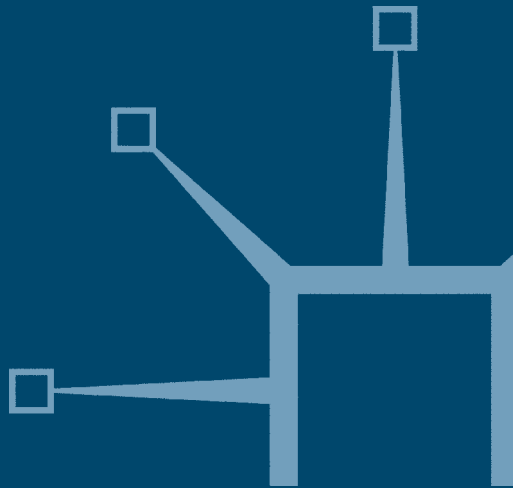


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Autobiography, Travel and Postnational Identity

Gandhi, Nehru and Iqbal

Javed Majeed



'Javed Majeed has produced an exceptional and important book which will affect our way of thinking about nationalism today. Through the most scrupulous and sensitive readings of the autobiographical writings of Gandhi, Nehru and Iqbal, he demonstrates how each of them is engaged in a complex negotiation of the innermost depths of selfhood as a means of political self-empowerment. They do this against the oppressive clichés of colonial discourse, but also in such a way as to forge a new, subtly rendered, version of political subjectivity which could serve as a model for post-colonial identity in modern times. Majeed opens up these key figures of Indian nationalism to the widest political significance. In the process, notably in his discussion of Iqbal, he also despatches a number of dangerously oversimplified readings of modern Islamic thought. *Autobiography, Travel and Postnational Identity* is an impressive achievement which will stand as a major rebuttal of those who would separate the vagaries of the internal world from the drama of political liberation.'

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Autobiography, Travel and Postnational Identity

Gandhi, Nehru and Iqbal

Javed Majeed

Queen Mary, University of London



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Introduction

The pre-eminence of Jawaharlal Nehru (1889–1964), Mohandas K. Gandhi (1869–1948) and Muhammad Iqbal (1877–1938) as public intellectuals who defined dominant strands of modern South Asian nationalism cannot be in doubt. As key figures who represented and articulated South Asian cultural processes and nationalisms, their legacy remains important today, evidenced in influential studies of their thought and work, and a range of biographies.

My aim here, however, is to focus on their autobiographies as texts in which they articulate their notions of individual selfhood. Although I take account of biographical details where necessary, I am not on the whole concerned with adding to their existing biographies.¹ Instead, I will focus on how Gandhi, Nehru and Iqbal use the genre of autobiography, as a first-person narrative in which there is a formal identity between the author, narrator and the main protagonist in the text,² to express visions of individual selfhood. Autobiography has generally been interpreted as a formalisation of self-awareness, an exercise in self-understanding and an enactment of an 'I' which is given coherence and substance through a written narrative.³ It is seen as a mode of writing in which the narrator's self is simultaneously discovered, created and asserted.⁴ For Gandhi, Nehru and Iqbal, given the colonial context in which they lived, autobiography had an obvious appeal as a written articulation of self-discovery and self-assertion. But more importantly, for them autobiography became a way of enacting self-choice. In their autobiographies, they choose their own existence from a moral and political point of view, and thereby taking responsibility for their own biographies as authors. In their first-person narratives, selfhood becomes an achievement rather than a sign ascribed by others.⁵ Matustik reminds us that at the basic level, the term 'I' simply signifies singularity; it denotes a grammatical self-reference through which a speaker identifies himself or herself as an object. This numerical identity has to be distinguished from identity in the qualitative sense of the word, in which a person goes beyond mere singularity to become an individual with a competence for autonomous action, with an inner space and a complex subjectivity.⁶ For Gandhi, Nehru

and Iqbal, autobiography is that realm of writing in which the 'I' wins for itself an identity in a qualitative sense, as opposed to a numerical sense alone.

In this study, then, I focus on Nehru's *An Autobiography* (1936) and *The Discovery of India* (1946). In a letter of December 17, 1940, to Madame Chiang Kai-Shek, Nehru speculated on the possibility of continuing 'the story' of his earlier *Autobiography*, but added 'If I make the attempt, it is likely to lead to another book for so much has happened during these five years in the world, in India and to me personally.'⁷ Clearly, Nehru conceived of *The Discovery of India* as a continuation of *An Autobiography*, and for this reason I treat the two together, using the singular 'autobiography' to refer to both. When I wish to distinguish between the two texts, I refer to their separate titles. For Gandhi, I approach both *An Autobiography or the Story of My Experiments with Truth* (1927–1929) and *Satyagraha in South Africa* (1924–1925) as autobiographies. Gandhi makes it clear in his chapter on 'The birth of Satyagraha' in *An Autobiography* that the reader who 'wishes to consider these experiments in their strict chronological order will now do well to keep the history of Satyagraha in South Africa before him', before reading about the experiments conducted on Gandhi's return to India. He also refers the reader to *Satyagraha in South Africa* for a fuller description of the 'conditions of Indians in the Transvaal and the Orange Free State'.⁸ For Gandhi, then, *Satyagraha in South Africa* had to be read alongside *An Autobiography* as an autobiographical text. Thus, as with the case of Nehru, I refer to both together under the term 'autobiography', unless I expressly wish to distinguish between the two.

In the case of Iqbal, my focus will be on his Persian poem, the *Jāvīd Nāma* (1932), which is generally reckoned by literary critics to be his magnum opus. It has also been called 'his most intriguing literary work'.⁹ My choice of this epic poem is based on its status as a poetic masterpiece which is a defining instance of Iqbal's aesthetic and intellectual concerns. More importantly, though, the poem bears the defining feature of an autobiographical narrative because it signals an identity between the poet and the main protagonist in the poem, so that the poet appears as a figure in the poem by using the first-person singular pronoun. The poet is also expressly concerned with the main task of autobiographical narrative, namely self-definition. However, the poem is unlike other autobiographical texts in that it unfolds on an explicitly symbolic plane as the poet journeys through the cosmos. But, as we shall see, this reflects the distinctive nature of Iqbal's autobiographical task.

In focussing on autobiographies, I shall argue that there are important connections as well as tensions between concepts of nationality and autobiographical concepts of selfhood. This study will try to show how nationalism can be grounded in notions of individual personhood, how the idea of collective life is drawn from a vision of the individual self, and how the writing of autobiography can play a key role in formulating that complex

tie between nation and subject which allows nationalism to work as a key defining identity of peoples in the world today. I will argue that Gandhi, Nehru and Iqbal deploy autobiography to generate and project a vision of individual selfhood on which their nationalist aspirations try to rely. I treat their autobiographies less as their retrospective accounts of their lives, and more as projects¹⁰ of selfhood, through which they explored the intricate relationships between interiority and the public realm of politics.

My argument, then, is that there are crucial connections between the autobiographies of Gandhi, Nehru and Iqbal, and their political concepts of nationality. The latter were *decisively* articulated through their autobiographies. The relationship between autobiography and political thinking in their texts is not an accidental one, in which autobiography is only a transparent medium of their political thought, which could be replaced by another literary form. Their political thought is not detachable from their autobiographies. Rather, their appropriation of the autobiographical form as a first-person narrative is central to their notion of the political and is crucial to their very articulation of it. It is through processes of self-authorship that they define the senses of selfhood which ground their politics.

While biographers have tended to approach Gandhi, Nehru and Iqbal as coherent and unified figures, I assume that they can only be dealt with in parts and fragments, rooted in their own self-conceptions as they express them in their autobiographies. They self-consciously enact changing, mobile and heterogeneous selves as they travel. I focus on the different components of these selves, how they are constructed, and how they are sometimes disavowed. Here their autobiographies are in sharp contrast to a number of other Indian nationalist autobiographies, which seek to construct homogenous selves that can be easily integrated into emerging nationalisms. Within the body of Indian nationalist autobiography, Nehru, Gandhi and Iqbal are distinctive in that their autobiographies bear the signs, to varying degrees, of a postnationalist discourse. By this I mean that there is no attempt to simply subsume their individual autobiographical voice within a group identity, or to conflate one's voice with a pre-existing nationality. This is the route taken in the autobiographies of Lajpat Rai, Surendranath Banerjea and M.R. Jayakar,¹¹ where at key moments in their texts the conflict between self-narration and national narration is overcome through the assumption of a pre-existing unity between the autobiographer's voice and a collective identity.¹² As such, their works bear testimony to the homogenising and levelling character of an oppressive nationalism, in which self and group identity mirror each other. Their autobiographical texts enact a fantasy of a compositional form of individual and group identity, in which a group identity becomes a simple merger of its individual parts,¹³ and there are indications of the strains this puts on the autobiographical form, in so far as it expresses a self-defeating nationalism. The self they enact is subsumed within a totalising nationalism which makes autobiography not so much the performance

of emerging singularity¹⁴ but more the disappearance of self into a totalising nationalism.

Julia Kristeva has pointed out that in a world of 'national fundamentalism' we have to assert belonging as a matter of choice; we have to recognise the strangers within ourselves in order to recognise that there is otherness for all others.¹⁵ Matustik has argued that postnational identity is a form of resistance to the oppressive imperatives of a homogenising nationalism. Postnational questioning and postnational forms of life are needed to counter the elevation of the nation state into an unconditional, ethical totality.¹⁶ My aim here is to show how the autobiographical creations of Nehru, Gandhi and Iqbal elaborate elements and questions of postnationality, not as signalling the disintegration of any sense of collective polity,¹⁷ but more as a means to articulate points of resistance to the oppressive potential of collective nationalist identities. These postnational elements are deployed at various levels and with varying degrees of success and awareness in their autobiographical texts. In doing so, they sometimes unveil the undesirability, even the impossibility, of certain kinds of national selves.

I begin by considering how for Gandhi, Nehru and Iqbal, autobiography and travel are intimately connected. This has not been explicitly commented upon in studies of their work and thought. I argue that their self-conception as travellers is fundamental to their sense of themselves. The experiences and motifs of travel are key to understanding their autobiographical narratives. It is for this reason that I define their autobiographies as 'travelling autobiographies', representing particular kinds of travellers.

bell hooks has stressed the need to unpack conventional notions of travel and to 'put alongside it or in its place a theory of the journey that would expose the extent to which holding on to the concept of "travel" as we know it is a way to hold on to imperialism'.¹⁸ In their autobiographies, Gandhi, Nehru and Iqbal outline alternative notions to conventional and imperial notions of travel. In the case of Nehru and Iqbal, this includes forms of travel which do not involve physical mobility alone, and sometimes even exclude physical travel altogether. In the *Jāvid Nāma*, Iqbal's journey is not physical, while Nehru demonstrates how he can be a traveller even when he is physically incarcerated. Both Nehru and Iqbal articulate their interiority in their autobiographies in terms of different forms of travel. Gandhi's concern is with modes of travel, and he opens up alternative notions of travel which are rooted in his rejection of the modern technology of transport. Travel for him becomes a way of engaging with corporeality; as a traveller and through travel he defines some of the key terms in his lexicon, such as 'simplicity', 'cleanliness', *brahmacharya* (roughly, 'celibacy') and 'Truth'. This is the lexicon of an original and distinctive traveller who is a perpetual itinerant in his quest for a certain kind of 'Truth'. For Gandhi, 'Truth' is not something you can arrive at, but is progressively enacted through a particular kind of travel.

It is through their concepts of travel that Nehru, Gandhi and Iqbal define themselves against European ethnographic representations of the 'native', in which Indians were represented as being incapable of individual growth through travel. However, the distinctive nature of their autobiographies as travelogues needs to be read mainly in terms of their differences from an earlier body of travel writing by Indians. I recontextualise their autobiographies in relation to travelogues by Indians written in English, Urdu and Persian, from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries onwards. Ultimately, it is against this tradition of travel writing by Indians that their distinctive voices as nationalist travellers are defined, as they fuse together the travelogue with autobiography.

