

Introduction



IN 1799, a British officer took it upon himself to catalog and celebrate “the most distinguished men of the Asiatic Society” of Calcutta. The society, then just fifteen years old, had already changed the landscape of European literature, giving impetus to a new kind of orientalism in British poetry. British verse, imbued with orientalist tropes and themes, in its turn was shaping English language poetry written in India. At the beginning of this complex formation of literary culture, that same English officer—one John Horsford, former fellow of St. Johns, Oxford—commemorated Sir William Jones, the founder of the Asiatic Society. Jones, Horsford wrote, had been commissioned by Britannia herself to explore the “mystic mines of Asiatic Lore.”¹

Horsford’s panegyric captured an important moment in the creation of English language letters, for Jones’s excursions into “Asiatic Lore” brought Europeans and North Americans access to Persian and Sanskrit verse. Jones’s translations influenced the English romantic poets and inspired Goethe and Schiller, Emerson and Thoreau. In the decades following Jones’s death in 1794, poets born in India, in turn, made poems shaped by Persian, Sanskrit, and vernacular poetry as well as by the poetic practices of British romanticism. Over the course of the nineteenth century, the range of English language poetic production in India widened, drawing poets from varied backgrounds and moving into realms domestic, religious, and political.

Anglophone Poetry in Colonial India, 1780–1913 traces these arcs of cultural exchange from the beginnings of English language literature in India through the long nineteenth century. It begins with Jones, along with various members of his circle, and concludes with poems written in the early twentieth century, taking as its end point Rabindranath Tagore’s Nobel Prize in Literature. The trajectory of these poems moves from Indian and British romanticism to the poetry of the fin de siècle and early modernism, yet these poems complicate traditional narratives of literary history. The poets whose works are presented here engaged in intricate networks of affiliation and disaffiliation, and their poems challenge simple periodization and nationalist narratives.

1. John Horsford, *Poems in Three Parts* (Calcutta: Thomas Hollingbery, Hircarrah Press, 1800), 51.

Nationalist parameters have, to date, shaped most attempts to collect English language writing in India. With the exception of Elleke Boehmer's wide-ranging collection, *Empire Writing* (1870–1918), which is global in scope, English language poetry written by British poets has languished, the last collection of any note being T. O. D. Dunn's *Poets of John Company* (1921). Dunn treated Indian poets separately from British ones, also assembling a useful collection (though biased entirely toward Bengal, as the title suggests) in *The Bengali Book of English Verse*. In the many years since Dunn's work, British and North American scholars have tended to ignore most English language poetry in India, focusing instead on prose fiction and nonfiction.

Indian scholars, for their part, have until recently focused only on those poets who can be claimed for an Indian nationalist canon. Since about 1920, anthologies of Indian English language poets have omitted all British- and American-born poets.² In India, Indian English language poetry has typically been understood to begin with Henry Louis Vivian Derozio, unfolding in a genealogical continuum from his verse to the modernist experiments of the Calcutta Writers' Workshop and beyond.

But literary exchange is never simply a respecter of persons or political boundaries. Derozio's life attests to the complexity of genealogical narratives—both familial and literary—for his mother was born in Hampshire and his father came from Portuguese and Indian ancestors. Derozio's literary antecedents, colleagues, and successors were similarly various.³ Building the premise of a shared literary culture, in this anthology I bring together a full selection of the poets who were writing in English in colonial India in the long nineteenth century.

Instead of assembling the poetic canon along nationalist lines, I work here to reconstruct the conversations among poets that constituted early Indian English language literature. At the same time, I bring back to visibility poets whose work has long been ignored—poets such as Mary Carshore and Mary Leslie, who were born and died in India, and Henry Page, a radical Baptist of obscure origin, who identified himself as a friend of Derozio's and an Indian patriot. Their texts, along with those of better-known poets such as Rabindranath Tagore and Aurobindo Ghose, are organized chronologically by authors' dates of birth.

The first generation of poets presented here was born in Britain. With the exception of the anonymous Anna Maria, they were men who went to India in

2. Such anthologies include, most notably, Eunice De Souza, *Early Indian Poetry in English: An Anthology, 1829–1947* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2005); and Vinayak Krishna Gokak, *The Golden Treasury of Indo-Anglian Poetry, 1828–1965* (New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 1970). T. O. D. Dunn's collections include *The Bengali Book of English Verse* (Calcutta: Longmans, Green, 1918) and *Poets of John Company* (Calcutta: Thacker, 1921). See also A. N. Diwedi, *Indian Poetry in English: A Literary History and Anthology* (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1980); and V. N. Bhushan, *The Peacock Lute* (Bombay: Padma Publications, 1945).

3. I have relied here and elsewhere on Rosinka Chaudhuri's pioneering work: *Derozio, Poet of India: The Definitive Edition* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2008) and *Gentlemen Poets of Colonial Bengal* (Calcutta: Seagull, 2002).

the late eighteenth century to make their fortunes. The first English language poets born in India, Kasiprasad Ghosh and Derozio, were a generation younger, but they, like their British-born counterparts, participated in a complex web of influence and acknowledgment. Kasiprasad Ghosh, for example, dedicated verses to the British civil servant and orientalist Horace Hayman Wilson, while the anonymous American poet E.L. dedicated poems to Kasiprasad. Henry Derozio acknowledged Wilson along with the poet and civil servant Henry Meredith Parker. In turn, Emma Roberts, the first woman journalist in India, dedicated her volume of verse, published in Calcutta in 1830, to Derozio, many of whose political views she shared. Derozio called himself “East Indian,” and his defense of India was acknowledged and echoed two decades later by another Indian-born poet, Henry Page. The biographical sketches through which I introduce these poets trace the contours of their exchanges with each other, with British poets whose work they read, and with classical and vernacular Indian and European literatures.

A detailed exploration of the social, political, and material contexts of English language poetry in India is provided in the monograph that accompanies this volume, *Indian Angles: English Verse in Colonial India from Jones to Tagore*. Here I wish, in brief compass, to place English language poets’ intellectual and personal exchanges in their historical contexts. I focus first on the sociolinguistic context for reading and writing, providing an overview of the cosmopolitan and polyglot culture that gave rise to English language verse. I then sketch the changes in the circumstances of publishing and reading over the long nineteenth century, as they were shaped by the rise of print culture, by shifts in publishing practices, and by political events. In focusing on the poems, I supply the reader new to these poems a survey of the dominant tropes and important modes of English language poetry in India in this period—from the satire to devotional verse, from the tropes of bardic nationalism to the reiterated discourses of exile. Finally, I lay out the editorial principles that shaped the selection and presentation of these English language poems, poems that emerged from the overlapping contact zones of multiple languages.

English Language Poetry in a Polyglot Culture

Many American and British readers of poetry are now being educated in a monolingual way—though this limitation is being challenged on many fronts. Education in Britain and India in the long nineteenth century, by contrast, made much higher linguistic demands on its students. Educated men in Britain and India were expected to have facility in more than one classical and modern language. Moreover, in India, even ordinary men and women, though they had limited access to education and literacy, learned (at least in urban centers) to operate in a multilingual context. The polyglot environment of urban India in the long nineteenth century proved fertile ground for a new kind of poetry.

Though for brevity’s sake the title of this anthology relies on the word *Anglo-phone* to establish its linguistic contours, my preference is to speak of the verse

included here as *English language poetry*. This awkward phrase makes space for the wide variety of speakers and readers and for the extraordinary variety of dialects and social locations that formed the cultural ground in India for English language writing. The phrase *English language poetry* evades the postcolonial ambiance and monolingual implications often attaching to the word *Anglophone*, even as it points to the variety of poets who made verse in English.

