are astute for they bring together the pre-emptive nature of Williams's work with the latter's 'eclectic and idiosyncratic route' of going about his critical business. And this is precisely what makes for the peculiar singularity of *The Country and the City*. To use Williams to explain Williams, I want to suggest that *The Country and the City* is a kind of structure of feeling, an anticipatory horizon of a possible critical method and enterprise. Readers will recall that the phrase *structures of feeling*, though repeatedly used by Williams in *The Country and the City*, is not explained in the text. It is, however, glossed in detail in his subsequent publication, and seminal theoretical work, *Marxism and Literature* (1977) from which I quote at length:

we are concerned with meanings and values as they are actively lived and felt [...] We are talking about characteristic elements of impulse, restraint, and tone; specifically affective elements of consciousness and relationships: not

feeling against thought, but thought as felt and feeling as thought: practical consciousness of a present kind, in the living and interrelating continuity. We are [...] defining a social experience which is still *in process*, often indeed not yet recognized as social taken to be private, idiosyncratic, and even isolating, but which [...] are often more recognizable at a later stage, when they have been (as often happens) formalized, classified, and in many cases built into institutions and formations [...].²⁵

Williams goes on to add that ‘structures of feeling can be defined as social experiences *in solution*, as distinct from other semantic formations which have been *precipitated* [...] [They are] at the very edge of semantic availability, [and have] [...] many of the characteristics of a pre-formation’.²⁶ As an attempt to think through and articulate social experience that is being lived and still in process, structures of feeling indicate inchoate and pre-emergent socio-cultural formations that express themselves as an individual tic or idiosyncrasy – or, to put it another way, and in aesthetic terms, a formal or stylistic peculiarity.²⁷ And as a pre-formation, structures of feeling are, in effect, anticipatory illuminations of a future possibility and a possible future. As a structure of feeling, then, *The Country and the City* points to a future reading method and disciplinary formation. It signals a desire to move beyond reading texts in terms of their cloistered national contexts, and to a global literary field and a comparativism at a global scale.

To the Corners of a Foreign Field

Williams’s study focuses largely on the changing conceptions of the countryside and the city in English literary representations from the sixteenth to the twentieth century. It situates these in relation to transforming property relations in England, and the concomitant changes in the relations of production. Williams locates the distinction between the country and the city as being ideologically coded into ‘here nature, there worldliness’, where the ‘contrast depends, often, on just the suppression of work in the countryside, and of the property relations through which this work is organised’ to present the rural as a space of unsullied nature.²⁸ The processes of capitalist exploitation, especially of the countryside, signals a crisis of perspective that is negotiated by ‘in effect, dissolv[ing it] into a landscape’.²⁹ Landscape, Williams explains in his study, is a way of looking at the land that ‘implies separation and observation’.³⁰ And, just as crucially, it also implies a ‘self-conscious observer [...] who is not only looking at land but who is [also] conscious [of] doing so, as an experience in itself, and who has prepared social models and analogies from

elsewhere to support and justify the experience'.³¹ Williams offers readers a set of coordinates to examine the landscape aesthetic: property relations; a crisis of perspective; the obfuscation of labour, and the concomitant idealisation of nature; distance from the land; the self-conscious observer; and, crucially for my purposes, the categories of the pastoral and counter-pastoral. Recall Williams had recommended that critics move beyond thinking of the 'particularity of [...] [the non-western] stories as merely exotic' suggesting they be read in a materialist vein: keeping in mind the 'social process' to illuminate a 'connecting process' between the metropole and colony that ultimately 'shares as a common history'.³² Keeping this *methodological injunction* in mind, I now move to colonial Bengal to examine the emergent landscape aesthetic and, in particular, the ways in which it expresses itself through the forms of the pastoral and counter-pastoral.

I begin, in media res, in 1875. That year, the Bengali journal *Bongodorshon* [বঙ্গদর্শন] published a poem that was composed by its editor Bankim Chandra Chatterji. Called 'Bande Mataram' [বন্দে মাতরম],³³ the poem imagines the ethnolinguistic homeland of Bengal as a landscape and, drawing on Hindu iconography, personifies it as a nurturing mother and a mother goddess. It was republished in the journal in 1881, as part of the serialised publication of the novel *Anandamath* [আনন্দমঠ] by Chatterji, which was published in book form the following year. *Anandamath* and 'Bande Mataram' were immensely popular on publication, with the poem's imagination of the land/scape as a mother goddess, in particular, becoming a powerful catalyst for galvanising anti-colonial sentiments among Hindu Bengalis.³⁴ Set to music and sung for the first time by Rabindranath Tagore in the 1896 session of the Indian National Congress, the poem transformed into a song and gained wider currency during the protests against the first partition of Bengal of 1905. Over time, it circulated across India with the 'mother' of the lyric coming to signify India rather than Bengal.³⁵ As the phrase 'Bande Mataram', meaning 'I revere the Mother', became a popular nationalist slogan in Indian National Congress circles, a significant section of Muslims opposed it for being idolatrous and against the tenets of Islam. The lyric became a major source of conflict between Hindus and Muslims of British India with the rift playing out politically – the Muslim League opposed it, while the Indian National Congress championed it. Over time, Tagore, who gave the poem its lyrical lease of life, became one of its staunchest critics and repeatedly condemned the exclusionary nationalism the song spawned. 'Bande Mataram' also inaugurated the affective ideas of Bengal, and subsequently India, as a 'motherland'; the latter would, in turn, inform the emergence of Bharat Mata or Mother India, 'a novel deity of nation and country [in a] land already thronging with all manner of gods and goddesses'.³⁶