It is also through their different concepts of travel that Gandhi, Nehru and Iqbal reflect upon the consequences of modernity and shape their perspectives on it. Here there are clear differences between themselves and earlier Indian travellers, whose texts express a sense of selves lacking in relation to the power of a stable modernity, exemplified by Britain. For Gandhi, travel enacts a sacred landscape, obscured and undermined by the modern technology of speedy transport. It is only by exposing the fallacy of speed that such a landscape can become part of a self-empowering autobiography. Furthermore, Gandhi's concept of the sacred is rooted in his notion of the translatability of 'Truth'. As he travels in search of 'Truth', it is through processes and motifs of translation that he engages with the *Bhagavad Gita*, which becomes less a stable text whose doctrinal meanings are conveyed by Gandhi to others, and more a repository of 'Truth' precisely because it is entangled with translation as both mode of thinking and process. For Gandhi, then, the sacredness of 'Truth' is enacted and made available (but never fully so) through travel. It is also amplified through translation (although never finally so) rather than undermined by it.

Iqbal also defines notions of the sacred through travel. His aim is complex in that he seeks to appropriate modernity's power for an emerging Islamic community, but in doing so he unveils the unstable nature of modernity's temporality. This instability both grounds and undermines his appropriation of modernity. This tension is reflected in the relationships between the literary form and content of his travelling autobiography, and his reinterpretation of the Qur'ān, which becomes a central reference point for revealing the instability of modernity's moment, and yet is embroiled in that instability, rather than transcending it.

In presenting himself as a traveller, Nehru argues that he is recovering a tradition of Indians as travellers, which has been interrupted by British colonialism. In doing so, his travelling autobiography enacts a process of secularisation, in which the recovery of the figure of the travelling Indian extends to that of the Indian scientist, participating in a global narrative of scientific endeavour. The narrative of a progressive modernity is itself cast by Nehru in terms of adventurous travel. Furthermore, for Nehru it is

precisely the heterogeneity of India, represented in colonialist discourse as disabling India from playing a role in a modern world, which qualifies India as a travelling culture, drawing on a long tradition of mobility, for a place in a global narrative of modernity.

In considering their autobiographies as forms of travelogues, I will also outline how Nehru, Gandhi and Iqbal enact imaginary geographies, in which they define alternative maps to the London-centric maps of previous Indian travellers. In their influential studies of Indian travellers, both Lahiri and Burton have stressed the importance of London as a site for the self-definitions of Indian nationalists,¹⁹ but what is striking about my three authors is how they open up alternative spaces, both conceptual and geographical, to London and the 'West'. They do not define themselves against the 'West' alone; indeed, often the 'West' exists mainly as an archive from which they can selectively appropriate authors and texts for their own purposes of self-authorship. In the imaginary geographies opened up through their travelling autobiographies, none conceives of colonialism as unitary totality or monolithic entity. Instead, they decentre that colonialism in relation to concepts of selfhood, and define what might be called 'a geography of subjectivity'²⁰ in which they reconfigure notions of the 'outer' and the 'inner', and enact different conceptions of space.

These geographies of subjectivity are defined against a whole host of figures, of which only a few are 'Western'. Iqbal's notion of a pan-Islamic self was defined mainly against what he called 'Arabian imperialism' rather than British imperialism. If Nehru defined himself against an 'Other' in his autobiography, that 'Other' was Gandhi rather than 'the West'. Nehru also conflates the figure of Gandhi and the category of 'Nature', and it is against both that he secures his own sense of agency and self-authorship. Furthermore, in his handling of the different components of his identity, he was also representing himself against other Indian 'narrow nationalists'. As for Gandhi himself, scholars have observed how *satyagraha* ('truth force' or 'soul force') was defined just as much against the 'terrorist' wing of Indian nationalism as against imperial violence.²¹ *Hind Swaraj* was addressed first to those Indians who espoused violence in political struggle, although the text assumes that it is their infatuation with the 'West' which disposes them to such violence.²² Moreover, in his engagement with the *Bhagavad Gita*, Gandhi defined his notion of 'Truth' both against the tradition of indigenous commentaries by Hindu pandits and translations by Orientalist scholars.²³

In his seminal study of Indian travellers, Michael Fisher has shown how the lives and writings of Indians travelling to Britain have become 'homeless texts' largely absent from British and Indian national histories but vital to our understanding of both.²⁴ My concern here is not to write a 'history', but to open up another space for the consideration of nationalism, by considering how the articulation of subjectivity through the experiences and notions of

travel might have grounded the nationalist politics of Gandhi, Nehru and Iqbal. I am mindful of the fact that, as Anne McClintock amongst others has argued, the term 'postcolonial' is haunted by the very figure of linear development it seeks to dismantle, and that it confers on colonialism the prestige of history proper.²⁵ However, as authors of autobiographies, Gandhi, Nehru and Iqbal use the unstable temporality of the autobiographical form to release possibilities for the enactment of self and/or group identity. Sturrock has described autobiography as the 'certificate of a unique human passage through time'.²⁶ It would be true to say that in varying degrees their autobiographies are not tales of time, but tales about time, because the very experience of time is at stake in their narratives.²⁷ This is in contrast to other Indian nationalist autobiographies, which, while finding it difficult to maintain a linear chronology because of the very nature of the autobiographical form, do not foreground the experience of time or use it to reflect upon the nature of time.

Notes

1. For Nehru, these include the classic three-volume study by Sarvepalli Gopal, *Jawaharlal Nehru. A Biography* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1975), and Michael Brecher, *Nehru. A Political Biography* (1959; New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998). For a recent biography which is usefully succinct and thoughtful, see Benjamin Zachariah, *Nehru* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004). The standard biography of Gandhi remains Judith Brown, *Gandhi. Prisoner of Hope* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1989), but see also Antony Copley, *Gandhi. Against the Tide* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1987) for an insightful and informative study. There is no full-length biography of Muhammad Iqbal, but for biographical information see Annemarie Schimmel, *Gabriel's Wing. A Study into the Religious Ideas of Sir Muhammad Iqbal* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1963), Ch. 1.
2. For permutations of this definition of the formal feature of autobiography, see Jean Starobinski, 'The style of autobiography', in James Olney (ed.), *Autobiography: Essays Theoretical and Critical* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), p. 78, William Howarth, 'Some principles of autobiography', *ibid.*, p. 87, William C. Spengemann, *The Forms of Autobiography. Episodes in the History of a Literary Genre* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1980), p. xvi, Laura Marcus, *Auto/biographical Discourses: Theory, Practice, Criticism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, c. 1994), p. 7, pp. 12–13, p. 149, p. 191 ff.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 137, p. 138 ff., p. 145, p. 151.
4. James Olney, 'Autobiography and the Cultural Moment: A thematic, historical and bibliographical introduction', in Olney (ed.), *Autobiography*, pp. 3–27, p. 24.

5. I have taken this notion of self-choice from the important work of Martin J. Matustik, *Postnational Identity. Critical Theory and Existential Philosophy in Habermas, Kierkegaard, and Havel* (New York and London: The Guildford Press, 1993), p. 12, pp. 91–3.
6. Matustik, pp. 87–8.
7. Nehru, 'To Madame Chiang Kai-Shek', in S. Gopal (ed.), *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru*, 11 vols (New Delhi: Orient Longman, 1972–1978), 11: pp. 516–18, p. 517. Hereafter SW.
8. M.K. Gandhi, *An Autobiography or the Story of My Experiments with Truth* (1927–1929; London: Penguin, 1982), p. 292, p. 128.
9. Annemarie Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1975), p. 219.
10. Following Nicholas Thomas, I use the term 'project' to signify both discourse and agency; see Nicholas Thomas, *Colonialism's Culture. Anthropology, Travel and Government* (Cambridge and Oxford: Polity Press, 1994), pp. 105–6.
11. For an important article on autobiography and Indian nationalism, see Milton Israel, 'Indian nationalist voices: autobiography and the process of return', in George Egerton (ed.), *Political Memoir. Essays on the Politics of Memory* (London: Frank Cass, 1994), pp. 76–105.
12. An exception to this self-defeating nationalism is Cornelia Sorabji's *India Calling* (1934) which I examine in Chapter 4.
13. This definition of compositional identity is taken from Martin J. Matustik, *Postnational Identity. Critical Theory and Existential Philosophy in Habermas, Kierkegaard, and Havel* (New York and London: The Guildford Press, 1993), p. 10.
14. Sturrock argues that autobiography is the 'story of a singularization, or of how the autobiographer came to acquire the conviction of uniqueness that has impelled him to write'; see John Sturrock, *The Language of Autobiography. Studies in the First Person Singular* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 14.
15. Julia Kristeva, *Nations without Nationalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), translated Leon S. Roudiez, p. 15, p. 31.
16. Matustik, *Postnational Identity*, pp. viii–ix, p. 38.
17. This sense of postnational seems to be dominant in Frank Davey's *Post-national Arguments. The Politics of the Anglophone-Canadian Novel since 1967* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), see especially pp. 252–66.
18. bell hooks, 'Representing whiteness in the black imagination', in Lawrence Grossberg, Cary Nelson and Paula Treichler (eds), *Cultural Studies* (New York and London: Routledge, 1992), p. 343.
19. Antoinette Burton, *At the Heart of Empire. Indians and the Colonial Encounter in Late-Victorian Britain* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), p. 175, p. 191, Shompa Lahari, *Indians in Britain. Anglo-Indian Encounters, race and Identity, 1880–1930* (London: Frank Cass, 2000), pp. xi–xiii.
20. This was the title of a seminar programme hosted by the London Historical Geographers from October to December 2003.
21. For example, see Bhiku Parekh, *Colonialism, Tradition, and Reform. An Analysis of Gandhi's Political Discourse* (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1989), pp. 151–71.
22. Anthony J. Parel (ed.), *Hind Swaraj and Other Writings* (1909; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. xxiv–xxix, Ch. 1.
23. See Ch. 7.
24. Michael H. Fisher, *Counterflows to Colonialism. Indian Travellers and Settlers in Britain 1600–1857* (New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2004), p. 431.

25. Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather. Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Context* (New York and London: Routledge, 1995), pp. 10–11.
26. Sturrock, p. 3.
27. This distinction between tales of time and tales about time is made by Paul Ricoeur in *Time and Narrative*, 3 vols (1984–1985; Chicago and London: Chicago University Press, 1984–1988), translated Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer; 2: p. 101, 3: p. 139, p. 141.

1

Native Travelees

Unselfconscious insiders

Mary Louise Pratt has argued that European travel writing represented the rest of the world for a European readership at particular points in the process of imperial expansion overseas. Travelogues encoded and legitimised aspirations of empire.¹ Tim Fulford and Carol Bolton have also argued that travel writing and exploration narratives were closely tied to imperial expansion, citing the volume and diversity of exploration narratives published in English during the expansion of the British empire. Drawing on the work of other scholars, they stress how many of the significant literary works of the period 1770–1830, which they describe as the ‘age of the exploration narrative’, were inspired by the printed texts of explorers.² The cross-fertilisation between travelogues, exploration narratives and works of literature (especially novels) was exemplified by the popularity of the adventure narrative and romance quest during the period 1880–1920, at the height of British imperial power.³ The popularity of the ‘adventure romance’, as Martin Green has called it,⁴ was partly due to its ‘energising myth’ of empire as space for heroic endeavour.⁵ A number of scholars have focussed on the fiction of Kipling, Haggard and Stevenson in particular as romance quest or adventure narrative, and the way in which they configure elements of adventure, travel and exploration,⁶ showing the close links between the romance quest and imperialism, links significant in formulating a geopolitical imagination of nineteenth-century empire.⁷

Scholars have also drawn attention to the importance of European travel and exploration narratives in the development of modern scientific disciplines. Pratt has outlined the crucial role of the scientific expedition in European travel literature.⁸ She describes these expeditions as Europe’s ‘proudest and most conspicuous instruments of expansion’, and as the source of some of the most powerful ‘ideational and ideological apparatuses through which European citizenries related themselves to other parts of the world’. She convincingly shows how the language of natural history and the naturalist as traveller were key to the self-understanding of Euroimperialism and its underpinning ideology of science.⁹ For Fulford and

Bolton, the paradigmatic journeys here are those of Sir Joseph Banks and Erasmus Darwin.¹⁰ The study of flora and fauna and the representation of 'native' manners and customs were both articulated in terms of classification of species rather than human character and society,¹¹ reflecting the increasing application of Darwinian ideas to ethnographic interpretation of differences between groups of people.¹² As Nicholas Thomas has argued, post-Enlightenment anthropology predicated that particular peoples have natures, mainly racial, cultural or social, and most importantly distinctive to them. This distinctiveness was naturalised and rendered equivalent to species difference. Human attributes perhaps universal at cognitive or linguistic levels, or differences perhaps arising from age, gender and a plethora of other considerations, were marginalised by this privileging of ethnic or cultural difference.¹³