Poets writing English in India emerged in a thoroughly multilingual space. English itself comprised multiple regional and class dialects, and these dialects were in turn situated in a context of multiple vernacular Indian languages and dialects. Writers such as Michael Madhusudan Dutt and Sarojini Naidu were multilingual and, with respect to language preference, were actively bilingual or trilingual, code shifting and moving between or among languages at will. For instance, Michael Madhusudan and his best friend Gour Bysack no doubt spoke Bangla (often anglicized as Bengali) with many members of their families, especially the women, but their letters to each other were written in English. From these letters, one can readily imagine that their spoken language shifted from Bangla to English to Bangla at will. Sarojini Naidu, to take a second example, was something of a linguistic prodigy, early on learning Persian to a high level and becoming fluent in Urdu, among other languages. Although she became a nationalist leader and eventually president of the Congress Party, Sarojini nonetheless insisted that her children write to her in English. Even for Rabindranath Tagore, who wrote primarily in Bangla and staunchly defended writing in Bangla on nationalist and aesthetic terms, English served more than a utilitarian purpose. Though as a boy he famously resisted English lessons, Tagore also spoke enthusiastically in his letters and essays of transcreating his Bengali poems into English. He wrote to his niece about his famous English language volume *Gitanjali*, “I simply felt an urge to recapture, through the medium of another language, the feelings and sentiments which had created such a feast of joy within me in past days.” Evoking the traditional language of inspiration, elsewhere he declared, “I was possessed by the pleasure of receiving anew my feelings as expressed in a foreign tongue. I was making fresh acquaintance with my own heart by dressing it in other clothes.”⁴ Tagore and other poets—including Derozio, Manmohan Ghose, and Sarojini Naidu (who read Persian and spoke Urdu, Tamil, Telugu, Bangla, and English)—could scarcely be said to have experienced English as more foreign than other languages. Though Tagore refers to English as a foreign language in the essay quoted here, the very notion of the “mother” tongue underlying this characterization of English-as-foreign was by the end of the nineteenth century ideologically fraught. Finding your mother can be com-

4. The first statement, in a letter by Rabindranath to his niece Indira Devi, is quoted by Sisir Kumar Das in his preface to *The English Writings of Rabindranath Tagore* (New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 1994), 1:10; the second is quoted by M. K. Naik in *Perspectives on Indian Poetry in English* (New Delhi: Abhinav Publications, 1984), 59–60.

plicated if, like Kipling, you learned to speak in India or if, like Manmohan Ghose and his brother Aurobindo, you spent your childhood and young manhood in England. In many cases, code switching occurred in both oral and written language, and poets operated in a variety of languages, dialects, and registers of dialects, which impinged directly or indirectly on their verse.

Although few people on the subcontinent were even literate, those who did write English language poetry operated among multiple classical languages (Persian, Arabic, Greek, Latin, and sometimes Hebrew) and vernaculars (Hindustani [as it was formerly known, now divided into Hindi and Urdu] and Bangla principally, though also in South Indian and European languages [especially French and Italian and sometimes German]). Literary creation emerged from a shifting array of literacies and from shifting dynamics of the classical and the vernacular. English language *poetry* in particular could be understood as a kind of cosmopolitan polyglossia, for poetry is, of all genres, the most dependent on allusion and various forms of intertextual citation. This poetic polyglossia emerged from a complex sociolinguistic scene.

In the long nineteenth century, English in India was a minority language—as it still is—and a high level of literacy in any language was reserved almost entirely for elite European women and for elite men. But the spoken word was rich with mingled languages and dialects, especially in the larger cities, where one might also find access to printing. Calcutta, for example, in the late 1830s was home to a rich mix of people speaking Bangla, Hindustani (Hindi/Urdu), Chinese, French, Portuguese, Arabic, Persian, Burmese, Armenian, and Tamil, in addition to languages spoken by Parsis and Jews or read by those classically trained in Sanskrit, Persian, Hebrew, Greek, or Latin.⁵ Spoken language was further enriched—and complicated—by local dialects of many of these languages.

To further complicate the scene, the poets collected here spoke various dialects of English—with Scottish and Irish variations being the most prominent vectors of differentiation. We can presume that Mary Carshore spoke some version of an Irish dialect, a dialect no doubt modulated by her birth in India and the language she learned from her Indian nursemaid, while Honoria Lawrence's speech would have been inflected more thoroughly by her upbringing in Ireland. Both of these poets wrote in a version of the received or standard educated English of their time, but it is useful to remember that their ear would have been attuned differently from those poets born in London or in Scotland. The dominant nonstandard dialect of English in Calcutta—aside from the working-class

5. See Tithi Bhattacharya, *The Sentinels of Culture: Class, Education, and the Colonial Intellectual in Bengal, 1848–85* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2005) and especially Bhattacharya, "A World of Learning: The Material Culture of Education and Class in Nineteenth-century Bengal" in *Beyond Representation*, ed. Crispin Bates (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2006), 177–209. See also S. N. Mukherjee, "Class, Caste and Politics, 1814–38," in *Elites in South Asia*, ed. Edmund Leach and S. N. Mukherjee (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 33–78.

dialects and regional dialects of common soldiers—would have been a variety of lowland Scots. John Leyden, for example, wrote poetry in English, but his speech was another matter. He protested to his mentor—another Scotsman, John Malcolm—that learning English had “spoilt [his] Scotch.” However many odes he might compose in Oxbridge English, Leyden considered his speech—his Borders “Scotch”—too precious to lose.⁶ Leyden was by no means alone in cultivating his Scots. One need only imagine the conversation at the monthly meetings of the St. Andrews Society, a refuge in Calcutta for educated Scotsmen like Leyden. Given the superior nature of technical and scientific education in Scotland and the broad literacy among men educated in local schools, Scots medical men, divines, and schoolmasters exercised a disproportionate influence on institutions of publishing and English-medium education in India. Their Indian students could not but be exposed alike to the poetry of Robert Burns and to the Scottish burr.

Poets going from Great Britain to India in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries entered an already lively field of literary production, one in which poets negotiated the shifting domains of orality and print. Before the advent of print technology in eighteenth-century India, multiple rich poetic traditions were created through manuscript transmission and oral performance. In what C. A. Bayly calls the Indian ecumene—roughly, northern India in the ambit of Hindustani (Hindi/Urdu)—a vibrant literary culture relied on a variety of means of transmission, both oral and written; it depended upon what Bayly calls “linguistic plurality running through the whole society.”⁷ Bayly, Anindita Ghosh, and Robert Darnton, along with Graham Shaw, have provided a detailed picture of this linguistic plurality, describing a complex array of written texts, oral performances of written texts, and oral texts—many of them poetic texts.⁸

Educated elites in colonial India were multilingual and had been so well before the arrival of the British. For literate male elites, as Ruth Vanita has argued, English was simply added to the languages that “the educated were required to know, but not displacing Persian, Sanskrit or the modern Indian languages.”⁹

6. John Malcolm, “To the Editor of the Bombay Courier,” quoted in “Supplementary Memoir,” which prefaces John Leyden, *Poems and Ballads*, ed. Walter Scott (Kelso, Scotland: J. and J. H. Rutherford, 1858), xli.

7. C. A. Bayly, “The Indian Ecumene,” in *The Book History Reader*, ed. David Finkelstein and Alistair McCleery (London: Routledge, 2002), 174–88; quotation from 175.

8. See Robert Darnton, “Literary Surveillance in the British Raj: The Contradictions of Liberal Imperialism,” *Book History* 2 (2005): 133–76; Anindita Ghosh, “Identities Made in Print: Literary Bengali and Its ‘Others,’ c. 1800–1905,” in *Beyond Representation*, ed. Crispin Bates (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2006), 210–31; Anindita Ghosh, “An Uncertain Coming of the Book: Early Print Cultures in Colonial India,” *Book History* 6 (2003): 23–55; *Power in Print: Popular Publishing and the Politics of Language and Culture in a Colonial Society, 1778–1905* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2006); Graham Shaw, “Printing at Mangalore and Tellicherry by the Basel Mission,” *Libri* 27 (June 1977): 154–64, and Graham Shaw, *Printing in Calcutta to 1800: A Description and Checklist of Printing in Late 18th-Century Calcutta* (London: Bibliographical Society, 1976).

9. Ruth Vanita, “Gandhi’s Tiger: Multilingual Elites, the Battle for Minds, and English Romantic Literature in Colonial India,” *Postcolonial Studies* 5 (2002): 95–110; quotation from 97.

For male elites, Vanita argues, “oral translation was part of everyday life in cities such as Delhi, Lucknow, Hyderabad, [and] Varanasi, with cosmopolitan, polyglot cultures, and there were also sophisticated written traditions of translation between various Indian languages in pre-colonial India” (98).

At the same time, poetic traditions went well beyond the elite, as did polyglot cultures, as Bayly has argued in detail. His examples show how “the learned reached down to incorporate these more localized language cultures in order to broaden cultural community” (176). Literary biography, aristocratic and personal libraries or book houses large and small, and a variety of forms of oral and written communication, Bayly argues, made for a rapid transmission of news and information. Poetry remained a central genre of both elite and popular cultures.

With the coming of print technology in the late eighteenth century—largely the work of European missionaries—the transmission of news and poetry took additional forms. Anindita Ghosh describes, for example, the expansion of the book market in mid-nineteenth-century Bengal. Beginning with missionary type founders in the eighteenth century, print culture by the middle of the nineteenth century had expanded enormously—although the rapid growth of print culture did not simply displace oral traditions, which continued to thrive. Literacy expanded rapidly (though for women, as always, later than for men). Though literacy never reached a majority of people in the eighteenth or indeed in the nineteenth century, those who did read, as in Britain in similar circumstances, expanded the reach of print culture by reading to others. Ghosh argues that the “rapid spread of literacy and the availability of cheap print technology bred enormous popular markets for ephemeral genres that encapsulated the desires of a reading public still geared to preprint tastes” (“Uncertain Coming,” 25). Elites in Bengal—Vanita’s focus—lamented the state of Bengali literate culture in much the same way that their British counterparts might have done, but they participated by the middle of the century in an explosion of vernacular print. Meanwhile, European missionary literature in vernacular languages was also produced apace; the Serampore Press in the first third of the century produced almost a quarter of a million books in forty languages (“Uncertain Coming,” 27).