I briefly sketch out the socio-political history of the circulation and reception of 'Bande Mataram' to gesture towards the deeply consequential nature of its spatial imagination, one that continues to shape political discourse in contemporary India.³⁷ It bears pointing out that at its heart, the lyric is animated by a landscape aesthetic that is shaped, as will be evident momentarily, by transforming property relations and the forms of subjectivity it engendered. Let us take a look at the opening sections of the poem:

I revere the Mother! The Mother
 Rich in waters, rich in fruit,
 Cooled by the southern airs,
 Verdant with the harvest fair.³⁸

[বন্দে মাতরম্
 সুজলাং সুফলাং
 মলয়জশীতলাং
 শস্যশ্যামলাং]³⁹

The opening stanza sets up the landscape view of the Bengal countryside and posits it as an image of plenitude. It is not just 'rich in waters, rich in fruit', but also green from the standing crops and 'cooled by the southern airs'. It sets up an equation between womanhood, nature, and fecundity that is developed throughout the lyric. The next stanza continues the interplay between landscape, homeland, mother, and mother goddess:

The Mother – with nights that thrill
 in the light of the moon,
 Radiant with foliage and flowers in bloom,
 Smiling sweetly, speaking gently,
 Giving joy and gifts in plenty.⁴⁰

[শুভ্র-জ্যেৎস্না-পুলকিত-যামিনীম্
 ফুল্ল-কুসুমিত-দ্রুমদলশোভিনীম্
 সুহাসিনীং সুমধুরভাষিণীম্
 সুখদাং বরদাং]⁴¹

The 'Mother', adorned with flowers and foliage, is now presented as 'Smiling sweetly, speaking gently, / Giving joy and gifts in plenty', signalling the Bengal landscape as a nurturing space.

Williams reminds us that a 'working country is hardly ever a landscape'.⁴² To *landscape* Bengal into a pleasing prospect replete with trees, flowers, fruits

and standing crops, and render it a riparian land of fecundity and plenitude, the lyric evacuates all traces of human labour from the space. Implicit in such a conception is that the land's produce is a gift of the mother/land and not a product of human labour. 'Bande Mataram', significantly, idealises and idolises Bengal but also posits it as a *pastoral* landscape. By obfuscating the labour regimes behind the re/production of the Bengal countryside, the lyric signals a fetishised way of viewing space that sets up space as a view. Just as crucially, it points to that 'self-conscious observer' who is 'not only looking at land' but is conscious of 'doing so, as an experience in itself'. This observer, whose relationship to the land is predicated on the logic of 'separation' gestures towards the rentier subjectivity of the landlord class that was incubated by the English East India Company (hereafter, EIC) through the introduction, first in Bengal, and subsequently across British India, of the rule of property in land.

In 1765, as a consequence of defeating the combined forces of the Mughals and the nawabs of Bengal and Awadh, the EIC was granted the *Divani*, that is, the right to collect revenue from Bengal, the richest province of Mughal India. After initially using the nawab's officials as tax collectors, the EIC began to lease out and auction the right to collect taxes. These experiments in revenue collection dramatically worsened the effect of the famine of 1769–73 that killed 10 million people, that is, about thirty percent of Bengal.⁴³ In 1776, Philip Francis, a member of the Bengal Council, advanced a plan for the 'rule of property' insisting that 'if private property be not once for all secured on a permanent footing, the public revenue will sink rapidly with the general produce of the country'.⁴⁴ This scheme took juridical form as the Permanent Settlement of Bengal of 1793. It gave tenure holders ownership of the land and the right to its revenue who, in return, had to pay the EIC an annual tax that was fixed in perpetuity. In 1835, Persian was replaced by English as the official medium of instruction in British India, which helped create a new class of Anglo-vernacular elites. In Bengal, this emergent class who were overwhelmingly Hindu, and upper caste (and, of course, male) fashioned themselves as the *bhdrolok* [ভদ্রলোক; literally, the 'polite folk']. This class acquired a degree of influence that belied their status as a numerical minority in the Bengali social formation, to frame 'new forms of public discourse, [...] new criteria of social respectability, [...] new aesthetic and moral standards of judgment and [...] new forms of political mobilisation'.⁴⁵ The first generation of the *bhdrolok* were intermediary capitalists and key members of the cultural life of Bengal through the eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries. With their economic heft dwindling from the middle of the nineteenth century – owing to the depression of 1848 as well as the emergence of new intermediaries, such as the Marwari community from northwestern India that settled in Bengal – the *bhdrolok* sought pecuniary refuge in the land revenue guaranteed to them by