This slippage between science and ethnography meant that anthropologists acted as if they were the 'natural scientists of society' in their search for universal structural principles.¹⁴ The scientism¹⁵ of ethnography also meant that it could be understood to reinforce an imperial sense of epistemic superiority,¹⁶ reflected in the normalising and generalising voice of canonical texts of ethnography, and objectification of 'native' subjects into standard specimens and homogenised collectivities.¹⁷ At the heart of this objectification lies the immobilisation of the figure of the 'native'. As Arjun Appadurai has argued, in European ethnology 'natives are not only persons who are from certain places, and belong to those places, but they are also those who are somehow *incarcerated*, or confined, in those places'. This is in contrast to the anthropologist, explorer and missionary, who are 'quintessentially mobile' observers.¹⁸ The attachment of 'natives' to physical places was often presented in terms of adaptation to constraints of the environment, in striking contrast to the adventurous motion of metropolitan behaviour.¹⁹ For European travel and exploration narratives to work, especially in their production of ethnographic knowledge, the 'native' had to operate as innately incapable of travel. As James Clifford has pointed out, in the dominant discourses of European travel, the 'native' cannot appear as heroic explorer, aesthetic interpreter, or scientific authority; the 'non-white' person cannot achieve the status of traveller.²⁰ To adopt one of Pratt's terms, the 'native' is always a 'travelee', a person who is travelled to or on by a traveller, a receptor of travel rather than an initiator of it.²¹

These assumptions structure a classic work of British ethnography in India, Herbert Risley's *The People of India* (1908). Risley's text is not only an ethnographic account of India, but an attempt to define the expertise of 'the modern science of ethnology'.²² He grounds this science in its combination of cartography with the language of statistics, especially the enumeration of the official census, and the craniometrical and anthropometric measurements of the physical features of the inhabitants of India. Connections between *The People of India* and Census reports are highlighted by Risley

himself, both to legitimise the factual nature of his ethnology and to show how some of his observations had already found their way into previous census reports.²³ Continuities between his text and the census as a project of the colonial state are stressed, so that the constitution of ethnology as a 'modern science' and the infrastructure and epistemological projects of that state are entangled to produce a certain kind of 'anthropogeography'.²⁴ Risley's text shares the founding assumption and defining conclusion of the census that Indians are to be firmly fixed as members of mutually exclusive groups of a particular dimension and substance.²⁵

Clifford has argued that ethnography privileged relations of dwelling over those of travelling.²⁶ The emergence of ethnology as a 'science' in Risley's text enacts just this erasure of travel. In trying to define the expertise of this 'science', he deploys the enabling fiction of the ordinary 'untraveller' European whose 'untrained eye' cannot tell Indians apart,²⁷ in contrast to the ethnographer who perceives heterogeneity in the apparently homogenous mass of Indians. The distinction between the superficiality of the 'observer recently arrived from Europe'²⁸ and the depth of the ethnographer's field-work lies in the latter's competence to detect differences mapped along axes of regional, linguistic, religious, social and ultimately physical differences.²⁹ From the outset, two 'poses' of seeing India are juxtaposed: the ethnographer's panoramic view of India, articulated in carefully calibrated vocabulary, and the view of the recently arrived European. But both figures erase the question of travel which would situate these two kinds of knowledge. The European who has arrives in India is described as 'untraveller', as though coming to India does not involve undertaking a journey, while the ethnographer's third-person view occludes any narrative of travel through India. This denial of travel precisely involves the grounding assumption which distinguishes the native from the anthropologist, explorer and missionary, namely that the latter group are 'quintessentially mobile' while 'natives' are not.³⁰ The assumption that mobility is the norm for Europeans secures the denial of travel as constitutive of ethnological knowledge, rather than risking the questioning of enabling conventions of knowledge which emerge in Risley's text as grounding the 'science' of ethnology. The travelling 'native' would be a contradiction in terms within this discursive framework.

In Risley's *The People of India*, then, ethnological encounters through travel are erased. Partial knowledge produced in encounters in specific locations through an itinerary of travel is supplanted by what Donna Haraway has called the 'god trick of seeing everything from nowhere', or the 'conquering gaze from nowhere'.³¹ In this vision, mapping is no longer situated, embodied and partial,³² but the paradigm of a third-person, omniscient voice.

These grounding assumptions account for the anxiety of British editors and translators when presented with travel accounts by Indians in the nineteenth century. These editors and translators sought to frame travel accounts

by Indians within a language of ethnography. Their travel accounts are presented as ethnographic data of pre-existing 'native' perspectives, within a static framework of a hierarchy of civilisations. In his preface to his translation of the *Shigurf Nāma*, J.E. Alexander writes that it exhibits 'the impressions made on a native of Hindoostan by the manners, customs, and superior civilisation of the inhabitants of Europe'.³³ His translation is useful because it will 'furnish a work to the Hindoostanee tyro . . . [which will] induce him to prosecute his studies in that most useful language, the acquirement of which is so indispensably necessary for those who mean to sojourn in our Eastern possessions'. He later avers the 'benefits to be derived from studying Hindoostanee, the grand popular dialect of India, a knowledge of which is the sine qua non to preferment in our Eastern dominions'.³⁴ Mirza's travel account is not only converted into an ethnographic text containing a native's 'Oriental lore',³⁵ but a work of utility for imperial policy and career advancement. This is further underlined by Alexander's concern with its utility as a Hindustani text, created by himself, since the original manuscript is in Persian. The value of Mirza's language of authorship is elided as the travel account is converted into the languages of the translator's own text, just as Mirza ceases to be an author in his own right, and instead becomes the European ethnographer's 'native' informant. Alexander's translation is also an abridged one, imposing on it his own sense of coherence and linearity. In the preamble to the account of his travels, Mirza explains the political circumstances which led to his travelling to England, as well as his return to India, and the resolution of the political issues which initiated the trip.³⁶ In Alexander's translation, however, Mirza's passage on his return to India and these resolutions are placed at the end of the account.³⁷ Interestingly, one of the passages Alexander does not include in his translation is Mirza's extended description of the many types of ships he encounters,³⁸ presumably because its inclusion would undermine Alexander's sense of Mirza as an unchanging 'native of Hindoostan'. Another omitted passage is an extended account of the discovery of the New World and an ethnography of its inhabitants.³⁹ Here, Mirza struggles to understand how this discovery fits in with the traditional geography of the Arabs and Persians, reflecting upon his own geographical preconceptions and changing planetary consciousness.⁴⁰ The discursive possibilities of a 'native' ethnographer need to be erased by the translator if the category of the unchanging 'native of Hindoostan' is to remain intact.

The attempt to contain and immobilise the accounts of Indian travellers is evident in other texts too. In his translation of Mirza Abu Taleb Khan's *Masīr-e Tālibī*, Charles Stewart argues that it has little literary value. Instead its value is as the production of 'a Native of the East, unacquainted with the sciences of Europe, whose only object was to inform and improve his countrymen, by a candid and simple narrative of what he saw, heard, and thought, during his Travels'.⁴¹ Alongside the ethnographic category of a

'native' as an 'object of liberal curiosity',⁴² Stewart categorises Abu Taleb's journey as progress towards the sciences of Europe for the purposes of collective and self-improvement. Abu Taleb's criticisms of British modes of conduct,⁴³ and his defence of the social and cultural position of Indian Muslim women compared with English women,⁴⁴ challenge this imposed trajectory of uncritical emulation. Stewart's blanket term 'Native of the East' also empties Abu Taleb's cosmopolitan identity of its complex specificities.⁴⁵ The static term 'Native' fails to take into account Abu Taleb's description of the very changes and dislocations in his social and economic position as a member of the Persianate service gentry in late-eighteenth-century India which led him to travel to Europe.⁴⁶ Finally, it also denies his mobile point of view, and especially his retrospective reflections on the provisional and shifting nature of his evaluations of the places he visits. He discusses how these necessarily change in relation to each other place as he journeys. While he begins with a conviction of the magnificence of Calcutta [khūbīhāye shehr va 'āzam 'imārat-e kalkata] when he arrives in Cape Town this conception is erased [maḥv shavad], but then he revises his opinion of Cape Town when he sees Cork [chīzī āz kaip beh khātir namānad]. Similarly on his return trip, this is reversed [waqt murāj'at hāl 'aks īn būd], so that when he sees Paris in relation to London, he feels as if he has fallen from Paradise into Hell [āz behisht beh dozakhī uftādam]. Yet, when he arrives in Italy he becomes aware of the extent of Paris's magnificence [qadar khūbī shehr paris ma'lūm shudan]. When he arrives in Istanbul, Rome acquires splendour [jalva] in comparison, and Istanbul seems like heaven in relation to Baghdad, and Baghdad is lovely [maḥbūb, literally beloved] in relation to Basra [tamāshā-ye bašra].⁴⁷

A similar attempt to contain the travel narratives of Indians is evident in the 'Memoir of Mohal Lal Kashmiri' written by C.E. Trevelyan as a preface to Lal's 1834 account of his travels in parts of India and Central Asia. Trevelyan uses various strategies to contain Mohan Lal. Although Lal travels as Sir Alexander Burnes' Persian munshi,⁴⁸ the latter stresses Lal's knowledge of the English language and not of Persian. He emphasises how Lal's knowledge of English, acquired in the first English class at Delhi College between 1829 and 1831, 'is the simple cause of [his] elevation of character'. Lal's status as a traveller is subsumed by Trevelyan as living proof of the superiority of Anglicist educational policy. When Lal travels he becomes an exhibit of Anglicist policy, so that he is seen by the 'natives' of Muslim Central Asia as 'an individual raised at once by the simple influence of European education from the base to the apex of society'. Trevelyan adds, 'In the person of Mohan Lal we proved to the Mahammadan [*sic.*] nations beyond the Indus, our qualification for the great mission with which we have been entrusted of regenerating India'. Trevelyan represents the English class at Delhi College as 'the nucleus of a system which, to all appearances, is destined to change the moral aspect of the whole of Upper India'. It is this which makes Mohan Lal

'a triumph of our nation, which does us more real credit than all our Plasseys and Assayes'.⁴⁹ As in the case of Mirza and Abu Taleb, this imposition of the terms of travel on the travelling Indian contradicts Mohan Lal's enactment of syncretistic identity in his travel account, and also his negotiation of the tensions between his status as munshi and his awareness of himself as product of what Trevelyan called the 'great experiment' of the first English class in Delhi College.⁵⁰ Trevelyan's reference to Mohan Lal as the triumph of 'our nation' and 'the hero of our tale' (rather than of his own)⁵¹ demonstrates how explicitly Lal is appropriated to vindicate one specific colonial policy. Lal cannot exist as a traveller in his own right.⁵² The reviews of Lal's travelogue also see it less as travel document, and more as ethnographic data providing insight into the 'Oriental mind'.⁵³

Another example of a containing strategy is Eardley Norton's 'Introduction' to G. Paramaswaran Pillai's *London and Paris Through Indian Spectacles* (1897). Under the two antithetical categories of East and West, Norton lists 'physical' and 'mental' differences, only made evident because Pillai places himself, both mentally and physically, in the 'East'. Norton argues that the book is a 'tribute to the effect of England's rule in India', even though it is about the author's sojourn in England, because of the 'abundant loyalty it displays from start to end to all things admirable in our English political and domestic systems'.⁵⁴ Norton also claims that even the 'bitterest of Indian critics lives and dies in an invincible belief in the generosity and the sympathy both of the statesmen and the people of Great Britain'.⁵⁵ Pillai cannot but occupy the position of the East, and so loyally holds in place the antithetical and self-evident categories of India and Britain, East and West. Yet this framework subverts those aspects of the text critical of British society, as well as those where the distance between 'East' and 'West' is bridged.⁵⁶ It also fails to take into account the vacillation in the book between two different idioms, reflected in the illustrations, between the documentary realism of portraits of representative figures of the London poor, such as the 'crossing sweeper' and 'the shoe-black', and the witty caricatures of other figures such as the barber and 'mashers'.⁵⁷