In entering this multilingual space, poets choosing to write in English had widely different access to language depending on their place of birth, the languages spoken by their parents, and their education, religion, gender, and social class or caste. Religion, class, and gender were crucial markers of access to literacy, to belletristic writing, and to participation in constructions of nation and nationalism. Access to education, and hence to literacy and languages, varied widely. For example, Mary Eliza Leslie (daughter and granddaughter of missionaries) managed to acquire Greek, Italian, and German. Given her active work in Indian girls’ education, we can deduce that she probably also spoke and wrote Bangla and perhaps Hindustani (Hindi/Urdu). Leslie’s contemporary Mary Carshore was less fortunate in her education and seems to have acquired only some spoken Hindustani but no classical languages and perhaps no written Indian

language. In contrast to Carshore's limited education, William Jones, John Leyden, Horace Hayman Wilson, Michael Madhusudan Dutt, Toru Dutt, and Sarojini Naidu all attained facility in a variety of modern and classical languages—with Jones, Leyden, Wilson, and Naidu, like Manmohan Ghose, becoming accomplished linguists.

From one point of view, English language poetry in India was only the preoccupation of a small set of British and Indian elites, mere froth on the waters of the Ganges as it flowed into the Bay of Bengal. English speakers in India—whether they were from Britain or were educated in English on the subcontinent—were generally intent on professional and pecuniary advancement. In India, as elsewhere, poetry was seldom a successful commercial enterprise. By the middle of the nineteenth century, moreover, there was a lively debate about the legitimacy of writing English poetry rather than poetry in Indian vernaculars. Yet in the same period, English (along with Hindi) came to serve as a *lingua franca* of political, commercial, and intellectual elites, and poets from a variety of social locations composed lyric and narrative verse and published their work by subscription, in newspapers, in literary annuals, and in volumes printed both in India and in London. In the first half of the period, poetry was by far the most important genre of English language belletristic writing, and it formed a common, if not always harmonious, bond among writers from varied backgrounds.

Print, Reading, and the Politics of Poetry

The long nineteenth century, as I have been calling it here, can for the purposes of thinking about poetry be roughly divided into the period between the 1780s and about 1835; the midcentury; and finally the period from the 1880s to 1913. While some things remain constant over this long period—a polyglot culture, for example—many historians have noted cultural, political, and material shifts that influenced literature written in English and in Indian vernaculars. Poetry, however, remained an important genre (in fact, the central belletristic genre) on the subcontinent. Although, as Priya Joshi has shown, fiction gradually came to dominate the English-reading market, poetry remained central in English-language school curricula and was by numbers of volumes produced extremely important in the growing market for vernacular literature as well as in persisting oral literary cultures.¹⁰ Between 1780 and the midcentury, poetry was not only the most prestigious but also the dominant English language genre, as measured by texts printed in India. It remained crucial in book imports as well.

As I have shown in detail in *Indian Angles: English Verse in Colonial India from Jones to Tagore*, poetry maintained an important place in Indian publishing and in imported books, in private libraries, and in new lending libraries both private and

10. Priya Joshi, *In Another Country: Colonialism, Culture, and the English Novel in India* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002).

public that were established in the three presidencies—Calcutta, Madras, and Bombay.¹¹ Reformers also encouraged the British military to substitute reading for drunkenness and supported the establishment of regimental libraries and book clubs, which ordered books from urban booksellers.¹² In the period when the press was largely uncensored, a variety of English language newspapers flourished, publishing locally written poetry along with reviews and poems reprinted from British periodicals. Even as control of the press by the East India Company tightened and even as writers lamented the small size of the English-speaking audience, a surprisingly large number of periodicals continued to appear. The English press in the early part of this period exhibited a much wider variety of opinion than is commonly recognized, with radical and republican sentiment vying with East India Company politics and commerce. Early collections of poetry emphasized orientalist learning, while newspaper verse consisted of occasional verse, translation, and traditional lyric topics given a global turn.

An examination of the Indian press in the period 1780–1820 also reveals a remarkable ability on the part of its editors to remain au courant with the London literary scene; particularly powerful British influences were Burns, Moore, Byron, Keats, and L.E.L. (Letitia Landon), while Wordsworth, Coleridge, Southey, and Charlotte Smith were acknowledged but less frequently praised. Discussion of contemporary British poetry (a good bit of it orientalist in nature) mingled with discussion and translations of the Persian poets Hāfiz, Firdausī, and Sa’dī and with translations from Sanskrit texts (not to mention the occasional translations from modern European languages). Political dissent, religious skepticism, and intense interest in commerce were hallmarks of the literary scene, along with the more unexceptionable patriotic and sentimental emotions. Orientalist learning made its way into the periodical press, well beyond the publications of the Asiatic Society, through translations and brief essays. At the beginnings of English education for the colonized and of orientalist education for the colonizers, literary discourse in English was marked by a vigorous dialogue touching on politics, religion, and the relative merits of British writers.

With the coming of missionaries after the renewal of the East India Company’s charter in 1813, the press began to take on a somewhat different tone. English belletristic writing owed much to William Carey’s Serampore Press (established in 1800) and later to the Baptist Mission Press in Calcutta. The Baptist Mission Press published a wide array of texts, many of them having little explicit Christian content, for it served as one of the principal printing establishments in English and in Bangla (not to mention its work and that of the Serampore Press in designing and casting type for translations of the Bible into numerous South Asian languages).

11. The three principal administrative centers of British India.

12. For details, see Gibson, *Indian Angles: English Verse in India from Jones to Tagore* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2011), chapter 3.

The period from about 1820 through the 1840s was marked, as many scholars have noted, by the entry into the field of English publishing by Indian and East Indian (sometimes called “Eurasian”) poets, including notably Kasisprasad Ghose and H. L. V. Derozio. The continuing work of Scottish and English poets in India and the new contributions of Indian poets arose with the further development of institutions and informal networks that fostered literary sociality. By the 1830s, the literary annual (in imitation of the London literary annuals that combined engravings and poetry) had become popular. To this day, English language newspapers in Kolkata print a substantial annual literary supplement.

By the 1850s, printing had spread beyond Bengal. And in Bengal itself, print had exceeded the purview of missionaries and the British government. Hence, despite Sir Charles Metcalfe’s lifting of censorship in Bengal in 1835, the authorities soon reverted to surveillance and control of the press. In 1857, the Reverend James Long was charged with surveying vernacular Bangla publications, with the result that, for Bengal, unlike the rest of British India at this period, we have a fairly accurate sense of literary production. Long recorded 571,670 books printed for sale in Calcutta in 1857—a significant increase over the number in 1853 (Ghosh, “Uncertain Coming,” 28). Vernacular publications and smaller numbers of English language publications vied for the public’s attention, literary genres being outnumbered by schoolbooks, almanacs, and tracts. Nonetheless, poetry from the first had an important place in the vernacular press. With respect to the English press, from the beginning of the century through at least midcentury, poetry was the predominant literary genre in periodicals and English language books published on the subcontinent.

Between about 1840 and 1870, English language poetry was marked by a diversity of perspectives and the rise of other centers of publishing, particularly Bombay and Madras. The number of volumes written by Indian men, educated British women, and British working-class men rose significantly, and this growth in publishing was more than matched by an outpouring of print in the vernacular languages.¹³ Poems reflecting the perspectives of the ordinary soldier appeared and, along with various satirical volumes throughout the century, gave rise later in the century to Kipling’s satirical and demotic verse.

In this period, political developments also had an immediate and palpable impact on poets, especially the Afghan campaigns of the 1840s and the revolt of 1857. English language poetry in India always included a considerable amount of topical political poetry, particularly satire, but political stresses at midcentury either were elided in favor of sentiment or led to verse meditation on political events. In 1842, for example, Honoria Lawrence wrote multiple drafts of an elegy for her brother, who had been sent to India in her care—he had proven a difficult

13. For details, see Ghosh, “An Uncertain ‘Coming of the Book.’”

young man but was found a commission in the army. After his death at the disastrous end of the first Afghan campaign, Lawrence drafted, but did not publish, a poem in which she attempted to come to terms with his loss. At about the same time, T. W. Smyth, who had come to India as an assistant to the Church Missionary Society, wrote a diatribe titled “On the Late Assassination of the Queen” after Victoria escaped two attempts on her life in 1842. Smyth compared his sovereign to a worm, declaring that she should grovel for her political and religious sins before the throne of God. Happily, he argued, God had spared the queen so that she might amend her ways. According to Smyth, the Afghan disaster, like the failed assassination attempts, was a warning:

See India groaning under countless ills,
 Cathay well drug'd with opium and with blood,
 The heathen martyr'd, while the Christian kills,
 With war and havoc roaring in a flood;
 Oh! sin out-sinuing persecution's sin!
 The brand of double infamy burnt in!