the Permanent Settlement. Introduced to foster the rule of property and a class of yeomen farmers, the Permanent Settlement, ironically, ‘produced an intermediate, tenure-holding class of rentiers who survived by appropriating the surplus of the Bengal peasantry’.⁴⁶ And it is this rentier subjectivity – of living off the land without working it – that informs the logic of ‘separation and observation’ behind the landscape aesthetic deployed in ‘Bande Mataram’.

The historical conjuncture that structured the emergence of the lyric was marked by colonial repression and famines on the one hand, and, on the other, by an ascendant middle class that was developing a sense of anti-colonial nationalism. This informed the popularity of ‘Bande Mataram’ and enabled it to normalise the *landscaped* imagination of Bengal (and India) while also lending the lyric immense ideological power with which it could insinuate questions of identity and belonging. Take, for instance, the seventh stanza, where the Bengal landscape is most directly apotheosised:

For you are Durga, bearer of the tenfold power,
And wealth’s Goddess, dallying on the lotus flower,
You are Speech, to you I bow,
To us wisdom you endow.⁴⁷

[তুম্‌ হি দুর্গা দশপ্রহরণধারিণী
কমলা কমল-দলবিহারিণী
বাণী বিদ্যাদায়িনী]⁴⁸

Here, the ‘you are’ (‘twam hi’ [তুম্‌ হি] in the original Sanskrit) holds up the space of Bengal, imagined as a pastoral landscape, as Durga, the ten-handed mother goddess popular among middle- and upper-class Bengali Hindus. The apotheosising impulse continues to allegorise the landscape as the Hindu goddess of wealth, Lakshmi (‘wealth’s goddess’), and Saraswati, the Hindu goddess of ‘Speech’, learning and ‘wisdom’. The ideological manoeuvre being performed here is significant. Foremost, it idealises the Bengal landscape by infusing it with a spiritual charge thereby re-enchanting the disenchanting colonial space. But such an act of re-enchantment also initiates a misrecognition where the mundane land/scape stands in for Hindu divinity and vice versa, which, in effect, interpellates the reader-auditor as a devotee. It is a valorisation of the landscape, no doubt, but also one that is exclusionary, for the relationship is sanctioned and validated by Hinduism *alone*. In sum, it sets up Bengal (and by extension, India) as a Hindu space, and a space for Hindus, thus excluding Muslims (significantly, the majority religious community of Bengal). Williams’s ‘self-conscious observer’ has not only posited a ‘way of looking’ but has also drawn on Hinduism to ‘support and justify the experience’.

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Let me now turn to Rabindranath Tagore, the single most important literary figure and public intellectual of Bengal and British India, who offers us a different conception of the Bengal landscape. In 1896, the same year he set 'Bande Mataram' to music and sung it publicly for the first time, Tagore published the poem 'A Half-Acre of Land' [দুই বিঘা জমি 'Dui Bigha Jomi'] in his collection of poems called *Chitra* [চিত্রা]. The poem is a fairly straightforward critique of the landlordism engendered by the Permanent Settlement of Bengal, and details how Bengali landlords stole land from the underclass. The opening of the poem makes this abundantly clear by laying out the machinations of the landlord [zamindar]:

I had forfeited all my land except for one half-acre.
The landlord said 'Upen, I'll buy it, you must hand it over.'
I said, 'You're rich, you've endless land, can't you see
That all I've got is a patch on which to die?'
'Old man,' he sneered, 'you know I've made a garden;
If I have your half-acre its length and breadth will be even.
You'll have to sell.' Then I said with my hands on my heart
And tears in my eyes, 'Don't take my only plot!
It's more than gold – for seven generations my family
Has owned it: must I sell my own mother through poverty?'
He was silent for a while as his eyes grew red with fury.
'All right, we'll see,' he said, smiling cruelly.
Six weeks later I had left and was out on the road;
Everything was sold, debt claimed through a fraudulent deed.
For those want most, alas, who already have plenty:
The rich zamindār steals the beggar-man's property.⁴⁹