Thus, the prefaces to and translations of Indian travelogues by British officials evince an unease at Indians as travellers. These travelogues present their colonial mediators with, to use a phrase of Rey Chow's, the 'discomforting fact that the natives are no longer staying in their frames'.⁵⁸ Anxiety about travelling natives was also reflected in the East India Company's policies of surveillance and control of the travel of Indian servants and Indian seamen to Britain.⁵⁹ In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, this unease continued to be expressed in official policies towards Indians who travelled to Britain,⁶⁰ initially formulated in the context of evolving and sometimes contradictory British laws about who was a 'native' of India. Fisher stresses two general points here: first, much of the agency in these categorisations lay with the British authorities, and secondly, while definitions of what constituted a 'native' Indian shifted and were inconsistent, the project to define

'natives' occurred within the context of the efforts by the British state and company to define and control 'natives' throughout the world.⁶¹ It is clear from Fisher's work, though, that the very issue of who constituted a 'native' of India was raised in the context of those 'natives' travelling, and the need to control and regulate their movements. The mobility of the 'natives' of India is not an addendum, but part and parcel of the issue of definition. Moreover, these concerns about travelling 'natives' should be read in conjunction with the general thrust of British revenue and fiscal policy in India from the late eighteenth century onwards, to render Indian society more sedentary and therefore more productive. This meant the expansion of settled agriculture and the increasing policing and surveillance of itinerant groups within Indian society itself.⁶²

The ethnographic incarceration of the 'native' was powerfully experienced by Indian travellers when they encountered the ethnographic gaze. Disempowerment when meeting that gaze is a theme which runs through many, if not most, Indian travelogues. This has been insightfully discussed by Antoinette Burton.⁶³ She shows how the formal and informal display of cultures and artefacts of India in Victorian Britain reinforced the tendency to see Indian travellers themselves as exhibits. The most telling experience here is that of T.N. Mukharji, who came to London in an official capacity for the Indian and Colonial Exhibition in 1886, and was scrutinised and examined as a curious and exotic object within the exhibition hall.⁶⁴ More than a hundred years earlier, Mirza I'tisam uddin had a similar experience. He recounts how when one day he was taken to a dance party, the music and dancing stopped as the assembled ladies and gentlemen crowded around to stare at him. As he puts it succinctly, 'I had gone to see a spectacle but instead became a spectacle myself' [har chand ke betamāshā rafta būdam laikin khud tamāshā shudan].⁶⁵ Similarly, Karim Khan mentions how when he arrived at the Isle of Wight in August 1840, a large group of people gathered to stare at him, and followed him around.⁶⁶ There are a number of other examples of this experience throughout the nineteenth century.⁶⁷

The important studies of Burton, Lahiri and Fisher have in part rested on the assumption that the mobility of Indians travelling to Britain is of significance, in either affording anti-colonial and modernising possibilities, or correcting the historical record by demonstrating the significant presence of Indians in imperial Britain. However, since one can be fixed as a specimen when one travels, physical mobility alone does not constitute a travelling subject.⁶⁸ Rather it is the discursive and conceptual possibilities opened up by travel for identity formation which are key to the formation of the travelling subject. Such possibilities can be constrained by the ethnographic perspectives of powerful others who try to re-convert travelling subjects back to native travelees. This is evident in one of the canonical texts of Anglo-Indian literature, in which the configuration of a scientific ethnography with travel are given full play in the cross-fertilisation between travel

narrative and novel. In Rudyard Kipling's *Kim* (1901), the heterogeneity of India is unfolded through travelogue, merged with ethnographic detail as the reader is regaled with descriptions of the different caste groups Kim and the Lama encounter on their travels. The longest description occurs as they walk 'in silence mile upon mile' along the Grand Trunk road.⁶⁹ Aside from these set-piece descriptions, there are frequent references to tableaux of Indian groups, as when the old soldier tells how 'all castes and kinds of men move here . . . Brahmins and chumars, bankers and tinkers, barbers and bunnias, pilgrims and potters'.⁷⁰ In the train journey from Lahore appear a Ludhiana Sikh, a Dogra, a Hindu Jat, a 'fat Hindu money-lender' and a 'burly Sikh artisan'.⁷¹ There is also a kind of festive comedy in these Chaucerian representations of typical figures they meet on the road, in which good humoured repartee between representatives of different caste and religious groups is in part made possible by the benign nature of British India.⁷² As one of the characters explains, 'all who serve the Sirkar with weapons in their hands are, as it were, one brotherhood. There is one brotherhood of the caste, and beyond that again . . . the bond of the *Pulton* – the Regiment'.⁷³ Similarly, in the train 'we sit side by side with all castes and peoples'.⁷⁴ The reassuring words of the Sikh artisan about the train, 'Do not be afraid . . . Enter! This thing is the work of the Government',⁷⁵ might even serve as an epigram for the text as a whole. The comic aspects of the text are also reinforced by the *jouissance* of the Great Game, in which India becomes a playground for boyish adventure; the vulnerability of a child on the streets to adult predators is transmuted by the benign workings of the State into the playful pranks of a mischievous changeling, who is under the protective tutelage of a number of father figures, from Creighton to Mahbub Ali. It is this enabling boyishness which allows the novel union of the Lama and Kim to be enacted on colonial territory.⁷⁶

The 'Great Game' includes the 'game' in which Lurgan is most interested, 'what might be called dressing-up'.⁷⁷ Here, in a display of panoramic ethnography, Kim parades himself before Lurgan's voyeuristic gaze, mimicking various incarnations of the Indian native, with Lurgan effortlessly explaining 'by the half-hour together how such and such a caste talked, or walked, or coughed, or spat, or sneezed'.⁷⁸ What enables this masterful performance is the assumption of the fixed identities of Indian groups. While Kim and the Lama meet Indian travellers as they walk and ride through India, what is continually stressed is the fixity of these travellers' identities. Each individual Indian is read as a representative type of a pre-given identity about which pseudo-ethnological generalisations can be made. Their identities are not travelling identities. In the discursive framework of the text, Indians remain fixed even when they physically travel.

On the other hand, not only does Kim have a facility for disguise which is denied to Indians as a whole,⁷⁹ but Indian characters in the text are continually amazed at his changeling abilities. He is a 'white boy . . . who is not a

white boy', and he is quizzed, 'Once more, what manner of white boy art thou?'⁸⁰ Both he and the Lama are signs which Indians continually struggle to interpret. *Kim* puts into motion a double exoticism, with Kim and the Lama as exotic figures within an already exotic India. Kim's ongoing identity crisis in some ways frames the tableau of fixed Indian identities. As Bart Moore-Gilbert suggests, Kim's self-interrogating question 'Who is Kim?'⁸¹ is not definitively answered. This question also slips into the 'hard knot' of the even larger question, 'What am I?',⁸² as though the very substance of Kim is in question. It is this ongoing crisis which is harnessed to the Great Game. But the self-conscious possibilities of an identity crisis which lend Kim existential depth and open up spaces for a variety of identity formations and subject positions are not available to Indians themselves. Instead, the fixed, collective identities of natives form a contrasting background to the 'hard knot' of the question of identity. The wistfulness of the text⁸³ stems from not just its elegiac boyishness, but also a nostalgia for the supposed plenitude of native fixity, a fixity which is at odds with the depth of existential angst articulated in Kim's self-questioning. It seems that natives are precluded from experiencing identity crises and are unable to ask the question 'Who am I'?

In contrast to Kim, whose 'bright eyes were open wide' as he and the Lama walk on the Grand Trunk Road, the Lama 'never raised his eyes' but instead 'looked steadily at the ground'.⁸⁴ Earlier, in response to Mahbub Ali's questions as to Kim's caste, the Lama replies 'there is neither high nor low in the Middle Way'.⁸⁵ But the Lama's Buddhism which underpins this view of identity as illusory play is also not available to the Indians in the text. As Appadurai points out, the 'metonymic freezing' involved in the category of the native is rooted in assumptions about the 'boundedness of cultural units and the confinement of the varieties of human consciousness within these boundaries'.⁸⁶ The immobilising of the native involves not just physical incarceration but also a freezing of his or her consciousness as a human subject.

It is the 'wandering viewpoint' of the composite figure of Kim and the Lama which enables the reader to travel through the text,⁸⁷ unfolding a multiplicity of interconnecting perspectives in which the various parts of India are coordinated into an ordered totality. India is spread out for the reader as a surface to explore; spatial extension is converted into a spatial text, into a succession of places and natives whose fixity enables them to be read.⁸⁸ As Kim notes in his 'orisons' on the Great Game, 'it runs like a shuttle throughout all Hind'.⁸⁹ As a 'shuttle', both instrument of weaving and railway train, it weaves together the spatial text of India just as the railway lines cross over the subcontinent, bringing together in train compartments castes and religious groups from far-flung regions. The cartographic discourse of *Kim* can be read in terms of a technology of knowledge and possession, which captures the 'truth' of a place in a single scientific form,⁹⁰

in which a map is 'silent arbiter of power'.⁹¹ It was in this period that the world was increasingly displayed as a globe to be viewed, as part of a 'spectacular geography in which the world appeared as an exhibition'.⁹² Mapping the different parts of India in relation to each other as an ordered totality also fixes India's place in relation to the rest of the world. The configuration of ethnology with a distinctive geography of knowing transforms India into not just an exhibition which we view but also an 'anthropogeography'⁹³ in which India becomes an exhibition which we travel through. Moreover, as a circumscribed space for the pleasurable fieldwork of ethnology, Indians are not just fixed in their identities as they travel, but the very space they travel through has been defined for them and not produced by themselves.

Nationalism's travelling autobiographies

Nationalism's travelling autobiographies question this incarceration of Indians as unselfconscious insiders within a space which is not of their own making. In these autobiographical projects, dwelling in travel is the norm,⁹⁴ and styles of travelling become modes of knowing. These autobiographies counter the freezing of consciousness, which is such an important feature of the category of 'native'. Travel is both a physical activity and an epistemological strategy;⁹⁵ it also represents what Paul Carter has called a 'mental orientation'.⁹⁶ While travel is important as a metaphor for intellectual liberty,⁹⁷ in nationalism's travelling autobiographies, travel enacts the construction of a conceptual space, independent of although related to the everyday machinations of politics, in which to articulate possibilities of identity formation. The relationship between the opening up of a conceptual and mental space, often described in these texts as a form of travel, and actual physical movement remains complex, raising fundamental questions about the relationship between mind and body in travel. Nehru's remark that 'while we are always journeying, trying to approach something that is ever receding', at the same time 'in each one of us are many different human beings with their inconsistencies and contradictions, each pulling in a different direction',⁹⁸ encapsulates the way these travelling autobiographies enact the development of selves.

Gandhi fashions himself through representations of travel in his work. His texts contain accounts of journeys between India and South Africa,⁹⁹ between India and England,¹⁰⁰ and from South Africa to India via England.¹⁰¹ He travels widely within South Africa and India.¹⁰² The experience of being unsettled, of dwelling, in travel is the central motif of Gandhi's autobiographical texts. The refrain in his autobiography is of being on the point of settling down before moving on again.¹⁰³ He is repeatedly setting up house and then moving house. Within one month after furnishing his house in Johannesburg he has to break up his household in order to serve in the Indian ambulance corps during the so-called Zulu 'rebellion'.¹⁰⁴ Even his

stay at the various settlements he establishes at Phoenix and Tolstoy farm are temporary.¹⁰⁵ In fact, his autobiographical texts display the features of what Elaine Savory has called the 'travelling identity', as a 'series of consecutive selves, linking together in the same life and resulting from the renewals of self in different environments'. For Gandhi, it seems that home is a travelling space or series of spaces, a series of interconnected rooms or countries, reached only by passing through all of the others, rather than a fixed place which is the antithesis of travel.¹⁰⁶ The subtitle of *An Autobiography, the Story of My Experiments with Truth*, points to how Gandhi's autobiographical texts are also travels in search of 'Truth', or a quest narrative for 'Truth'. But 'Truth' is not something which is found, but something which is progressively but never finally made through his travels.