Look on Cabool!—and in Victoria's reign?—
 Shall this be told posterity, ev'n this?
 Oh sov'reign sacred! lov'd and honor'd Queen!
 Be not thy name a mark for history's hiss!—
 Think too, what He might think—thy Maker!—King!
 Before whom summon'd, what art thou?
 —a thing

Of dust,—a worm, a something, nothing now,
 Then, less than nothingness—a shadow flown—
 A phantom pale with her undiadem'd brow
 Thy breath a bubble; and thy glory gone—
 Thy scepter broken—shot to dust thy throne
 Thy stewardship demanded now and done!¹⁴

A less apocalyptic view than Smyth's pervaded Mary Leslie's conflicted sonnet sequence on the revolt of 1857. Born and reared in India, with neither prospect nor evident intention of leaving, Leslie was torn by the sensational reports of violence during the revolt (known as the Mutiny or the Sepoy Rebellion). Her long sonnet sequence printed in *Sorrows, Aspirations and Legends from India* reveals her conflicted response to the violence. On the one hand, she surprises herself by

14. T. W. Smyth, *Ella, or A Tale of the Waldensian Martyrs, and Other Poems* (Calcutta: W. Thacker, 1843), 153.

praying for divine vengeance on the rebels, and on the other she concludes that the rebellion marks a sorrowful centenary of empire, ending in “deep griefs” (see Leslie in this volume).

The decades after 1857 Rosinka Chaudhuri has characterized—at least for Bengali elite poets—as the “loyal hours.” Taking the phrase from the title of a collection edited by Greece Chunder Dutt on the visit of the Prince of Wales to India, Chaudhuri argues that the decades after the rebellion of 1857 saw both a renaissance in vernacular publishing, especially in Bengal, and the efforts of Indian poets writing in English to accommodate their verse to their professional positions, which often depended on the British bureaucracy directly or indirectly (*Gentlemen Poets*). Govin Chunder Dutt, for example, praised Charles, Lord Canning (then governor-general), for his conduct during the rebellion of 1857; reflecting a Bengali distrust of the rebellion, Govin Chunder also defended Canning for his refusal to exact summary vengeance on the mutineers—a refusal that had earned the governor-general the nickname “Clemency Canning” among the most bloody-minded Britishers. Thus, Govin both opposed British jingoist hysteria and accommodated British lawful authority (see Govin Dutt, “To Lord Canning,” in this volume).

Even as it was articulated, Govin Chunder’s temporizing seemed ineffectual or old-fashioned to those among his peers whom we might call protonationalist. One could say that Govin Chunder’s edited volume, *The Dutt Family Album* (1870), was bookended on one side by Michael Madhusudan Dutt’s protonationalism and on the other by the more overtly nationalist poetry of Sarojini Naidu and Aurobindo Ghose, along with the subtle lyrics of Govin’s daughter Toru. At mid-century, Michael Madhusudan Dutt had turned from English poetry to writing a highly stylized (even deliberately Miltonic) Bangla. He had begun the 1840s by sighing “for Albion’s distant shore.” But his conventional—though fascinating—volume *The Captive Ladie* earned him little praise; it brought instead a reprimand from the Calcutta educationist John Drinkwater Bethune, who urged Michael Madhusudan to write in Bangla. Bethune opined, in the double-edged way characteristic of midcentury, that Bengal wanted its own poet: “[W]hat we lack is a Byron or a Shelley in Bengali literature.”¹⁵ Michael’s turn to writing in Bangla anticipated the nationalist politics of language in the late nineteenth century, which suggested that to adopt literary English was in some measure to adulterate the nationalist cause. Govin Chunder Dutt’s and Greece Chunder Dutt’s work seemed, by the end of the century, to have missed the main current of the time—the nationalist current.

After the generation of the elder Dutt, many Indian poets writing in English searched for ways to identify with or to imagine a nation, even if they did not

15. Bethune’s advice is quoted in Clinton B. Seely, introduction to Michael Madhusudan Dutt, *The Slaying of Meghanada: A Ramayana from Colonial Bengal*, trans. Seely (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 26–27. Michael Madhusudan Dutt was no relation to Govin Chunder Dutt’s family.

turn to the vernacular. We can see a subtle version of such nationalism in Toru Dutt's English language poems. Toru's poems implied their nationalist themes, extolling the lotus, for example, over the conventional flowers of English poetry. By the time Sarojini Naidu came to publish her first volume in 1905, her fin-de-siècle musings were accompanied by explicitly nationalist verse. And though his poems of 1905 are flavored with the British fin de siècle, Aurobindo Ghose likewise struck an implicitly political note, writing several poems on Irish subjects that relied on comparisons between Ireland and India. Aurobindo turned from the "Hellenic" muses to the Indian goddess of poetry and learning, Sarasvatī, thus cementing his nationalist loyalties, but he clearly bid a reluctant (and temporary) farewell to the classical European languages he so loved. Although these turn-of-the-century volumes of verse have their own linguistic and political timbre, they emerged from a literary marketplace in which the dissemination of poetry took place mostly through residual forms.

The middle of the nineteenth century had seen a greater diversity of voices entering the literary dialogue and a shift in the forms of literary sociality and literary markets. In the eighteenth century and early nineteenth century (and later in India than in Britain), poetry was often published by subscription. Through references in periodicals, dedications of volumes, and subscription lists, we can trace for the earlier periods complex networks of education and employment, access to publishing, and social networks. Male-only (and British-only) organizations such as the St. Andrews Society, the Irish Harp Society, and the Masons also contributed to these literary social networks. By the middle of the nineteenth century, publishing in India was coming to resemble that in the United States and in Britain, transforming itself from a patronage to a market economy. Poetry remained more or less tied to the gift economy, however, as it still for the most part is. Poets, then and now, have not often made a living by their art. Moreover, Indian poets writing in English continued to be understood with reference to British tradition; the famed Derozio, for example, was routinely referred to in the decades after his death as the Indian Keats. Madhusudan Dutt was exhorted to become an Indian Byron, though he chose to become, rather, something of an Indian Milton. Publishers and reviewers similarly appropriated other Indian writers to the British canon, and this trend continued well into the twentieth century. A key player in the effort to encourage literary publishing and in attempting to market verse was David Lester Richardson, whose thirty-year career as editor, poet, and educator had a profound effect on the development of the English language literary canon in India. Beyond Richardson's efforts, we can trace the pattern of Indian reading in school and college syllabi and in the beginnings of public and subscription libraries after 1850. While libraries stocked numerous novels, as detailed in Priya Joshi's *In Another Country*, school syllabi and examination questions remained ruthlessly tied to poetry for many decades, as I have shown in detail in *Indian Angles*.

The last quarter of the nineteenth century saw both a new spate of satirical poems and a turn to aestheticism; it reflected the impact of British spiritualism and British and American fascination with Asian religions. Edwin Arnold with his long poem *The Light of Asia* had a significant impact on the British reception of these poems, as did Edmund Gosse, who in London sponsored the work of any number of young Indian poets and introduced them to the poets of British fin-de-siècle aestheticism. As a very young woman, for example, Sarojini Naidu was introduced by Gosse to W. B. Yeats and Arthur Symons, as well as to Alice Meynell and Mathilde Blinde; she found Gosse's at-homes distinctly more congenial than the athleticism of Girton College, where she was supposed to be studying. Greater access to international education meant that, like Sarojini, more Indian poets resided abroad for prolonged periods, and this led to the penetration of Indian writers into the newly developing British market for small press books produced along aesthetic lines. In this historical context, we can see how phenomena as different as Kipling's early success and the Tagore phenomenon in Britain and America participated in larger trends. The shift from patronage and publishing of English language poetry by subscription to initial publication by private printing and small press books was a change in detail rather than in kind. Tagore's *Gitanjali* was in its first edition (1912), published privately by the members of the India Society, while the second edition by the commercial press Macmillan appealed to Euro-American audiences who viewed the poet as a spiritual teacher. Over the course of the long nineteenth century, then, English language poetry retained its salience, modulating its dominant tropes and themes but continuing to speak to its small but significant audience.

*Satire and Devotion, Bards and Exiles: The Transperipheral
in the Tropes of English Language Poetry*

Even as the forms of publishing shifted, the modes and tropes of English poetry in India likewise developed over the long nineteenth century. Yet the dominant tropes of this poetry and its modes—satire, verse narrative, the loco-descriptive lyric, and expressive lyric—also evidence continuity. For instance, though Kipling's idiom in his dialect poems is quite different from, say, Thomas Medwin's or John Leyden's, his early narrative verse betrays a common debt to orientalist tropes and plots. Moreover, across the long nineteenth century the tropes of bardic nationalism persisted, relying as they did on transperipheral as well as metro-pole/colonial relations. British-born poets continued to think of themselves as exiles, although this trope and its entailments were differently activated by poets born in India. Religious and devotional poetry, similarly, had a continuing importance, though the nature of religiosity shifted across the period. And finally, the cliché of Britain as the home of freedom, which was given force in newspaper verse in the late eighteenth century, persisted but was transformed in the climate of Indian nationalism.