[শুধু বিঘে-দুই ছিল মোর ভূঁই, আর সব গেছে ঋণে ।
বার বলিলেন, 'বুঝেছ উপেন, এ জমি লইব কিনে ।'
কহিলাম আমি, 'তুমি ভূস্বামী, ভূমির অন্ত নাই,
চেয়ে দেখো মোর আছে বড়োজোর মরিবার মত ঠাঁই ।'
শুনি রাজা কহে, 'বাপু, জান তো হে, করেছি বাগানখানা,
পেলে দুই বিঘে প্রস্তু ও দিঘে সমান হইবে টানা –
ওটা দিতে হবে ।' কহিলাম তবে বক্ষে জুড়িয়া পাণি
সজল চক্ষে, 'করুন রক্ষে গরিবের ভিটেখানি ।
সপ্তপুরুষ যেথায় মানুষ সে মাটি সোনার বাড়ী,
দৈন্যের দায়ে বেচিব সে মায়ে এমনি লক্ষীছাড়া !'
আঁখি করি লাল রাজা ক্ষণকাল রহিল মৌনভাবে,
কহিলেন শেষে ক্রুর হাসি হেসে, 'আচ্ছা, সে দেখা যাবে ।'

পরে মাস-দেড়ে ভিটেমাটি ছেড়ে বাহির হইনু পথে –
করিল ডিক্রি, সকলি বিক্রি মিথ্যা দেনার খতে ।
এ জগতে হায় সেই বেশি চায় আছে যার ভূরি ভূরি,
রাজার হস্ত করে সমস্ত কাঙালের ধন চুরি ॥⁵⁰

These lines stage a confrontation between the social classes with the landlord demanding his tenant Upen give up his ancestral land. The act of eviction is rendered more poignant by the fact that Upen is evicted from his home for the sake of a garden whose ‘length and breadth will be [made] even’ by the landlord with his land. There are two crucial aspects of this passage. First, the poem is narrated from the point of view of Upen, representing the underclass, and not from the perspective of the landlord. And second, the extract underlines Upen’s ties with his land without relying on the landscape form, though this will change in the course of the poem. Also note the poem’s use of the word ‘mother’ (and, just as importantly, not ‘mother goddess’) to connote the lived relationship between the tenant and the land. In the lines that follow, readers are left with no doubt that what is being narrated is a land-grab: Upen is removed from the land through a ‘fraudulent deed’, and he sets off to travel across India as a mendicant. Fifteen years pass, readers are told, and Upen’s homesickness forces him to return to Bengal.

As Upen returns to Bengal and views the countryside, the poem offers readers lines that are one of the finest renditions – if not *the* finest image – of the Bengal landscape ever composed in Bengali (one that is also, though sadly lost in translation, a virtuoso display of Tagore’s accomplishment with meter, rhyme, assonance, and alliteration):

I bow, I bow to my beautiful motherland Bengal!
To your river-banks, to your winds that cool and console;
Your plains, whose dust the sky bends down to kiss;
Your shrouded villages, that are nests of shade and peace;
Your leafy mango-woods, where the herd-boys play;
Your deep ponds, loving and cool as the midnight sky;
Your sweet-hearted women returning home with water;
I tremble in my soul and weep when I call you Mother.⁵¹

[নমোনমো নম, সুন্দরী মম জননী বঙ্গভূমি !
গঙ্গার তীর, স্নিগ্ধ সমীর, জীবন জুড়ালে তুমি ।
অবারিত মাঠ, গগনললাট চুমে তব পদধূলি –
ছায়াসুনিবিড় শান্তির নীড় ছোটো ছোটো গ্রামগুলি ।
পল্লবঘন আম্রকানন, রাখালের খেলাগেহ –
সুন্ধ অতল দিঘি-কালোজল নিশীথশীতলস্নেহ ।

বুক-ভরা-মধু বঙ্গের বধু জল লয়ে যায় ঘরে –
মা বলিতে প্রাণ করে আনচান, চোখে আসে জল ভরে ।⁵²

The landscape vision of the Bengal countryside is, significantly, focalised through Upen who, having been separated from his land, can now access, and articulate, the alienated vision of the land. Notice, also, how the scope of the term ‘mother’, earlier used to denote just Upen’s land, has now been expanded to signal Bengal as such. The image brings the natural and human worlds together in a way that, despite its idealisation of Bengal as a home and homeland, is also invested in providing readers with a sense of the social whole. Depictions of the ‘river-banks’, the ‘winds that cool and console’, and the ‘plains, whose dust the sky bends down to kiss’ idealise the land – but they go hand in hand with ‘shrouded villages’, ‘herd-boys’, and ‘women returning home with water’. In other words, the landscape view is punctuated repeatedly with human activity and haunted by the spectre of labour. To put this another way, Tagore constructs a view of the land that is predicated on ‘separation and observation’. But at the same time, he brings to view the ‘working country’ that is obscured in pastoral constructions of landscapes such as ‘Bande Mataram’. Tagore posits and also, simultaneously, undermines the landscape aesthetic thus offering a profoundly contradictory spatial image that, drawing on Williams, I want to suggest is a *counter-pastoral*. Such a landscape image draws on the leisured gaze of the ‘self-conscious observer’ while also undermining it through gentle reminders of the myriad worlds of work. Let me elaborate my point further by discussing a critical exchange on Tagore’s poetry.