Gandhi's autobiography as traveller also bears witness to the attempts to immobilise him. Gandhi refers to various incidents in which the space and time for travelling are carefully controlled and defined by the State and its officials in South Africa. Gandhi outlines how he tackles legislation which is aimed at impeding the mobility of non-white populations in South Africa, as well as the immigration of Indians into South Africa.¹⁰⁷ He is arrested for entering the Transvaal without the required permit, and for inducing indentured labourers to leave the province of Natal, and aiding and abetting 'prohibited persons' to enter the Transvaal.¹⁰⁸ This leads to the subsequent mass deportation of the striking miners from Balfour to Natal.¹⁰⁹ Gandhi also refers to the law passed in the Transvaal in 1885, and amended in 1886, under which Indians were not allowed to walk on public footpaths, and could not move out of doors after 9 p.m. without a permit. This is followed by his own experience of being pushed off the footpath at night.¹¹⁰ He is ejected from the first-class compartment of the train he takes from Durban to Pretoria for being 'coloured' even though he has a first-class ticket.¹¹¹ He also mentions how at Maritzburg Indians could not enter the railway station by the main gate and how difficult it was for them to purchase tickets.¹¹² Gandhi also mentions the 'difficulty in and the practical impossibility of securing accommodation in hotels'.¹¹³ In India, Gandhi is barred from entering the province of Punjab, and on another train journey he is harassed at every station by the CID.¹¹⁴

It is because of these practical disabilities, grounded in assumptions about the dangers of both 'free' and indentured Indians travelling within South Africa, that moments of arrival in Gandhi's itinerary can be fraught with difficulties. In one episode, the hostile reception to Gandhi in particular and to Indians in general when they land at Durban is partly caused by the summaries by Reuter of his speeches on South Africa in India. However, this quickly becomes entangled with perceptions about the 'first step towards flooding Natal with free Indians'.¹¹⁵ This specific fear of 'free' Indians appears to stem from the fact that Indian immigrants who were indentured were in many ways the 'property' of their masters, and so their mobility and

labour was from the outset at the command of Europeans.¹¹⁶ This fear of the uncontrolled mobility of Indians was also evident in the plans of the Natal government in 1894 to impose an annual poll tax on indentured Indians who did not return to India after their indenture expired, or who did not renew their indenture.¹¹⁷ In other words, the plight of the indentured Indian was a graphic illustration of how the Indian as traveller was only acceptable if his or her mobility was in some way or other stringently controlled. Moreover, there was a slippage between the status of the indentured Indian in this regard and that of the 'free' Indian, in so far as the provisions of the Asiatic Law Amendment Ordinance of 1906, passed as the Asiatic Registration Act in March 1907, in the Transvaal, were in some ways more punitive than the laws to which indentured Indians were subject.¹¹⁸ This was supplemented by the Transvaal Immigrants Restriction Bill of 1907 which indirectly became an instrument for 'preventing the entry of a single Indian newcomer'.¹¹⁹

The status of the indentured Indian, as someone who travelled to South Africa subject to drastic laws of control, reflects the deeper and even ontological assumption about the native as incarcerated within a clearly demarcated space. Indians in South Africa, precisely because they were not 'native' to South Africa, were subject to drastic laws governing their mobility. The asymmetry between their mobility as non-'natives' in South Africa and that of European non-'natives' points to how deep this ontological assumption was. As Gertrude Stein puts it so disarmingly in her mock autobiography, 'native always means people who belonged somewhere. That shows that the white race does not really think they belong anywhere because they think of everybody else as native.'¹²⁰ Hence, too, the attempt to fine indentured labourers if they refused to return to India once their period of indenture had not expired, as though their refusal was a transgression of their status as Indians who as 'natives' belonged somewhere else. Gandhi also notes how as a result of their defiance of the Black Act and the Immigration Act, a large group of Indians were deported to India; he notes that 'many of them were ex-indentured labourers, and had no relations in India. Some were even born in South Africa, and to all India was something like a strange land.'¹²¹ The very logic of deportation to India was an imposition of the notion of the 'native' as belonging to and incarcerated in certain places. Gandhi also notes the argument in circulation among some European circles, both official and unofficial, to the effect that Indians were entitled to less rights than the 'negroes' because the latter were in some way 'native' to South Africa.¹²² That this did not affect the rights of Europeans in South Africa reflected how the non-'native' status of Europeans was normalised as part of their general freedom of mobility throughout the British empire.

Gandhi notes that prior to his hostile reception in Durban he had vociferously attacked the indentured labour system, and the plans of the Natal government to impose a tax on these labourers.¹²³ Given the way in which

the category of the stationary 'native' was almost an ontological one in official and non-official European discourse, this goes some way to explaining the visceral tone of the reaction against Gandhi upon his arrival. Although there were no contagious diseases on board, officials placed the ship in quarantine to prevent the Indian passengers from disembarkation. This is also indicative of how the dangers of travelling natives were partly seen in terms of infection.¹²⁴ It may be useful to consider Gandhi's stress on the importance of hygiene and 'cleanliness' among Indians in this context. He describes European perceptions of Indians as 'very dirty', but insists that 'whatever force there was in the arguments of Europeans was duly acknowledged'. The lectures and debates arranged at Congress meetings on the question of sanitation and hygiene are in part designed to rebut these perceptions.¹²⁵ Gandhi also suggests that these perceptions may be self-reinforcing. The locations selected for Indians were 'dirty places situated far away from the towns where there was no water supply, no lighting arrangement and no sanitary convenience to speak of'.¹²⁶ The spatialising practices of the State in assigning fixed locations to Indians was partly premised on the equation of the term 'Indian' with dirt and disease, which led to what Gandhi called 'coolie locations or ghettos', where the Municipality did 'nothing to provide any sanitary facilities, much less good roads or lights'. The Municipality also used the insanitation caused by its own neglect to dispossess Indian settlers who had acquired their plots in the Johannesburg location on leases of 99 years.¹²⁷ Whenever there was a danger of an epidemic, the executive takes 'excessive measures'. Hence when the Indian community takes sanitary measures voluntarily, it saved itself from this 'oppression'.¹²⁸

Gandhi's stress on self-empowerment through strategies of cleanliness and hygiene not only aimed to rebut stereotypes of Indians as 'dirty', it also challenged the grounds of the spatialising practices of the State, which circumscribed Indians in specific locations.¹²⁹ It is for this reason that Gandhi stresses the efficiency of the sanitary arrangements during the long march of the miners, and also those at Tolstoy farm.¹³⁰ The mobility of the Indian traveller and self-reflexive practices of hygiene in Gandhi's counter-discourse of travel represented an attempt to break from the ethnological and official discourse in which travelling Indians were sometimes equated with the circulation of disease, an equation attracting the unwelcome attentions of the State.

Thus, Gandhi's autobiography enacts a struggle to appropriate travel as the norm for the 'native' against the ethnological framework of the State's ideologies. Travel and displacement constitute location; location is not a bounded site but an itinerary of travel.¹³¹ His focus is on shifting locations and not bounded fields, with a 'native inside' and an ethnographer 'outside', nor the circumscribed space of fieldwork as in Risley's *The People of India*. Moreover, in Gandhi's project, the Phoenix Settlement and Tolstoy farm are established as temporary dwellings which emerge from, instead of against,

movement, travelling and circulation. When Gandhi stops at the house of Lazarus in Newcastle during the long march of the Indian coalminers in South Africa, the house is 'converted . . . into a caravanserai. All sorts and conditions of men would come and go and the premises at all times would present the appearance of an ocean of heads'.¹³² Similarly, earlier when he stops at the Reverend Doke's house in the Transvaal, he again describes how the 'house became a sort of caravanserai'.¹³³ The figure of the home as a caravanserai serves to illustrate how for Gandhi dwelling is an itinerary of travel in an ongoing journey, which serves to underpin movement and circulation in what he calls the 'houseless life'.¹³⁴ Dwelling is not a fixed location which is defined against travel, rather it is framed through travel itself. It both sustains and is secured through mobility. This is illustrated by the way in which Gandhi's experimental dwellings, such as Tolstoy farm and Phoenix farm, tend to be framed within the itineraries and arrangements of travel, whether these are long walks as in the case of Tolstoy Farm where Gandhi devotes a section to the travel arrangements for movement to and from Johannesburg,¹³⁵ or difficult train journeys as when he transports his seriously ill wife from Durban to Phoenix by train and foot.¹³⁶

Scholars have rightly noted the complexity of Gandhi's notion of simplicity.¹³⁷ This notion might also be read as a self-mobilising strategy. For Gandhi, simplicity means paring down his possessions and household expenses, and an important aspect of his autobiography is the progressive simplification of his household. This simplification of his household is partly an attempt to put into practice Ruskin's teaching;¹³⁸ but there is also a pragmatic concern here. Divesting himself of possessions is important to ensure his mobility. Possessions become inconvenient burdens for the frequent traveller. He points out how he had to give up the house he had 'carefully furnished' in Johannesburg when he joins the ambulance corps during the Zulu 'rebellion'.¹³⁹ Clifford has pointed to the entire infrastructure which ensured the comfort and safety of the European traveller.¹⁴⁰ Gandhi's simplicity in travel and his reduction of the infrastructure of his dwellings in travel¹⁴¹ are a pointed contrast to the complex and elaborate infrastructure which secures India for Risley's ethnographic fieldwork, and the general safety of British travellers in the Empire. Travelling lightly for Gandhi becomes an important part of his identity as a 'native' itinerant; and like so much else in Gandhi's texts, the benefits of 'simplicity' are at once 'spiritual', pragmatic and political.

Iqbal and the aesthetics of travel

Thus, the field of self-fashioning in Gandhi's autobiographies can be understood in terms of notions of travel. His travelling identity helps us to reconsider important concepts of his thinking such as 'simplicity' and his stress on cleanliness. A narrative of travel is also key to Iqbal's self-conception in

the *Jāvīd Nāma*, but he deploys a very different kind of travel. It is the poet's journey through the cosmos, with the poet travelling from earth through the various spheres [aflāk] of the planets, which structures the text. The journey is a visionary and imaginary one in an inner realm of the self, rather than a physical one in the external world, but for the poet it is no less 'real' for that. Indeed, one of the key questions in the poem is precisely how to distinguish between the inner and the outer: 'Is this external [bairūn] then internal [andarūn]? What is it?'¹⁴² Moreover, it is through this journey that the poet defines his selfhood. The defining question in the poem is 'Who am I?' [man kīyam?], and it is in part this quest for self-knowledge which motivates Iqbal's visionary journey. The journey is also the poet's attempt to find his station, for as he laments 'I know not where my station [maqām-e khud] is/I know this much, that it is far from friends [yārān judāst]'.¹⁴³ So the poem is also a symbolic attempt to fix the poet's station through self-narration. The figure of the poet is depicted as coming into his own as both a poet and a thinker as he approaches the end of his journey. Here he is acknowledged by other characters in the poem as 'a master of fire and melody [ṣāhib-e sauz va sarūd]',¹⁴⁴ and here his guide disappears, leaving the poet to stand on his own as a figure in his own right.