A remarkable number of the English language poets in India in the long nineteenth century identified with the peripheries of British internal colonialism—Scotland, Ireland, and Wales. Like some of their Indian peers, these poets took up the tropes of bardic nationalism—most notably the silent harp hung upon the willow. The legacies of Britain’s internal colonialism—the ambivalent constitution of regional loyalties by the Scots, the Irish, and the Welsh—often provided the foundation for poetic efforts. Transperipheral relations among Britain’s internal colonies, her former colonies in North America, and India shaped the idea of the bard, the experience of “exile,” and the definition of home and its freedoms.

Many of the poets included in this volume came from Scotland; a smaller number owed complex allegiances to Ireland, Wales, or the United States. The Scotsmen celebrated or longed for Teviotdale, for the banks of the Esk, for the drawing rooms of Edinburgh, or for Highland glens. Among the Scots included here are John Leyden, James Ross Hutchinson, and George Anderson Vetch. Mary Leslie, who was born and died in India, was the daughter of another Scot, Andrew Leslie, who had come to India after training as a Baptist missionary. As for Wales, both Sir William Jones and Emma Roberts were of Welsh ancestry. Before coming to India, Jones served by choice as a judge on the Welsh circuit, becoming fascinated with Welsh poetic traditions and increasingly impatient with English-speaking monoglot magistrates. The Irish too have their place in this complex transperipheral conversation, with Honoria Marshall Lawrence coming from an Anglo-Irish family and Mary Carshore, who was born and died in India, from an Irish Catholic one. Carshore’s “Lines to a Withered Shamrock” casts a fascinating light on a young poet’s understanding of her father’s nostalgia for an Ireland he was never again to see. Carshore presents a poetic dialogue between the shamrock and the poem’s speaker, in which the shamrock describes how it became detached from its “parent stem” to bring a message to a much missed brother:

“I’ve told the exile’s heart a tale
“Of childhood’s fields and flowers;
“I’ve told him of his native vale,
“And of his boyhood’s hours.

“The music of the lark and thrush,
“His own loved Island tongue,
“Have in one wild melodious gush
“Fond memory’s echoes rung.”¹⁶

The representatives of poetry—the lark and the thrush—of the dialect of Ireland have rushed back into the exile’s heart, but of course the poet, though she shares

16. Mary Carshore, “Lines to a Withered Shamrock,” in *Songs of the East: By Mrs. W. S. Carshore*, 2nd ed. (Calcutta: Englishman Press, 1871), 164.

her father's "loved Island tongue," is not herself an exile; unlike the shamrock, she has not been detached from her "parent stem." To the contrary, Carshore sees herself as very much the native of India, setting to rights the misperceptions of those born elsewhere. Nonetheless, even a second-generation emigrant such as Mary Carshore thought of poetic music in the context of a transperipheral poetics—she re-created the lark and the tongue of Ireland, *mutatis mutandis*, in the English language poetry of India.

Not all transperipheral relationships were between Britain's internal colonies (that is, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales) and India. Several of the poets here found their lives triangulated by Britain, the United States, and India. John Lawson is often considered an early American poet, for en route to India he spent two years in Philadelphia, where he published his first volume of poetry. Maria Skinner Nugent was born in North America, where her father was advocate-general of New Jersey; he remained a loyalist and at the end of the American War of Independence took his family to England. Maria, however, spent much time in Ireland, with her mother's family; in Dublin, she met and married George Nugent, an army officer with family ties to Cornwall, and she followed him first to Jamaica and then to India. The anonymous E.L. seems to have had no important familial connections to Britain; E.L. appears to have grown up in the United States and to have lived for many years in India. Her love for her adopted country and its people is palpable.

In many cases—including John Lawson, whose affiliations were with Baptists around the world; John Leyden, who refused to give up speaking Scots; James Atkinson, who studied medicine in Edinburgh and owed his success to a common bond of nostalgia for Scotland, shared with Lord Minto, the governor-general of India; and Mary Carshore, for whom Ireland was a distant dream—the peripheries of empire competed with metropolitan power in the poetic imagination.

A census of the poets included here who sometimes identified as Scottish, Irish, or Welsh only begins to indicate how important transperipheral relations were in the creation of English language literary culture in India, for the tropes of what Katie Trumpener has called bardic nationalism early on permeated the poems of British, "East Indian," and Indian poets alike.¹⁷ Although in matters of trade and conquest cultural differences among the Irish, the Scots, and the English were subsumed in commercial and military institutions understood as British, in matters of culture—especially poetry—such differences continued to matter. The early volumes by Indian (or East Indian poets) published in India were permeated with the early-nineteenth-century forms of bardic nationalism. Derozio's first volume included a poem called "Here's a Health to Thee, Lassie!" written in imitation of the Scots verse of his teacher

17. For the most complete exploration of "bardic nationalism" and its accompanying trope of the harp hung upon the willow, see Katie Trumpener, *Bardic Nationalism: The Romantic Novel and the British Empire* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997).

David Drummond.¹⁸ In addition to alluding to his mentor's Scots poetry, Derozio adopted the bardic trope, quoting most immediately from Thomas Moore's *Irish Melodies*. Like his peer Kasiprasad Ghosh, Derozio took up the trope of the harp hung upon the willow. The silent harp, which is based on the persecution of Welsh bards at the time of the English conquest of Wales, appears repeatedly in Scottish and Irish poetry as a signal of cultural nationalism, although English poets adopted it as a form of nostalgia. For Derozio, the untuned harp represented the cultural power of an imaginary future India, and it was assimilated into Enlightenment antislavery discourse, for the poet implicitly compared his countrymen to the Jews taken captive into Babylon (see Psalm 137). Kasiprasad similarly acknowledged multiple influences; over the course of his one volume of English verse the tragic bard—clearly influenced by Thomas Moore, Letitia Landon, and James Beattie—gives place to poems on Hindu festivals. The harp hung upon the willow is transformed into a vina, an Indian lute, which becomes a synecdoche for the volume as a whole. Yet beneath Kasiprasad's Indian and explicitly Hindu reconstruction still lies the narrative structure of the doomed bard and the metaphor of the silent harp. Years later Henry Page took up the bardic harp again, lamenting Derozio's death and imagining a triumphant and free India in his "Land of Poesy." Mary Carshore, for her part, lamented the common lot of the peripheral colonial in her elegy for Letitia Landon, "The Iviid Harp."

In the course of the long nineteenth century, the bardic trope declined in importance, though transperipheral vectors retained their impact. At the end of the century, both Sarojini Naidu and Manmohan Ghose were influenced by racialized notions of the passionate and poetic Celtic soul, which had been common in various forms at least since Matthew Arnold's *On the Study of Celtic Literature*. Sarojini understood her relationship with Arthur Symons in these terms—he was from Cornwall and she from India, she reasoned, and thus they shared an implicitly non-English passion for life and for verse. Manmohan Ghose wrote numerous poems arising from his vacations in Wales, and his brother Aurobindo is represented in this volume by early—and explicitly political—poems on Charles Stuart Parnell and the condition of Ireland. Even Rabindranath Tagore was not exempt from the longevity of the bardic harp. How else to account for Ezra Pound's improbable comparison of Tagore to the troubadours of twelfth-century Provence or Yeats's declaration that Tagore's work bespoke the days of Tristan, the days of oral poetry even preceding Chaucer?¹⁹ Tagore became in Pound's hands nothing less than a modern survival of the Anglo-Saxon bard.

18. Derozio wrote a memorable poem for his brother, who had been sent to study medicine in Scotland, and he owed his first publications to the enthusiasm of John Grant, a Scottish newspaper editor in Calcutta.

19. See W. B. Yeats, introduction to Rabindranath Tagore, *Gitanjali* (London: Macmillan, 1913); and Ezra Pound, "Troubadours: Their Sorts and Conditions," *Quarterly Review* (London) 219 (October 1913): 426–40.