The subaltern historian Dipesh Chakrabarty, drawing in part on the landscape image from ‘A Half-Acre of Land’ that I have just discussed, has charged Tagore with a kind of creative schizophrenia. The poet, Chakrabarty contends, displays a ‘critical eye’ and an ‘adoring eye’. The former, in operation in his prose writings, enables Tagore to seek out ‘the defects in the nation for the purposes of reform and improvement’ while his ‘adoring eye’ informs his poetry and sees ‘the nation as already beautiful or sublime’.⁵³ And, somewhat curiously, Chakrabarty draws on the evocative landscape depiction from the middle of ‘A Half-Acre of Land’ to make his case. Insisting Chakrabarty’s is a misreading of Tagore, Rosinka Chaudhuri has pointed out that the landscape depiction in question is

only a small portion of the whole [poem]. What Chakrabarty doesn’t mention is that the extract is also directly opposite in temper and tone from the rest of the narrative [of ‘A Half-Acre of Land’], which is stridently polemical. If [that portion] [...] is to be read as illustrative of Tagore’s adoring eye, then it may be argued that the framework of the actual poem

itself within which it is contained (about a rapacious landlord and a false court case robbing a poor man of his ancestral land) is representative of the critical eye. The construction of the stories as didactic and the poems as celebratory thus breaks down even before it is properly built up.⁵⁴

Chaudhuri's correction of Chakrabarty's egregious misreading is undoubtedly valuable but, more crucially, this exchange offers us an insightful model for critically engaging Tagore and, in particular, his counter-pastoral landscapes. Despite its obvious shortcomings, Chakrabarty's formulation of the 'critical eye' and 'adoring eye' is nevertheless perceptive. In my estimation, the critical and the adoring eye should not be seen as ways of seeing that operate separately, and in distinct domains, such as prose and poetry. Rather, they are best understood *dialectically*, as two distinct moments of a single creative process through which the counter-pastoral both affirms ('adoring eye') and negates ('critical eye') the world to constitute itself as such. In 'A Half-Acre of Land', the landscape image at the heart of the poem brings together the view predicated on leisure and distance with the reminder of labour that is an anti-aesthetic insurrection against it. And this tension at the heart of the counter-pastoral is mirrored in the poem's form where the quasi-realist (though metrically rendered) opening that casts a critical eye on the Bengali social formation is held in tension with the adoring eye that valorises Bengal through, and as, a landscape. The counter-pastoral, then, by being an artifact *that repudiates the empirical world while simultaneously acknowledging the world it negates* appears to be an aesthetic that is aware of its own artifice.

Chatterji and Tagore inaugurate two distinct landscape modalities of Bengali lyric modernity. The poets of the post-Tagore era would take up the pastoral and the counter-pastoral to shape their own lyrical attitudes to the Bengal countryside. Let me conclude this section with two poetic landscapes from the poems of Jibanananda Das and Sukanta Bhattacharya, two of the most important modernists of the Bengali poetic tradition. Das's poems, especially from the posthumous collection titled *Ruposhi Bangla* [রূপসী বাংলা; *Bengal the Beautiful*], which were written in the context of the colonial famines and economic depression of the 1930s, effect a gesture of refusal to the empirical reality of distress that he inhabits. His Bengal, a riparian land of sensorial excess, is presented as a pastoral space of nostalgia. The opening lines, in Joe Winter's resonant translation, reads:

I will come back again to Bengal, to this Dhansiri riverside
 maybe not as a man – but a *shalik*, or white-chest kite;
 or a dawn crow maybe, new-rice-time, in misty flight
 to this jackfruit-tree shade one *Kartik* day will glide;

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or a duck – a girl owns it – on its red feet small bells are tied
(in *kalmi*-smell now the whole day floats by till night) –
I will come back again to Bengal in a loving delight,
Rivers, fields – land bathed by the Jalangi, green tender wide ...⁵⁵