The centrality of the journey to Iqbal's self-conception is evident in other ways too. In the poem, the poet's name is 'zinda rūd' or 'living stream', and he is described by others as a river in full flow, as when Tipu Sultan compares him to the River Cauvery.¹⁴⁵ These attributes are underlined by the poet himself when he refers to the River Cauvery as 'unceasingly on its journey' [safar] in whose life [jān] he sees a new commotion [shor].¹⁴⁶ These images and comparisons reinforce the sense of the poet as himself on an unceasing journey, enacting his selfhood as he unfolds his poem. Moreover, in the philosophical and poetic world of the poem, perpetual travel is both something to aim for as well as a necessary metaphysical and ontological condition. As one of the characters in the poem, the mystic al-Hallaj, says, 'the paradise of free men [āzādgān] is eternal voyaging [sair-e davām]',¹⁴⁷ while earlier on in the poem, in the sphere of the moon [qamar], the poet equates death with the absence of travelling: 'O traveller [musāfir] the soul [jān] dies by being at rest/it is more alive [zindatar] with perpetual flight [parvāz]!'¹⁴⁸ It is precisely the poet's self and soul that are at stake in his journey, and the central idea of the poem is the notion that the soul or the self is itself a journey. This conception is expressed by the poet, when he urges his reader to make the soul [jān] 'your journey' [seir].¹⁴⁹ In the transfiguring vision which is enacted in the poem, the entire universe is seen to be travelling, so that Tipu Sultan's missive [paighām] to the poet includes the exhortation to see that the highways [jādahā] are themselves like travellers [rahravān] on a journey [safar]. He goes on to say, 'The caravan and the camels and the desert and the palm-trees/whatever you see weeps [nālīd] for the pain of parting [dard-e raḥīl]'.¹⁵⁰ Even the stars, supposedly

fixed [sabitān], have been given the essence [jauhar] of planets, while in one of his lyrics, the poet avers that 'You say that these roses and tulips are permanently rooted [maqīm] here/but they have the attributes [ṣifāt] of travellers [rāh paima] like the waves of the breeze [mauḡ-e nasīm].'¹⁵¹

The vocabulary of travel fills the *Jāwīd Nāma* in other ways, with the poet often using the image of the self as a boat travelling across stormy and dangerous seas to underpin his sense of the dangers of the journey he is making.¹⁵² In the final section of the poem, when face to face with the Presence of Divinity, he speaks of his ecstatic experience in terms of hazarding the skiff of the soul [zauraq-e jān] on a sea of light [baḡr-e nūr].¹⁵³ Moreover, the poem also enacts an aesthetics of travel. Like all autobiographical texts, the *Jāwīd Nāma* is a self-reflexive text; but its self-reflexivity is deepened and reinforced by the way in which it reflects its aesthetic qualities back to the poet himself. The autobiographical journey includes the unfolding of its aesthetic and creative status as a text. Both Schimmel and Mir have pointed to the paradox of Iqbal's style as consisting of simple diction but difficult and subtle meanings.¹⁵⁴ The state of eloquence in the poem is mirrored in the poet's pseudonym of 'living stream'. When Tipu Sultan compares the poet as a living stream to the River Cauvery, he also calls attention to the poet's eloquence: 'In the world you are a 'living stream' and he is a 'living stream'/melody interwoven with melody [sarūd] sounds sweeter [khūshtar]'.¹⁵⁵ This comparison between flowing rivers and eloquence is made elsewhere: 'His speech and comprehension flowed like a river [āb jau]/I was lost in wonder [maḡv-e ḡairat] at his words.'¹⁵⁶ The poem tries to combine the musicality and mellifluousness of poetic eloquence, through the careful control of metre and clarity of diction, with the profundity of philosophical discourse. While doing so, it reflects these qualities back to the poet himself. The poet's pseudonym, then, reflects not only his travelling self, but also his aesthetics of travel, in which the flow of the river signifies the mellifluousness of his verse. This aesthetics of travel is evident, too, in the title of his first collection of Urdu poems in 1923, *Bāḡ-e darā* or 'The caravan bell', which refers to the ringing of the bell to announce the time for the caravan to re-commence its journey. Iqbal's first collection of verse can be seen as the commencement of a journey, and he alludes to this when in the closing verses of his famous poem, 'Shikva' or 'Complaint', he hopes that hearts [dil] may be awakened by the sound of the caravan-bell that is his own poetry.¹⁵⁷

The tying together of a restless self with the aesthetics of travel is also attested to by Iqbal in his English prose work *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* (1934) when he refers to the restless being of man in a 'ceaseless quest' for new avenues of 'self-expression'.¹⁵⁸ This again extends to his notion of selfhood, when, following Henri Bergson, he argues that 'individuality is a matter of degrees'. For Iqbal individuality is an ongoing project of travel rather than a finished achievement.¹⁵⁹

This conception of selfhood is also evident in another important Persian poem by Iqbal. The poem 'Gulshan-e Rāz-e Jadīd' ('The new rose garden', 1927), is structured by nine questions. The fifth question poses the question of selfhood: 'What am I? Tell me what "I"[man] means/What is the meaning of "travel into yourself" [andar khud safar kun]?' In part, the response includes an exhortation to undertake a journey into one's self [safari dar khud kun] in order to see what 'I' is.¹⁶⁰ The response to question seven also reiterates the centrality of travel to the possession of a self, when the poet warns the questioner not to seek the end of the journey, because there is no end point to this journey. For him, the ceaseless journey is immortal life [ḥayāt-e jāvadānī].¹⁶¹

In the ambiguity of the terms 'inner' and 'outer' in Iqbal's poetry, the expansive nature of his subjectivity is figured in terms of an inward landscape which suggests an internal spaciousness. This counters any ethnological sense of the fixed nature of the narrow consciousness of Indians. The *Jāvid Nāma* is eloquent in opening up the relationships between interiority and the outer world, to the extent that the distinction between the inner space of subjectivity, accessed through introspection, and the external world, perceived through the senses, becomes blurred: 'Am I of the skies or are the skies of me?/Either heaven has taken my heart into its breast/Or my heart has seized heaven/Is all this internal or is it external? Which is it?'¹⁶² The spaciousness of the cosmos through which the poet journeys becomes an image of the expansive inwardness which the poet articulates, also represented through images of the sea and ocean, and captured by his guide on his journey, referring to the heart of man as a 'sea without a shore' in which 'All ages and all times are drowned'.¹⁶³ One of the characters captures this view of interiority in the poem referring to the fluctuating waves of thought: 'What is there in man's [ādam] heart but thoughts [afkār]/like waves, this upsurging [sar kushīd] and that fleeing [ramīd]?'¹⁶⁴

It is important to stress not just the willed imaginary quality of nations¹⁶⁵ but also the creative labour of the imagination which goes into the assembling of the self in texts which are simultaneously autobiographical and quasi-nationalist, although, as we shall see, it is the poem's conception of selfhood which problematises the concept of nationality. This shaping power of the imagination is also reflected in the visionary quality of the poem, which forms part of the argument and which I will discuss in more detail later.¹⁶⁶

Iqbal's images of internal spaciousness counter the fixing of consciousness which characterised ethnological views of the inhabitants of India, frozen by caste or religion. He undermines the incarcerating effect which the limiting and homogenising term 'Muslim' might have on any suppositions about the static nature of his consciousness. He grapples with the conflicting and varied traditions within Islamic learning, and displays a cosmopolitan eclecticism as he negotiates the currents of both European and Islamic philosophy. His

work uses questions to open up territories of experience and thought. As we have seen, the 'Gulshan-e Rāz-e Jadīd' is formally structured by nine questions. The *Jāvid Nāma* is full of questions which are never really answered by the other characters in the text. Thus, halfway through the poem, despite the advice and admonishment the poet receives at the hands of others, the poet laments when he reaches the sphere of Venus that he is still ignorant of his station.¹⁶⁷ Similarly, towards the end of the poem, when the poet has arrived beyond the spheres, he asks the voice of Beauty some basic but difficult questions, as to the nature of the 'I' and 'thou' [tu], the distance [dūrī] between the two, and the whereabouts of the world.¹⁶⁸ These questions are similar to those the poem has been posing all along. The interrogative tone of the *Jāvid Nāma*, with its love for open questions and hidden answers, is reinforced by the poet's expression of his own doubts. In the sphere of Venus when the poet laments his loneliness, he contrasts himself to those who are ignorant [be-khabar] of the conflict [razm] between unbelief [kufr] and faith [dīn].¹⁶⁹

The interrogative nature of Iqbal's work is also evident in *The Reconstruction*, whose most striking feature is the contrast between the depth and range of its eclecticism, and its paucity of any clearly articulated conclusions. In Iqbal's work, it is simply not clear what 'Islam' means. This, however, reflects the complex nature of the category itself and its many instantiations. As Aziz al-Azmeh has reminded us, 'there are as many Islams as there are situations that sustain it'.¹⁷⁰ Harris Birkeland is just one of many scholars who have stressed the catholic nature of Islam, its incorporation of multiple sources and the actively constructed nature of what constitutes 'orthodox' Islam, which remains an ongoing process rather than a finished fact.¹⁷¹ Eickelman and Piscatori have rightly stressed that 'it is impossible to say with certainty at any given moment what Islam is,' just as 'it is impossible to specify the contours of Muslim identity'.¹⁷² Iqbal is aware of this in his intellectual history of Islamic thought. Iqbal's main concern in *The Development of Metaphysics in Persia* (1908) is to consider how Persian thinkers grappled with and reworked Islam in different ways. He sees the Ismailia movement as just one example of how the 'intellectually independent Persian waged against the religious and political ideals of Islam', and in his chapter on Sufism, he sees Sufi thought partly as an attempt to re-state Islam.¹⁷³ His own re-working and re-statement of Islam is thus consonant with this history of a succession of Islams. It is also consonant with his stress on interiority. Iqbal's disposition towards philosophical idealism is evident in the way he sees the history of religions in terms of this imposition of inwardness on the external world. According to him, both Islam and Christianity affirm the 'revelation of a new world within', with the difference, in his view, that Islam supplements the 'insight' contained in Christianity with the 'illumination of the new world thus revealed not as something foreign to the world of matter but [something that] permeates it through and through'.¹⁷⁴

Iqbal also conveys a sense of the ongoing nature of questions as motivating intellectual history and lived experience in his preface to *Reconstruction of Religious Thought*, when he stresses that 'there is no such thing as finality in philosophical thinking', and so, as a result, his own lectures can only be provisional.¹⁷⁵ Iqbal begins the *Reconstruction* with another set of problems which he sees as the shared foundational questions of religion, philosophy and what he calls 'higher poetry'. The opening lines of the *Reconstruction* consists of these questions: 'What is the character and general structure of the universe in which we live? Is there a permanent element in the constitution of this universe? How are we related to it? What place do we occupy in it, and what is the kind of conduct that befits the place we occupy?'¹⁷⁶ The interrogative nature of Iqbal's work is further evident in the addition of a final lecture in the second edition of *The Reconstruction*, entitled 'Is religion possible?' Typically, Iqbal does not answer this question. As in the *Jāvid Nāma*, it is the asking of the questions and the processes of answering them which matter, rather than the answers themselves. The defining experience of Iqbal's work is the experience of living the metaphysical and ontological questions he poses, rather than the asking of them at an abstract distance. In this, then, Iqbal counters any assumptions about the ethnologically fixed nature of Indians, or their consciousnesses frozen in categories of religion. Far from being self-complacent, for Iqbal the very nature of selfhood is at stake and has to be constructed through a notion of travel as inwardness.

It is important to distinguish Iqbal's project to articulate selfhood in autobiographical narratives from some key instances of autobiography in the West during the twentieth century, in which autobiography as a textual enterprise unravels as the self it purports to define is shown to be insubstantial. Thus, for Sartre the autobiographical self becomes an elusive absence rather than a substantial presence. His autobiography, rather than a testimony of his self-presence, becomes a declaration of himself as an absence. It mocks the reader's expectations of the genre of autobiography by chronicling the different ways in which the author does not exist: 'I had tried to take refuge from glory and dishonour in the loneliness of my true self; but I had no true self . . .'¹⁷⁷ Instead of the triumphant self-assertion of Descartes' *cogito ergo sum*, the autobiographical self-regard of *Words* is summed up in the starkly negative sentence 'I was not'.¹⁷⁸ For Sartre the act of writing becomes a trick to conjure up a series of selves for the reader.¹⁷⁹ In fact, *Words* becomes an autobiography about the impossibility of autobiography itself: 'I was always in front of or behind the impossible vision which would have revealed me to myself . . .'¹⁸⁰

This reversal of the conventions of autobiography is also evident in the surrealist poet and ethnographer Michel Leiris' *Manhood* (1939). Far from charting his seamless growth from child to mature manliness, Leiris instead charts his 'disintegration' from youth to maturity.¹⁸¹ He openly acknowledges, even celebrates, his inability to attain the manhood of his autobiography's title¹⁸² and he plays with the multiple nature of his impotence and

vulnerability. Like Sartre, he also finds the promise of the conventions of autobiography, namely to present one's self to the public, a chimera: 'Even as I write, the plan I had devised escapes me, and one might say that the more I look into myself the more confused everything I see becomes.'¹⁸³ It is perhaps because of this unravelling of autobiography as a genre in twentieth-century European literature that Paul de Man argues that empirically and theoretically autobiography lends itself poorly to generic definition.¹⁸⁴

The trajectory of South Asian nationalist autobiography in the colonial period is different, and in this Iqbal's *Jāvid Nāma* is representative. For these texts, the project to enact a selfhood is an act of empowerment. Instead of the mock heroic 'I am not', Iqbal's text celebrates the act of manifesting one's self as a separate entity. The day of creation is depicted in these terms: 'Everywhere out of the rapture and yearning [zauq va shauq] for the seizing of selfhood [khud-garī]/arose the cry I am another [dīgaram] and you are yet another [dīgārī]'.¹⁸⁵ However, as we shall see, this project to achieve selfhood does not entail a fully integrated individuality, nor the effortless integration of such an individuality into a collective group identity.