Although bardic nationalism provided poets such as Derozio, Kasiprasad, and Henry Page with a way to meld English language verse conventions and their own sense of place and language, many poets born in the British Isles insisted—sometimes despite strong evidence to the contrary—on writing of themselves as poetic exiles. Particularly between 1800 and 1880, they reconstructed the romantic lyric as a poem of exile. Not surprisingly, significant themes included separation from children, lovers, or parents. Indeed, so many poems were written on these themes that one could say exile became a defensive trope. From the perspectives of cultural and postcolonial studies, one can argue that the very notion of exile itself formed a poetic stance that balanced the contradictions implicit in “British” identity. Paradoxically, this identity in exile was flexible enough to include a nostalgic longing for Scotland or Ireland and, often, to recuperate the critique of empire that was implicit in Irish or Scottish nationalism. *The Asiatic Journal* in 1816, for example, printed a song written for the “Celebration of the Feast of St Andrew at Calcutta, November 30 1815.” This homage to Burns, though not quite metrical, neatly captures the exchange of oatcakes for rupees:

Though far we've left the land we loo,
 The land o' cakes behind,
 Our hearts are there this day I trow
 'Mang scenes o' lang syne.
 * * *
 What cheers us 'mid the sultry toils
 O' India's scorch'in clime?
 It's nae the rupees' witchin smiles,
 It's thoughts o' lang syne.²⁰

While for some poets the process of internal colonialism, as Michael Hechter calls it, motivated criticism of all British imperial endeavors, for other poets ethnic differences primarily provided opportunities for affiliative association and attendant patronage.²¹ The Irish Harp Society of Calcutta supported a blind harper in Dublin; the Burns monument in Edinburgh was largely built with contributions from India. As for poets in India, however deep one's nationalism might run, one's brother Masons or Scots could provide a ready list of subscribers.

Presenting themselves through a lyric subjectivity defined by exile, many British poets avoided writing about the very work of empire that had brought them to India. Such poets never tired of evoking the absent mother's grave. The daisy in India became a cliché, a trope for deracination, a memento mori for absent friends and climes. Whether “exile” served as a defense against daily re-

20. *Asiatic Journal* 2 (1816): 364.

21. Michael Hechter, *Internal Colonialism: The Celtic Fringe in British National Development, 1536–1966*, International Library of Sociology (London: Taylor and Francis, 1975).

alities or a link to British romantic attachment to place or a connection to a Scottish homeland, male British-born poets almost obsessively adopted the exile's stance. David Lester Richardson was among the most insistent in lamenting his lost home, and although many of his laments scarcely rose above the conventional, his poems on his absent children (living with their mother in England) do have a certain immediacy, for all their Wordsworthian imitativeness. Take these lines from "Consolations of Exile," for example:

Fair children! still, like phantoms of delight,
Ye haunt my soul on this strange distant shore,
As the same stars shine through the tropic night
That charmed me at my own sweet cottage door.
Though I have left ye long, I love not less;
Though ye are far away, I watch ye still;
Though I can ne'er embrace ye, I may bless,
And e'en though absent, guard ye from each ill!²²

Home for Richardson is always rural England—always constructed as the pleasant cottage and the verdant field. Yet Richardson's homesick poems are balanced by his book on Indian flower gardening, a text that remained the most popular of his productions. Clearly, he made a home in India and enjoyed doing it. Although Richardson resisted the recognition that Britain would perforce be strange to him should he return permanently, other poets realized that the returned exile might feel displaced in the place he had nostalgically considered home. The ambivalences of empire often emerged most strongly when a poet imagined the prospect of returning to Britain.

From time to time, moreover, even poets of British parentage resisted the trope of exile altogether. Missionaries and women appear to have been most resistant to the seductions of exile. John Lawson, for example, proved in a long poem to his wife that India was for them the best choice of a new life, and not an exile at all—though in other poems collected in *Orient Harping*, he drew a painful and nostalgic contrast between the British sabbath and a hot and noisy Calcutta Sunday. Drawing on different religious parameters but a similar sense of religious vocation, other British-born poets likewise avoided the trope of exile in favor of responding to the beauties of India. Perhaps the most famous Indian topographical poem in English at the beginning of the century was Reginald Heber's "Evening Walk in Bengal." If a British-born poet could escape the notion of exile through religious vocation and topographical meditation, others, not unlike their so-called Eurasian counterparts, were unlikely to imagine themselves

22. David Lester Richardson, "Consolations of Exile," in *Literary Leaves*, 2nd ed. (London: W. H. Allen, 1840), 37.

as exiles. Mary Carshore, for example, lived all her life in India and never expected to travel to England; the trope of exile scarcely entered her poetic vocabulary except, as we have seen, as a survival of a preceding generation's cultural moment. Carshore's poetry draws on sources as various as Indian folk song traditions and the urbane diction of a poem like Shelley's "To Jane: An Invitation." Rather than exile, Carshore claimed connection to the land and the people she encountered in daily life. The topography and the social networks of her poetry owe nothing to any posited "home" outside of India. Ironically, both Carshore and her family were murdered in the rebellion of 1857.

Gender as well as place of birth and social location, then, might shape one's view of one's circumstances. British-born women poets and common soldiers were sometimes not so fully able as men to position themselves as exiles, for they lacked the sense of British entitlement common to their male counterparts. Emma Roberts's poems at once construct and deconstruct the position of exile. In "Indian Graves," for example, she seems to take the typical position. For the European in India, life is exile and death is more poignant because it occurs far from home:

How many thoughts oppress the heart,
 Where early doomed, an exiled band
 From their paternal homes apart
 Lie buried in a heathen land,
 Unwept, unhonoured, and unknown?²³

In Roberts's "Stanzas Written in a Pavilion of the Rambaugh," by contrast, something more interesting happens to the topographical poem and to the trope of exile. The poem begins with an a description of natural Indian beauties, moves on to a conventional nostalgic lament for a distant British landscape, but then shows us a person in Britain looking at pictures of India and longing to be there. Roberts's poem finally cannot cohere around the nostalgic trope of exile. Honoria Lawrence, likewise, did not simply cultivate exilic nostalgia. At the beginning of her life in India, she created an enthusiastic journal/letter/poem that was anything but nostalgic. "A Day in the District," Lawrence's remarkable poem, recounts her delight with the flora and fauna, employment, and even the hardships of daily life as she followed and assisted her husband in his surveying tasks. Exile was the furthest thing from her mind—though she missed family and friends at home—for as a woman of a certain age and as the impecunious daughter of a highly respectable but large family, Honoria Marshall was no doubt delighted to find in Henry Lawrence a compatible husband, the prospect of adventure, and

23. Emma Roberts, "Indian Graves," in *Oriental Scenes, Sketches and Tales*, 2nd ed. (London: Edward Bull, 1832), 116.

the security of his substantial income. Never mind illness, elephants, and living in tents.

Like British-born poets, Indian and Eurasian poets in India also wrote satiric, narrative, lyric, and topographical poetry, and they too translated Indian and European languages. But their paths diverged from their counterparts' in important ways. Exile, for example, took on a variety of very different meanings. Praise of the Indian rural landscape in the topographical poem and urban satire alike developed outside the ambit of exile/nostalgia that was common in much British Indian poetry in the period. Late in the century, for example, Manmohan Ghose spoke of his return to India as an estrangement from England, where he had been sent to school at age ten. But at the same time, in an early poem titled "Myvanwy," addressed to a fictitious Welsh "maiden" of that name, he lamented,

How shall I picture to her all the strangeness,
All the enchantment,

In that enchanted land of noon? My heart faints
And my tongue falters: For long ago, Myvanwy,
Deep in the east where now but evening gathers,
Lost is my country.

Long ago hither in passionate boyhood,
Lightly an exile, lightly leagues I wandered
Over the bitter foam; so far Fate led me
Only to love thee.

Lost is that country, and all-but forgotten
Mid these chill breezes, yet still, oh, believe me,
All her meridian suns and ardent summers
Burn in my bosom.²⁴

Thus, Manmohan felt a double exile—exile from India during his youth and from England in his middle age.

Other ways to resist the trope of exile were provided to British-born poets through formal choices. Satirical poems, many owing a great deal to Samuel Butler's *Hudibras* and also to Byron's verse appeared regularly throughout the period. *The Grand Master; or, Adventures of Qui Hi* by the anonymous "Quiz" was published in London in 1816 by Thomas Tegg and circulated widely in English-speaking India. Quiz engaged in a broad satire against British pretension, and although

24. Manmohan Ghose, "Myvanwy," in *Songs of Love and Death*, ed. Laurence Binyon (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1926), 27. A different poem with the same title appeared in Ghose's *Love Songs and Elegies* (London: Elkin Mathews, 1898) and is reproduced in this volume.

he is sometimes critical of things Indian, he vigorously defends Indian knowledge and intelligence. The young East India Company writer whose career the poem chronicles naively presumes that India's "natives" are in need of Western scientific and mathematical knowledge. But the young man's pundit corrects him:

The learned Bramins well could see
The wonders of astronomy;
If master ever went so far as
The famous city of Benares,
He'd see some magnifying glasses
That Herschel's telescope surpasses.
For English pundits condescend
Th' observatory to ascend;
And sometimes are surprised to find
Comets of a malignant kind.²⁵

There follows a brief allegory on the British ascendancy, which, like a passing comet or a mere "Jack-a-lantern," is soon to be eclipsed. Other satirists later in the century are more sanguine about British hegemony than was *Quiz* but are still critical of the British. The satiric types depicted in *Qui Hi* reappear in various comic guises over the century. Satire allowed British poets in India to avoid the clichés of exile and, often, the pathos or jingoism of patriotic verse.