[আবার আসিব ফিরে ধানসিঁড়িটির তীরে – এই বাংলায়
হয়তো মানুষ নয় – হয়তো বা শঙ্খচিল শালিখের বেশে ;
হয়তো ভোরের কাক হয়ে এই কার্তিকের নবান্নের দেশে
কুয়াশার বৃকে ভেসে একদিন আসিব এ কাঁঠাল-ছায়ায় ;
হয়তো বা হাঁস হ'ব – কিশোরীর – ঘুঙুর রহিবে লাল পায়,
সারাদিন কেটে যাবে কল্মীর গন্ধভরা জলে ভেসে ভেসে ;
আবার আসিব আমি বাংলার নদী মাঠ ক্ষেত ভালোবেসে
জলাঙ্গীর চেউয়ে ভেজা বাংলার এই সবুজ করুণ ডাঙ্গায়...]⁵⁶

But the final word surely belongs to Sukanta Bhattacharya, the Communist poet and a younger contemporary of Das. The opening lines of 'The Awakening' [বোধন; 'Bodhon'], also written in the turbulent nineteen-thirties of the last century, provides a counter-pastoral gaze on Bengal with its landscapes marked by death and distress, and prescient of its postcolonial reality:

... come back just once, look out and see
Amidst the throngs of country and city –
Death raids this place, again and again,
Darkness gathers, from common view hidden.
This sky, vista, fields – the green earth of dreams,
It is here that Death silently camps.

[... একবার এসো ফিরে
শুধু একবার চোখ মেলো এই গ্রাম নগরের ভিড়ে,
এখানে মৃত্যু হানা দেয় বারবার ;
লোকচক্ষুর আড়ালে এখানে জমেছে অন্ধকার ।
এই যে আকাশ, দিগন্ত, মাঠ, স্বপ্নে সবুজ মাটি
নীরবে মৃত্যু গেড়েছে এখানে ঘাঁটি...]⁵⁷

Coda: Elective Affinities

Though Williams is a critical thinker who 'appears to elude categorization', let me conclude my discussion by considering Williams's location in the theoretical milieu of his times and beyond.⁵⁸ To begin with, Williams is certainly a key figure of that selective tradition that we have come to call Western Marxism, and, as Martin Jay suggests, 'perhaps the only English Marxist able to hold his

own with his continental peers'.⁵⁹ I do not need to rehearse his more-than-significant contributions to materialist literary and cultural theory to suggest that he belongs to a tradition that would include, *despite their important differences*, figures such as Antonio Gramsci, György Lukács, Lucien Goldmann, Walter Benjamin, Theodor Adorno, Herbert Marcuse, Louis Althusser, Pierre Macherey, Terry Eagleton and Fredric Jameson. He also inhabits several other critical traditions, foremost among them Cultural Studies, a field that he is often credited with having brought into being. Furthermore, owing largely, though not exclusively, to his critical focus in *The Country and the City*, he stands at the head of an interdisciplinary intellectual formation that is invested in materialist inquiries into the production of space and nature where the text is a substantial contribution to, and anticipation of, the spatial and environmental humanities. Much of what I am saying here is largely acknowledged but I also want to suggest that Williams belongs to another tradition in a way that may strike some readers as counter intuitive. Williams's insistence on drawing attention to the structural and constitutive linkages between the colony and the metropole, situating the latter in an uneven and exploitative relationship with the former, demonstrates his clear though unmarked affinity with the tradition of materialist thought and praxis committed to engaging issues of global unevenness and anti-colonialism together, and simultaneously, across the political, economic and cultural realms. Appearing as scattered speculations in the works of Karl Marx, this tradition gains a more concrete shape in the works of Vladimir Lenin, Nikolai Bukharin, Rosa Luxemburg, Leon Trotsky and Antonio Gramsci before developing further in the works of Rabindranath Tagore, Mao Zedong, Aimé Césaire, Frantz Fanon and Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o. And while this is not a tradition Williams is typically placed in, it bears stressing that figures of this tradition struggled to make hope practical at times when despair seemed more convincing. And this then is a tradition where Williams firmly belongs.⁶⁰