Nehru's adventurous interiority

The title of Nehru's *The Discovery of India* foregrounds his autobiography as a species of travel literature and an exploration narrative. The title alludes to the heroic narratives of exploration which were such an important part of the European imperial archive, but the function of the allusion is to mark his text off from those narratives while at one level identifying with them. Nehru's autobiographical and other texts contain empirical accounts of his travels in Europe, India, Ceylon and the USSR.¹⁸⁶ However, the significance of travel and exploration in Nehru's autobiographical texts extends beyond these passages dedicated to literal travel. It is the composite language of travel, exploration and adventure which binds his texts together as the governing idiom of his autobiographical project. Nehru's comments on and lists of his own reading in travel literature¹⁸⁷ reflect his engagement with travel narratives. They also represent the predilection of one travel writer for the travel writings of others, with the added dimension that for Nehru travel and discovery narratives come to be the governing framework of autobiographical narrative itself.

Like Iqbal, Nehru casts his autobiographical project as a self-conscious interrogation intertwined with his travelling identity. This interrogation breaks with the notion of the 'native' as an unselfconscious insider, with a frozen consciousness, who cannot question himself. Nehru makes it clear that he 'began the task' of his autobiographical venture 'in a mood of self-questioning and, to a large extent, this persisted throughout'.¹⁸⁸ He presents himself as 'addressing myself, framing questions and answering them for my own benefit'.¹⁸⁹ In keeping with this, his autobiographical texts do not

articulate the category of a heroic and integrated form of individuality in the figure of a nationalist leader, but instead evokes a fragile subjectivity. This is especially apparent in his open avowal of doubts, difficulties and confusion. Nehru compares his earlier 'definiteness about my thinking and objectives' with the global events of the past few years in India, China and Europe, 'which have been confusing, upsetting and distressing' so that the 'future has become vague and shadowy and has lost that clearness of outline which it once possessed in my mind'.¹⁹⁰ It is this 'doubt and difficulty about fundamental matters' which precludes any single-minded action.¹⁹¹ These expressions of doubt are in keeping with the interrogative mode of his autobiography which, as we will see, explores a number of fundamental questions which do not lend themselves to clear-cut answers. Nehru's sense of doubt is also evident in the hesitant tone which concludes *The Discovery*, when he confesses that he does not know how to measure the success or failure of his venture,¹⁹² and in the self-questioning epilogue to *An Autobiography*, when he wonders whether he can represent any one at all.¹⁹³ The self-questioning mood of Nehru's autobiographical texts resonates with the governing image of the autobiographical project as an adventure which by its very nature is open-ended, an adventure in which there is 'no resting on the way and no end of the journey'.¹⁹⁴ This adventure seeks out the 'storms of the open sea', as opposed to the 'calm that comes from being safe in the harbour', secured by the 'absence of questioning'.¹⁹⁵

Mary Evans has argued that in some ways, the tradition of autobiography in the West needs to be seen as a project of masculinity, which emphasises autonomy and the completed self.¹⁹⁶ Rather than masking more immediate emotional expressivity, and representing life as a coherent process in which rational choices are made,¹⁹⁷ Nehru uses the genre of autobiography to articulate a self which is rooted in emotions, moods, thoughts and doubts. Alongside the expressions of doubt and confusion, Nehru indicates how he struggles to master his emotions of unhappiness or of exaltation,¹⁹⁸ and how he tries to 'protect myself from too much hurt and hatred and excitement'.¹⁹⁹ There are also expressions of hurt, as for example when he points to the growing gulf between the British and Indians because a 'great deal has happened in recent years that has cut deep into our souls'.²⁰⁰ The overwhelming nature of these experiences is evoked by describing these emotions and thoughts as 'waves' which engulf him,²⁰¹ which suggests not only the powerful nature of his emotional experiences but also how little control he has over them. In this sense, his autobiography cannot always be read in terms of the 'conscious withholding of emotion'.²⁰² The failed attempts to master his emotions bring his emotions even more vividly before his readers, as when he evokes his attempts at self-control in a passage which swings from the first-person pronoun as an active agent trying to cultivate detachment, to an I that is engulfed by the sheer force of its emotional experiences. These experiences are imaged in terms of overwhelming natural forces which

expose the vulnerability of his conscious attempts at rational detachment: 'there is too much of a volcano within me for real detachment. Unexpectedly all my defences are hurled away and all my detachment goes.'²⁰³ In doing so, he reinforces the self-interrogating nature of his autobiography. But he does not posit a completed self which is pitted, ready-made, against colonialism, instead relating how 'I became a battleground, where various forces struggled for mastery.'²⁰⁴ For Nehru, then, while autobiography might be a site of struggle against the ethnographic gaze, the self articulated in autobiography is acknowledged to be a site of struggle too, rather than a coherent whole. In this, though, as we shall see, Nehru is not only writing back to the assumptions of colonial ethnology regarding the fixed nature of the native's interiority, but also countering other nationalist autobiographies whose narratives try to master emotions.

As a questioning autobiographer, like Iqbal, Nehru also formulates fundamental questions about identity formation from a universal point of view, rather than from an Indian perspective alone. He addresses the problem of the twofold aspect of an individual, as part of nature and therefore describable in terms of processes of cause and effect, and as unique moral agent with the capacity to act freely.²⁰⁵ The difficulty of negotiating the relationship between what he calls the 'individual's inner and outer life',²⁰⁶ or the 'parallel streams of an external and an internal life',²⁰⁷ leads to some formulations which clearly register these doubts and difficulties. He describes himself as living under the twofold aspect of an inner consciousness and a moral agent acting in the world, so that 'these two lives marched together, inseparably tied up with one another, and yet apart'.²⁰⁸ The disjunction between his interiority with its world of thoughts, emotions and sensations, and the moral agent who acts in the phenomenal world as an observable entity²⁰⁹ is one which underlies the more specific problem of the relationship between interiority and the external public realm of nationalist politics. But this question of the twofold aspect under which he lives is fundamental to each human individual. In this sense, Nehru's *Autobiography* as a record of both 'important events' and 'external happenings' as well as 'my own thoughts and moods'²¹⁰ becomes a personalised account of a universal predicament which is one of the characteristics of being human.

However, although the question of the relationship between subjectivity and the public realm is secondary to this more fundamental and universal question, clearly the two questions are inseparable. This is because the post-colonial articulation of an identity necessarily involves countering the dehumanising effects of colonialism. If, as Liah Greenfeld suggests, nationalism is fundamentally 'a matter of dignity',²¹¹ then in the case of 'third world' nationalism in particular it is a matter of asserting one's dignity as a human being. Thus autobiography is a profound resource for countering the objectifying gaze of colonialism. As a first-person narrative it affords scope for the articulation of individual subjectivity and for the inception of a voice

which by its presence alone is a powerful counter-agency to the systematic negation of the humanity of the colonised subject. So for Nehru the process of becoming national is inseparable from the construction of human identity from a universal perspective. Framed within an autobiographical adventure narrative, it counters the objectifying ethnographic gaze of travel and exploration literature with regard to the figure of the 'native', in which the 'native' is 'sealed into [a] crushing objecthood'.²¹²

Moreover, Nehru casts the processes of self-questioning in his autobiographical project in terms of travel, so that adventurous travel and subjective interiority are conflated. Nehru describes *An Autobiography* as an 'account of my mental journey',²¹³ and in *The Discovery* he speaks of his autobiographical 'adventures of the mind'.²¹⁴ The inwardness of the journey he undertakes is stressed elsewhere when he argues that while his physical journey in India is important what makes it 'a fascinating journey [is] not so much in just sight-seeing but in its mental aspect . . . The real journey is of course in the mind; without that there is little significance in wandering about physically'.²¹⁵ The journey as a mental process is also invoked as part of the narrative's autobiographical inflection of historiography, when Nehru writes that he 'has not only to go back in time but to travel, in mind if not in body, to various countries of Asia, where India spread out in many ways'.²¹⁶ In casting himself as the adventurous and thoughtful traveller, Nehru also shows how the 'vagrant mind, finding no haven, still wanders about restlessly'.²¹⁷

The dominant language of the Nehruvian autobiographical project is in fact a mental one, in which the processes of thinking and introspection are constructed as forms of travel. This is underlined when Nehru exhorts students to 'move mentally as I want you to move physically occasionally'.²¹⁸ For Nehru, the relationship between mind and body is cast in terms of a travelling identity, but one in which the two might journey independently of each other. This duality of mind and body is just one manifestation of self-division in his narrative, which forestalls any attempt at a heroically integrated individuality. In keeping with the valorisation of the journey as a mental act, Nehru also argues that mental suffering is more acute than physical suffering, so that in his rehumanising of the colonial subject his or her corporeality is almost etherealised.²¹⁹ Nehru's language aims to secure and evoke a depth of interiority from the very start. This is made clear in the preface to the first edition of *An Autobiography*, when he describes his 'attempt . . . to trace, as far as I could, my own mental development, and not to write a survey of recent Indian history. The fact that this account resembles superficially such a survey is apt to mislead the reader and lead him to attach a wider importance to it than it deserves'.²²⁰ The autobiography above all 'gives expression to the conflicts in my mind',²²¹ and throughout the narrative, events are viewed through the prism of interiority. Nehru depicts himself as having 'looked into my own mind . . . and examined its almost involuntary reaction to events',²²² as trying to 'give my moods and thoughts

at the time of each event, to represent as far as I could my feelings on the occasion'.²²³ He also responds to a suggestion to abridge *An Autobiography* so as to increase its 'factual' value, by arguing that its value 'might grow less if the book became more factual with the details and musings left out'.²²⁴

Nehru sometimes juxtaposes the mental dimension of journeying with the external realm of politics to suggest that this realm is a fragile, and even a superficial, one. He describes his extensive travels through India during the election campaign of 1936–1937,²²⁵ and adds, 'But all this while, in a corner of my mind, lay something deeper and more vivid, and elections or the other excitements of the passing day meant little to it. Another and a major excitement had seized me, and I was again on a great voyage of discovery and the land of India and the people of India lay spread out before me'.²²⁶ He sometimes pulls back from the world of politics in order to evoke the depths of interiority, as when he depicts how 'in the midst of [political] activity' he would 'retire into that cloistered chamber of my mind'.²²⁷ He insists that 'the dust and tumble of politics touched me on the surface only', instead the 'real conflict lay within me', not within the public realm of politics. At one point, he explains that he rushed into political action because 'the outer conflict relieved the strain of the inner struggle'.²²⁸ The political sphere becomes a realm of compensation for these mental conflicts, and one which is derivative of the primacy of the inner world of subjectivity rather than its determinant. It is the psychic nature of the benefits of political activism which is stressed first, rather than its political or economic consequences.²²⁹

The mental language of Nehru's autobiographies is especially evident in his deployment of the term 'psychological'. He argues that 'the primary test of the book is psychological'.²³⁰ Elsewhere, he argues that the 'value' of the book lies less in its factual details, and more in its depiction of the 'psychological background of happenings in India'.²³¹ The 'psychological' is extended to refer not to the individual narrator alone but a collection of individuals brought together under the aegis of a political project. In this sense, Nehru's nationalism is clearly grounded in a vision of an individual multifaceted self. His autobiography shows how the idea of collective life might be drawn from that vision. Nehru asserts that he wrote his autobiography 'as an individual about an individual', but with the concomitant 'claim to have represented the mental conflicts of large numbers of others who worked in our freedom movement'.²³² He seeks to generalise his own mental conflict to represent the nationalist movement as a whole. This attempt to transfer an individual psychology on to a collective group identity is also evident when he writes of the need to 'create a mass psychology that would not accept the federation', of the attempt to 'create a psychology of boycotting' Japanese goods and of the necessity to 'train people, psychologically and otherwise, in non-violent direct action'.²³³ In this sense, the term 'psychology' means creating the disposition to act in a certain way. Sometimes the term 'psychological' is given as a reason to undertake a particular course of action in the political

realm, as when Nehru argues that if the Indian National Congress (INC) accepts office, then the result would be 'psychologically' disastrous. The 'psychological aspect is important' because it would be a delusion to think that any real power can be gained through working in the legislature.²³⁴