Nearly as common as satire, religious poetry took a variety of tones and exhibited a broad range of politics. The poetry of conversion and poems by converts reflected the influence of missionaries on education and publishing. John Lawson exhorted his readers on various topics but always with evangelical ends. Less evangelical than Lawson but equally pious, Govin Chunder Dutt, a Christian convert, wrote poems reflecting both the comforts of Christianity and the strains that his conversion had caused in his domestic circle. Michael Madhusudan Dutt's conversion gave rise to a poem of pious conventionality but also lent a Miltonic flavor to his Bangla epic, *The Slaying of Meghanada*. Kasiprasad Ghosh's poems on Hindu festivals absorbed the influence of Christian evangelicalism and of British orientalism in quite another way—one could say that both the Hindu reaction to Christian missionary zeal and the British orientalist project shaped his English poems. Sir William Jones's hymns to Indian deities had been taken for translations, and Jones's notes and other apparatus made frequent comparison of Indian gods to the gods of Greece and Rome. This latter strategy was adopted and revised by Kasiprasad. Kasiprasad upended the orientalist equation by implying, with a subtle jab at Christian missionizing, that Krishna

25. *Quiz* [William Combe], *The Grand Master, or The Adventures of Qui Hi* (London: Thomas Tegg, 1816), 72–73.

was the Indian Jesus. A few years later, T. W. Smyth forwarded a different critique of British culture and policies; his radical Christian politics issued in an eschatological vision of the end of empire. The complexities of religious affiliation were felt much more acutely, of course, by Indian and “Eurasian” poets than by poets of British or American parentage. As Bruce King has shown for the twentieth century, in the nineteenth century many Indians writing in English were agnostic, were Christian converts, or came from families that had converted to Christianity.²⁶

Devotional poetry, more properly speaking, also had a place in English language verse in India, yet of course the subjects of devotion varied widely. The most striking Christian devotional poet during the century was Mary E. Leslie, the best of whose work can be justly compared to John Keble’s and to Christina Rossetti’s. Poems reflecting other traditions were produced in English to serve the purposes of devotional poetry for British and American audiences. Though it was not often the case that Sanskrit poetry, as translated over the course of the century, affected its non-Hindu readers as devotional verse, nonetheless, people of a transcendentalist frame of mind found inspiration in Indian sacred texts (witness, in America, for example, Emerson and Thoreau). Later in the century, Sir Edwin Arnold’s long poem on the life of the Buddha, *The Light of Asia*, met a ready audience in Britain and America; it went on to a long life in India as well. Orientalist translation, Arnold’s life of the Buddha, and Euro-American spiritualism and Theosophy prepared the way for the British and American reception of Tagore’s *Gitanjali* as a sacred text and for the construction of the poet as something of a guru. In their turn, the English poems of *Gitanjali* circulated widely in India outside of Bengal.

Much more common than devotional poetry were verse narratives modeled principally on Scott or Byron. For both Indian and British poets in India, the Oriental tale or lay often owed its genesis to early antiquarian researches or to James Tod’s *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan* (1829). Other sources were mined as well, and translation of Sanskrit and Persian classics provided not only a lyric vocabulary but also sources for narrative. Derozio’s “Fakeer of Jungheera,” Michael Madhusudan Dutt’s “Captive Ladie,” and Thomas Medwin’s *Oswald and Edwin* are among the most notable poems in this genre, but most poets working in India in the nineteenth century, whatever their origins, tried their hands at

26. Both of the principals of Hindu College in Calcutta, David Hare and David Lester Richardson, were confirmed agnostics. Between them, they directed for many years the training of many of the most important Bengali intellectuals of the century. A Scotsman, Hare had strong allegiance to radical democratic sentiments; he began as a watchmaker and found significant opportunity in India as a schoolmaster and a leader in English education. Though not a poet, he oversaw a curriculum dominated by thinkers of the Scottish Enlightenment and by a canon of English language poetry and classical prose. The legacy of the Scottish Enlightenment, though attenuated, lingered for decades. See also Bruce King, *Modern Indian Poetry in English* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2002).

ballads and legends. James Hutchinson's *Sunyassee, an Eastern Tale, and Other Poems* (1838) is a typical example, though his elegy for his brother who died in the East India Company's army in 1825 is by far the outstanding poem of the volume. Narrative verse, especially verse treating historical or pseudo historical themes, allowed significant scope both for romance and for politics by way of narration. In shaping their narratives, both British-born and Indian poets engaged in a discourse of nation and freedom, though with differing valences.

In a cliché oft repeated by those imprisoned in the tropes of exile, England or Britain was praised as the home of freedom, especially freedom for the common man. Be he ever so humble, these poets argued, the poor man in Britain was, at the least, free. The rural British cottage became a magnet for the exile's homesickness and a symbol of the independence of the average British man. By implication, then, the poor in India were anything but free, and the reforming job of empire, by extension, was to replace despotism with the rule of law. The poets of exile longed for a nostalgically constructed Britain in which the humble cottage represented both domesticity and an androcentric but compelling picture of freedom from caste and aristocratic tyranny. Never mind that the cottage seldom seemed to entail hard manual labor. In yet another version, the notion of freedom was linked to the Oriental tale, which was often premised on a historiography that claimed that the Muslim conquest of northern India had enslaved the virtuous (and free) Hindu, who might, in turn, be freed via British rule.

These notions of freedom, particularly as expressed through Scottish or Irish sentiment, however, resonated uncomfortably with the structure of empire itself. The sight of the company extracting revenue or the pageantry of a viceregal durbar was hardly calculated to enforce a notion of freedom for the humble. Consequently, the reflexive association of Britain and freedom was subject to modulation, critique, or use in a more radical historical project. Radical poets in India (including Henry Page, T. W. Smyth, Derozio, and Aurobindo) readily turned the traditional praise of British freedom into an explicit critique of British hegemony. In contrast, evangelical poets were prone to equating Christianity with freedom—freedom from sin, which is implicitly a peculiarly British freedom.

The one sort of freedom, or rather the one sort of slavery seldom mentioned except in satirical poems, was the principal end of empire: commerce. Though one might read David Lester Richardson's sonnet on the beauties of the Calcutta harbor as a paean to free trade and the beauties of commerce, few poems directly treated the commercial bases of empire. A dimmer note was sounded by two Scotsmen: James Atkinson and John Leyden. Interestingly, their poems—Atkinson's "City of Palaces" and Leyden's "Ode to an Indian Gold Coin"—remained popular throughout the century. Though it was mostly satirical and took its epigraph from Diogenes the cynic, Atkinson's poem contributed a nickname to Calcutta, which it wears to this day. Leyden's poem was often reprinted in the nineteenth century, for it captured that moment of regret common to those who

had emigrated to India to seek their fortunes. Though he was raised in relative poverty, Leyden contrasted the childhood freedom of Scotland with the commercial slavery of his Indian interests. He apostrophizes the Indian gold coin as a slave, clearly feeling that he himself has become a slave to the slave.

Slave of the dark and dirty mine!
What vanity has brought thee here?
How can I love to see thee shine
So bright, whom I have bought so dear?—
The tent-ropes flapping lone I hear
For twilight-converse, arm in arm;
The jackal's shriek bursts on mine ear,
When mirth and music went to charm.

By Cheral's dark wandering streams,
Where cane-tufts shadow all the wild,
Sweet visions haunt my waking dreams
Of Teviot loved while still a child,
Of castled rocks stupendous piled
By Esk or Eden's classic wave,
Where loves of youth and friendships smiled,
Uncursed by thee, vile yellow slave!²⁷

So John Leyden directs his ire at the yellow slave—all the while suffering a liver complaint that would have made his face a twin to the slave's.

As they extended the scope and concerns of English language verse across the long nineteenth century, poets from John Leyden and Emma Roberts to Rabindranath Tagore and Rudyard Kipling created an English language literary culture that still has resonance among English speakers in India. Their English language poems also inflected verse written in both Britain and the United States.

Theoretical Premises and Editorial Principles

In the metropolitan centers of Britain and the United States, the nuances of Indian English poetry were easily missed, and after their first publication the poems themselves were often lost to view. My effort here is bring forgotten poems back to view and to re-create the complex conversation among poets that shaped them. I hope to make these poems both literally and culturally legible to American and British readers. Given the explosion of print in nineteenth-century

27. John Leyden, "Ode to an Indian Gold Coin," in *Poems and Ballads*, ed. Walter Scott (Kelso, Scotland: J. and J. H. Rutherford, 1858), 312.