Notes

- 1 Aijaz Ahmad, *In Theory: Classes, Nations, Literatures* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press), 47. My italics.
- 2 See Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, *Gloabectics: Theory and the Politics of Knowing* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012).
- 3 See, for instance, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *Death of a Discipline* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003) and Ngũgĩ, *Gloabectics*.
- 4 Tristram Hunt, Introduction to *The Country and the City*, by Raymond Williams (London: Vintage, 2016), xvii.
- 5 Gauri Viswanathan, 'Raymond Williams and British Colonialism: The Limits of Metropolitan Cultural Theory', in *Views Beyond the Border Country: Raymond Williams and Cultural Politics*, ed. Dennis Dworkin and Leslie Roman (New York: Routledge, 1993), 218. Paul Gilroy, similarly, sees Williams invested in a kind of 'authentic' national belonging. Equating Williams with the chauvinism of Enoch Powell, Gilroy claims that 'the cultural dimensions of the new racism confound the left/right distinction'. See Paul Gilroy, *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack: The Cultural Politics of Race and Nation* (London: Hutchinson, 1987), 49. Though Williams's very specific understanding and deployment of terms such as 'culture' and 'nation' leave him open to such readings, I find Crystal Bartolovich's observation that 'Williams has been unfairly scapegoated in the broad critique of British cultural studies' both astute and salutary. See Crystal Bartolovich, 'Inventing London', in *Masses, Classes, and the Public Sphere*, ed. Mike Hill and Warren Montag (London: Verso, 2000), 36. Other scholars have sought to counter the persistent misreading of Williams that seems to have acquired the prejudice of common-sense. For a crucial reappraisal of Williams see Daniel G. Williams, 'Introduction to the 2003 Edition: The Return of the Native' in Raymond Williams, *Who Speaks for Wales: Nation, Culture, Identity*, ed. Daniel G. Williams (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2021), 12–46. For a more recent intervention along similar lines, see Daniel Hartley, 'Anti-Imperial Literacy, the Humanities, and Universality in Raymond Williams's Late Work', in *Raymond Williams at 100*, ed. Paul Stasi (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2021), 91–107.
- 6 Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage, 1994), 65. The critiques of Williams by Said, Gilroy and Viswanathan also gesture towards the reflexive anti-Marxism that was the zeitgeist of the 1980s and 1990s.
- 7 Terry Eagleton, 'Resources for a Journey of Hope: The Significance of Raymond Williams', *New Left Review*, Vol. I, no. 168 (March–April 1988): 8.
- 8 Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973), 279.
- 9 Williams, *The Country and the City*.
- 10 Williams, *The Country and the City*, 279.
- 11 Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Constance Farrington (New York: Grove Press, 1963), 51.
- 12 For an elaboration on the idea of combined and uneven development, see Michael Löwy, *The Politics of Combined and Uneven Development: The Theory of Permanent Revolution* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 1981).
- 13 Williams, *The Country and the City*, 280.
- 14 Williams, *The Country and the City*, 280. My italics. John Seeley, the first Regius Professor of Modern History at the University of Cambridge, had observed that the English seem 'to have conquered and peopled half the world in a fit of absence of mind'. These comments have since suggested to impressionable minds that England's colonial mission was not a wilful project of organised loot and plunder but rather an expression of imperial greatness

- being thrust upon them. See John R. Seeley, *The Expansion of England: Two Courses of Lectures* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1883), 8.
- 15 Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 41.
 - 16 The publication of Said's *Orientalism* is typically taken to be the originary moment of postcolonial studies. Several scholars, most notably Timothy Brennan, have sought to revise this commonsensical understanding of the field's origin. For a succinct *revisionary* intellectual history of postcolonial studies, see Timothy Brennan, 'Postcolonial Studies Between the European Wars: An Intellectual History', in *Marxism, Modernity, and Postcolonial Studies*, ed. Crystal Bartolovich and Neil Lazarus (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 185–203. For an illuminating discussion on the reception of Said's *Orientalism*, see Timothy Brennan, 'The Illusion of a Future: "Orientalism" as Traveling Theory', *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 26, no. 3 (Spring 2000): 558–83.
 - 17 Williams, *The Country and the City*, 288.
 - 18 Williams, *The Country and the City*, 286.
 - 19 Ngũgĩ, *Globalectics*, 8.
 - 20 Williams, *The Country and the City*, 36.
 - 21 Williams, *The Country and the City*, 304.
 - 22 Terry Eagleton, 'Criticism and Politics: The Work of Raymond Williams', *New Left Review* I/95 (January–February 1976): 20.
 - 23 Eagleton, 'Resources for a Journey of Hope', 6.
 - 24 Eagleton, 'Criticism and Politics', 18.
 - 25 Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 132–33. Italics in original.
 - 26 Williams, *Marxism and Literature*, 133–34. Italics in original.
 - 27 For an extended meditation on the importance of style in the work of Raymond Williams (as well as Terry Eagleton and Fredric Jameson), see Daniel Hartley, *The Politics of Style: Towards a Marxist Poetics* (Leiden: Brill, 2016).
 - 28 Williams, *The Country and the City*, 46.
 - 29 Williams, *The Country and the City*, 46.
 - 30 Williams, *The Country and the City*, 120.
 - 31 Williams, *The Country and the City*, 121. For another illuminating theorisation and discussion of the landscape (in the context of Japanese literature), see Karatani Kojin, *Origins of Modern Japanese Literature*, trans. Brett de Bary (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1993), 11–75. See, in particular, chapters 1 ('The Discovery of Landscape') and 2 ('The Discovery of Interiority').
 - 32 Williams, *The Country and the City*, 288.
 - 33 Its alternative, more Sanskritised, spelling is 'Vande Mataram'.
 - 34 For a discussion of *Anandamath* as a romance and 'Bande Mataram' as an exemplar of the global form of the patriotic lyric, see Sandeep Banerjee, *Space, Utopia, and Indian Decolonization: Literary Pre-figurations of the Postcolony* (New York: Routledge, 2019), 18–50; 82–115.
 - 35 I use 'lyric' to capture the lives of 'Bande Mataram' as both a poem and a song.
 - 36 Sumathi Ramaswamy, *The Goddess and the Nation: Mapping Mother India* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010), 1.
 - 37 After independence in 1947, the Indian state enshrined its first two stanzas as the country's national song, while the first stanza of Tagore's 'Jana Gana Mana' ['Guide of People's Thoughts'] became the country's national anthem. Bande Mataram is sung in its entirety by members of the Hindu Right Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), the parent organisation of the political party Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which has been in power in India since 2014. Storm troopers of the Hindu Right also treat the readiness to sing the

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- song as a litmus test of patriotism among Indians, especially Indian Muslims, a process that has intensified since 2014.
- 38 Bankim Chandra Chatterji, *Anandamath, or, the Sacred Brotherhood*, trans. Julius Lipner (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 145.
- 39 Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, আনন্দমঠ [*Anandamath*] (Calcutta: Bangiya Sahitya Parishad, 1938), 23.
- 40 Chatterji, *Anandamath*, 145.
- 41 Chatterjee, আনন্দমঠ [*Anandamath*], 23.
- 42 Williams, *The Country and the City*, 120.
- 43 Leela Visaria and Pravin Visaria, 'Population, 1757–1947', in *Cambridge Economic History of India, vol. 2: c.1757–1970*, ed. Dharma Kumar and Meghnad Desai (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 527.
- 44 Philip Francis, *Letter from Mr Francis to Lord North*, 36, quoted in Ranajit Guha, *A Rule of Property for Bengal: An Essay on the Idea of Permanent Settlement* (Ranikhet: Permanent Black, 2016), 143.
- 45 Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993), 36.
- 46 Sandeep Banerjee and Subho Basu, 'Secularizing the Sacred, Imagining the Nation-Space: The Himalaya in Bengali Travelogues, 1856–1901', *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 49, no. 3 (2015): 622.
- 47 Chatterji, *Anandamath*, 145.
- 48 Chatterjee, আনন্দমঠ [*Anandamath*], 24.
- 49 Rabindranath Tagore, 'A Half-Acre of Land', in *Rabindranath Tagore: Selected Poems*, trans. William Radice (London: Penguin Books, 1994), 55–56.
- 50 Rabindranath Tagore, 'দুই বিঘা জমি [Dui Bigha Jomi]', in সঞ্চয়িতা [*Sanchayita*] (Shantiniketan: Vishwabharati, 1955), 238–40.
- 51 Tagore, 'A Half-Acre of Land', 56.
- 52 Tagore, 'দুই বিঘা জমি [Dui Bigha Jomi]', 238–40.
- 53 Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), 151. Chakrabarty develops this idea about the 'two ways of seeing in Bengali nationalism' across the chapter titled 'Nation and Imagination'.
- 54 Rosinka Chaudhuri, 'The Flute, Gerontion, and Subaltern Misreadings of 'Tagore'', *Social Text*, Vol. 22, No. 1 (78) (Spring 2004): 112.
- 55 Jibanananda Das, '14. I will come back again to Bengal' in *Bengal the Beautiful*, trans. Joe Winter (London: Anvil Press Poetry, 2006), 24. For a brief discussion on Das's pastoralism in relation to a different poem from this anthology, see Neil Lazarus, *The Postcolonial Unconscious* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 85–7.
- 56 Jibanananda Das, 'আবার আসিব ফিরে [I Will Come Back Again to Bengal]' in রূপসী বাংলা [*Ruposhi Bangla*] (Calcutta: Signet Press, 2004), 24.
- 57 Sukanta Bhattacharya, 'বোধন [Bodhon]' in সুকান্ত সমগ্র [*Sukanta-Samagra*] (Calcutta: Saraswat Library, 1957), 71. The English translation is mine.
- 58 Anthony Barnett, 'Raymond Williams and Marxism: A Rejoinder to Terry Eagleton', *New Left Review*, Vol. I, no. 99 (September–October 1976): 52.
- 59 Martin Jay, *Marxism and Totality: The Adventures of a Concept from Lukács to Habermas* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 9.
- 60 I am grateful for the editorial assistance of Suvij Sudershan in preparing this essay.