India and the expansion of English-medium education, I have found it impossible in one volume to represent all the significant English language poems written in India during this period. Nor would I claim enduring aesthetic merit for every poem included here—some are well-made poems, while some are so ugly that they are interesting. I have made these texts available not because every one is a “masterpiece” but because, taken together, they establish the contours of a significant field of literary production.

These poems allow us to ask how writing in English, writing verse in English, in nineteenth-century India was legitimated and what it legitimated. They allow us further to understand the complex processes by which languages and the people who speak, learn, and teach them encounter each other. Though some of these poems were written by British or Indian officials, these poems move us away from official discourse and into the drawing rooms and school rooms, clubs and booksellers’ establishments of India and Britain. They arose from a global circulation of texts, tropes, ideas, and arguments. And if we look at them not merely through the dyad of metropolis/colony (or, say, London/Calcutta) but transperipherally, we can identify the complex relations of developed and nascent nationalisms that now patrol the boundaries of literary canons. I hope that reading these poems side by side—Kipling with Aurobindo, Kasisprasad Ghosh with Jones, Emma Roberts with Derozio—will make visible and call into question the nationalist biases of canon formation as we still experience it. These texts taken together allow us to ask what they *once meant* and how those meanings continue to shape literary endeavor.²⁸

My theoretical premises and editorial practices here require thinking about canons outside of nationalism. Even the globalization attendant on mercantile imperialism in the eighteenth century evidenced what David Harvey has characterized, for the twentieth century, as space-time compression.²⁹ The poems collected here emerged in a fundamentally heterogeneous space. Geographical gaps between texts and readers, between literary conventions and local circumstances, and between technologies available in the metropole and on the peripheries were the facts of empire most salient to writers, publishers, editors, and readers. The interchange between peripheries and metropole was neither one way nor two way but multiple, with metropolitan forms and tropes constituting themselves through complex exchanges with the peripheries and vice versa. The editorial apparatus supporting these poems—footnotes and critical biographical introductions to each poet—is designed to trace the arcs of exchange as well as to elucidate particular verses.

28. I take the terms of this question from David Shields, who discusses colonial poetry in much the same way. See Shields, *Civil Tongues and Polite Letters in British America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997).

29. David Harvey, *Justice, Nature and the Geography of Difference* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996).

Despite the fact that many of these poems—those written by Tagore and Kipling excepted—are virtually unknown to most readers in Britain and North America, the profusion of verse collected here represents only a small part of the English language verse written in India in the long nineteenth century. My principles of selection shifted somewhat as the project grew, but for the most part I have included here only poets who published a volume of English language verse in the period, and I have favored volumes that were published in India or were initially published in India. Thus, I have ignored many writers whose poetry appeared *only* in the English language press in Britain. Privileging whole volumes of poetry allowed me both a wide selection and the ability to fairly represent a poet's work. Both of these rules, however, have their exceptions. I have included manuscript poems of Horace Hayman Wilson, who, although he published many volumes of translation and history, never brought out a volume of his own verse. His manuscript poems appear here along with his published translations. A second exception to this rule is Honoria Marshall Lawrence. Lawrence's diaries were published in the twentieth century, but the editors of that publication chose to omit her poems; in her own time, most of her published poems appeared as epigraphs to the chapters of a novel she jointly authored with her husband, Henry Lawrence, or in periodicals. In both cases, I think their manuscript or periodical poetry adds a fullness to our understanding of the literary scene, emphasizing in Wilson's case the importance of the early nineteenth-century manuscript book as a form of literary circulation and emphasizing in Honoria Lawrence's case the importance of poetic circulation within small groups of family and friends. The second rule of selection here—my decision to favor poems published on the subcontinent—I have more frequently violated. I found that some texts published first in Britain had a lasting impact on the literary scene, as in the case of Edwin Arnold's work, or represented new technologies of publishing and distribution, as in volumes by Manmohan Ghose, Sarojini Naidu, and Rabindranath Tagore.

Any anthology, of course, has a certain arbitrariness—omissions occasioned by its commissions. In addition to being weighted toward the book rather than the periodical as a form of distribution, this collection is weighted toward northern India. In part, this bias simply reflects publishing realities; more books of English language poems appeared from Calcutta than from any other location, as Calcutta was the seat of imperial government. At the same time, my desire to fully represent the interconnections among poets and across generations caused me to include writers who most fully participated in these networks.

Finally, I have made a special effort to represent poets from a wide range of social locations, as understood by gender, class, and access to education. Hence, I have included Maria Nugent and Honoria Lawrence, though they did not publish books of verse but instead wrote voluminous diaries, and I have included

John Horsford and John Denning, both of whom began their careers in India as common soldiers, though Horsford, unlike Denning, came originally from the gentry. I have restricted the poems of Aurobindo Ghose to his early English verse, which falls within the limits of the period I am examining, thus ignoring his later religious verse. Despite its inevitable omissions, then, I hope this compilation of Indian English language poems will enable readers in Britain and North America access to a rich array of work and will provide Indian readers with the other half of the conversation that constituted nineteenth-century English language poetics.

The copy text for the poems included here has been, in most cases, provided by the last edition of a volume of verse that was at least nominally supervised by its author. Many of the texts reproduced here are available only in a single edition. In the rare cases where the author made revisions in a later edition, editorial notes indicate important changes. Indian copyediting was often poor during the period when these texts were published, and where necessary I have silently amended spelling and, sometimes, punctuation. In all but a few cases I have chosen to follow the spelling of the original wherever there is no evidence of typographical error. The bibliography for these copy texts is included in a paragraph immediately following each critical biographical introduction. The copy texts for the poems reprinted here are listed first in the bibliographical paragraph, followed by other useful editions and the sources for the biographical information used in the headnotes to each poet. In addition, the texts are fully annotated. Although overlooking annotations and relying on them only for information is sometimes tempting, the footnotes to these poems are crucial. The footnotes here include two kinds of materials: those originally provided by the poets themselves and the editor's explanatory notes.

The footnote was an important feature in orientalist verse and in early to midcentury Indian English poems generally. In their footnotes, poets carried on political arguments and literary controversies and legitimated themselves as experts on Indian intellectual and historical matters. The practices of annotation developed in India were widely adopted in Britain for orientalist subjects. In India, poets such as H. L. V. Derozio and Emma Roberts used footnotes to provide a running commentary and framework for reading. In addition, the learned footnote cataloging the flora and fauna of India was endemic to poems that the authors imagined might be read in Britain. Footnotes to the poems, like the other paratexts to volumes of verse published in India, are a crucial part of the reading experience. Without exception, the author's footnotes have been retained here and are marked in brackets with the author's initials. All other notes are the responsibility of the editor. In only two cases have I abridged a poet's footnotes, shortening Horace Hayman Wilson's disquisitions on flora, fauna, and literature and abridging Derozio's political notes. Derozio's extensive footnotes included whole articles reprinted from his journalistic writings on sati and

other topics. They have been abridged here because they are unwieldy, but enough has been retained to suggest the nature of Derozio's political arguments.

Even as I have preserved the poets' footnotes, so too have I followed their practices with respect to diacritical markings of foreign, usually Sanskrit or Persian, words. At the beginning of this period, there was no common practice in English print for transliterating foreign words, and poets engaged in different practices in this regard. By the end of the century, possibly because fewer of them were learned in Sanskrit and Persian, poets tended to use no diacritical markings in transliteration of either classical or vernacular languages. It is interesting, for example, that in the 1830s Kasiprasad used diacritics in his English verse, while Derozio did not—as in the matter of matching religious meanings, so too in transliterating Sanskrit, Kasiprasad chose to exhibit a high degree of learning. In most cases, poets chose not to use diacritical markings, and I have followed their practice in their texts. For myself, in notes and biographical introductions, I have omitted diacritical markings for words that have become common in English.

The poems selected here represent a mix of narrative, lyric, and satiric modes and are, in most cases, complete. A few long narrative poems and translations have been abridged. The length of Oriental tales has limited both their number and the length of passages selected from them. This collection, consequently, is a fair representation of lyric poems from the period, but it underrepresents the long narrative poem. Very recently, many volumes from which these long poems have been excerpted have become available in digital form, and I urge readers to seek them out.

The poems in the volume range from William Jones's witty poem to his wife, "Plassey-Plain"—in which the animals speak multiple languages to warn her of lurking dangers—to Sarojini Naidu's sad meditation "At Twilight," in which the poet meditates on communal strife in India dividing the nationalist movement. Jones found a global audience for his more serious hymns to Indian deities and a local Calcutta audience for his witty satirical verses. Naidu claimed a London audience for much of her personal poetry, but her nationalist verse was recited in English at Congress Party rallies across India. The poems in this volume continue their long history of migration. I hope that an understanding of what they once meant will tune our ears differently to the migratory poetics of our own time.