The readiness to cast political action under the umbrella term 'psychology' in Nehruvian discourse is apparent in other ways, particularly in the casual manner in which political movements are described using a generalised vocabulary of psychology. In *An Autobiography*, the narrator represents 'human convulsions like the great French revolution or the Russian Revolution' as the 'complex, swift and cruel eruptions of human desires, long suppressed'.²³⁵ Gandhi is described as having effected 'a vast psychological revolution'.²³⁶ The subordination of political and economic issues is demonstrated by the way in which Nehru describes Gandhi's ability to make the masses 'think of political and economic issues' as 'an amazing psychological change'.²³⁷ Similarly, although the Act of 1935 and the establishment of Congress governments in the provinces made no 'vital difference' to the colonial structure of government, 'the psychological change was enormous and an electric current seemd [sic.] to run through the countryside'.²³⁸ Loosely deploying the categories of the 'unconscious' and the 'subconscious', Nehru suggests that political processes cannot simply be grasped through ratiocination, nor can they be seen as mere expressions of rational self-interest. He hints at the importance of visceral depths in political processes when he cites with approval a remark of Bernard Shaw's to the effect that a great political movement is not 'consciously led or organised', but is rather the 'unconscious self in mankind [making] its way through the problem'.²³⁹ The representative status of the INC is also grounded by using this psychological language of inner depths, projected onto the category of India itself, so that the INC is a 'historic development of great significance', but the 'urge behind it has come from the sub-conscious self of India herself'.²⁴⁰ Finally, in a striking metaphor in the *Discovery*, he sees Gandhi as having wrought a 'psychological change' in the Indian people, 'almost as if some expert in psycho-analytical methods had probed deep into the patient's past, found out the origins of his complexes, exposed them to his view, and thus rid him of that burden'.²⁴¹

For Nehru, political developments cannot be secured without the requisite reorientation of mental outlook and the internalisation of new modes of thinking and acting. But more than that, it is this which secures political processes within the depths of a re-orientated interiority. Commentators have tended to highlight Nehru's concern with the political and economic consequences of British rule in India.²⁴² But not surprisingly, Nehru's critique of British colonialism also foregrounds the 'psychological'. He points to the limits of the application of force in sustaining British rule in India, and highlights instead what he would call the 'psychological' props of British rule. Thus, when outlining some of the consequences of British rule, in this

case the 'decay of the group system', he argues that this has 'caused deep injury to the Indian masses, even more psychological than economic'.²⁴³ He argues that this 'psychological aspect interests me more than the more aggressive manifestation of British authority in India, for it throws light on much that has happened'.²⁴⁴ Specific changes in the economic and political spheres tend to be measured by their impact on this extended sense of individual subjectivity. Elsewhere, Nehru draws attention to what he calls the 'psychological aspect' of the colonial relationship,²⁴⁵ and he refers to the conflict between England and India as 'psychological' in nature.²⁴⁶ At times Nehru tries to go further than his generalised language of psychology, by suggesting that the psychic wounds of colonialism lie not only in the creation and internalisation of a disabling 'mentality of collaboration',²⁴⁷ but also in the growth of 'complexes and prejudices and phobias [that] grow and darken the mind'.²⁴⁸ Elsewhere, this aspect of colonialism is referred to in a way which again underlies the slippage between individual and group 'psychology' in Nehruvian discourse. In a letter, Nehru opines that 'probably most of us suffer from a number of complexes, national and individual. That was inevitable in a subject country and the abnormal period we have passed through has added to the number and their intensity'.²⁴⁹

The notion of the repressive nature of colonial rule is deepened in Nehruvian discourse by a general notion of 'repression' in a psychological sense. For Nehru, then, autobiography enacts a self-possession which is 'psychologically' liberating. However, it is clear that Nehru is concerned less with technical precision and the accuracy of his language of psychology, and more with how he might deploy this language for the purposes of autobiographical self-empowerment. He holds back from any large-scale and totalising narrative of psychology and psychoanalysis which might yet again render Indians objects open to distant scrutiny.

Robert Fraser has argued that the adventure romance is a rite of passage in which the protagonist's own identity is the real object of the quest,²⁵⁰ and in Nehru's appropriation of the adventurous journey, this quest for identity is clearly entangled with the quest to know India itself. A corollary of the introspection discussed earlier is that India is underpinned by these processes of introspective thought as travel, and even emerges as the product of these processes, rather than as an entity unfolded through physical travel. This is made explicit in the categories of mental activity that Nehru uses in his quest to know India. Nehru's self-representation as a thoughtful traveller is paralleled by an India which is 'enamoured of thinking'.²⁵¹ His own mental conflicts find an echo in 'a conflict in the mind of India'.²⁵² Elsewhere, he writes of the 'psychological conflict' within India between tradition and modernity, which is also a 'conflict of minds'.²⁵³ 'External' differences between Indians (and the very term 'external') are measured against the unity of what he calls 'a mental background' or 'a mental atmosphere', which undermines the persistent nature of these differences.²⁵⁴ In this sense, political unity itself is presented first and foremost as if mental phenomena were

substantial realities. Nehru also endorses Charles Eliot's description of the spread of Indian colonies of settlement in other parts of Asia in the ancient and medieval world as 'the spread of Indian thought' and as 'intellectual conquests'. Even the gradation in ancient Indian society at the time of the Upanishads is described as having 'its mental gradation also'.²⁵⁵

Nehru comes close to privileging the category of India as a mental construct over the empirical observation of its social realities. Referring to his 'great voyage of discovery', he remarks how 'difficult it was for me or for anyone else to grasp the ideas she [India] had embodied'.²⁵⁶ The physical reality of India is treated as the fleshing out of pre-existing ideas, and the embodied nature of corporeality becomes the expression of an idea. Similarly, he also refers to the double aspect of the journey as both physical and mental, when he remarks upon how his journeys in India and 'the background of my reading, gave me an insight into the past. To a somewhat bare intellectual understanding was added an emotional appreciation, and gradually a sense of reality began to creep into my mental picture of India'.²⁵⁷ Here 'the sense of reality' is again the fleshing out of a pre-existing mental construct, rather than its correction or rejection. The privileging of India as a mental construct is also evident in his identification with the philosopher Shankara.²⁵⁸ Like Nehru, Shankara is presented as being on a mission to unify India without erasing its heterogeneity. He 'looked upon the whole of India from Cape Comorin to the Himalayas as his field of action' and he 'strove hard to synthesise the diverse currents that were troubling the mind of India of his day and to build a unity of outlook out of that diversity'.²⁵⁹ As Nehru's precursor, Shankara's self becomes a means for the inward unifying of India, which has its external counterpart in the image of India spread out as a geographical entity. Furthermore, the deployment of Shankara as a precursor also illustrates the simultaneously retrospective and prospective gaze in the autobiography; Nehru looks backwards to the figure of Shankara, retrospectively investing him with a significance in the light of the teleology of his own narrative, while as a figure Shankara looks forward to Nehru himself. This sense of the substantial nature of mental processes is also clear in the way that Nehru's interiority almost achieves a kind of substantial materiality, when he describes his thoughts and feelings as quasi-physical objects: 'If thoughts and emotions leave their traces behind in the physical surroundings, the very air of that cell must be thick with them, and they must cling to every object in that little space'.²⁶⁰

Nehru's valorisation of travel as a mental act counters the reductive incarceration of the 'native' as an unselfconscious insider in his or her pre-given territory. This valorisation also means that for Nehru travel articulates the complex relations and divisions between mind and body, in which the two might not travel together at all. This becomes clear in the prison narrative, which is such an important component of Nehru's autobiographical discourse. Even when the 'native travelee' is incarcerated, the substance

of his interiority means that he may still be travelling, although not in ways immediately apparent to the ethnographic eye. In this, there is some overlap between Nehru and Iqbal, for whom, as we have seen, the act of travel is not made with the body. In *An Autobiography* it becomes clear that planning and visualising journeys is an assertion of 'mental' freedom when imprisoned, because 'that is a joy that no one can deny even in prison'.²⁶¹ Physical incarceration opens up an interiority which is partly manifested in the visualisation of journeys, or what Nehru calls elsewhere a 'mental outing', when, for example, he imagines that he might join the addressee of one of his letters written in jail, 'and wander about with you on the green hill-sides of the Alps, capped with snow'.²⁶² This imagining of travel extends to the vicarious enjoyment of other people's travels,²⁶³ as well as reminiscences of his own travels in the past, sparked off by the travel accounts of others.²⁶⁴ It is also while in jail that he keenly recalls his plans to travel in the 'polar regions and the Himalayan glaciers', and refers to the 'many plans I have made to wander about in Ladakh and Skardo and Baltistan and Central Asia, and pass on to Tibet, to visit Manasarovar and Kailas! But so far my nearest approach to Kailas and Manasarovar is Almora jail – for the pilgrim route passes through Almora and it is a bare three weeks' journey from here to that wonderful lake.'²⁶⁵ The imbrication of jail with journey as a mental act is made clear here by the way in which the prison is relocated as part of an itinerary of travel. The mixture of visualising prospective journeys and remembering past travels (and remembering future plans to travel which were made in the past) captures the complex forward and backward motion of autobiography itself. For Nehru, prison becomes a site of self-articulation which enables him to focus on his own mental resources and to sharpen as well as deepen them as part of his adventure of interiority. Nehru contrasts himself with Indian Liberals in terms of the paradox of prison as a site for the mental freedom of travel: 'we went to gaol and our bodies were locked up in cells, but our minds ranged free . . . But they created mental prisons of their own fashioning, where they went round and round and from which they found no escape.'²⁶⁶ Hence, too, Nehru privileges travel literature over novels, which made 'one feel mentally slack', as his reading in jail.²⁶⁷ Nehru mentions that while he was composing *The Discovery of India* in prison, his 'chief reading' was Plato's *Republic*,²⁶⁸ which he also refers to as 'the only book I have gone back to again and again, to read in small doses'.²⁶⁹ Given the way Plato's *Republic* combines political philosophy with the theory of forms, it is not surprising that alongside Nehru's writing of his autobiography, it should be his chief reading. He also refers to Plato in the context of exploring the general problem of reconciling the phenomenal world with the 'inner' life of the individual.²⁷⁰

In prison, Nehru also uses his creative formative powers to try to simulate physical relocation and bodily states of being. This is clear not just in the mental act of transplanting by travel, but also through the imaginative

recreation of physical locality by contemplating pictorial representations of mountains and glaciers. In *An Autobiography*, he says travel books were always 'welcome' reading in prison, especially those with pictures of 'mountains and glaciers and deserts, for in prison one hungers for wide spaces and seas and mountains. I had some beautiful picture books of Mont Blanc, the Alps, and the Himalayas, and I turned to them often and gazed at the glaciers when the temperature of my cell or barracks was 115 °F or even more.'²⁷¹ The use of travel accounts to simulate sensory states of being once again asserts the dominance of the inner life of the individual.

He even goes so far as to suggest at one point that one of the consequences of his prison experience is the 'feeling that words have little or no meaning and thoughts become much more important'.²⁷² Nehru's overcoming of physical incarceration through travelling as a mentally creative act is especially evident in the genesis of his autobiographical texts. *An Autobiography* was 'written entirely in prison, except for the postscript and certain minor changes, from June 1934 to February 1935'.²⁷³ *The Discovery of India* 'remains as written in prison, with no additions or changes, except for the postscript at the end'.²⁷⁴ Like his prison diaries,²⁷⁵ the Nehruvian autobiographies are jail productions. He finds it difficult to respond to his publisher's request to add a chapter to *An Autobiography*, because 'I wrote my autobiography entirely in prison, cut off from outside activity.' As a result, he could not continue the text since his release, because in prison he 'gradually developed a mood of introspection and some peace of mind', a mood which he can no longer fit into the narrative now that he is out of prison.²⁷⁶ Hence 'Rumours of a jail delivery in October or thereabouts are not welcome. Any such happening will interfere with the writing. There is no chance of my doing it outside prison.'²⁷⁷ There are also other ways in which the autobiographical project calls attention to itself as a prison production. The *Discovery* is dedicated to Nehru's fellow prison inmates,²⁷⁸ and originally *An Autobiography* was conceived of as entitled 'In and Out of Prison'.²⁷⁹

In the end, though, what is important about *An Autobiography* is that it loses the original title of 'In and Out of Prison', in order to become a fully fledged autobiographical text in its own right. The autobiographical enactment of selfhood might have its roots in prison narrative, but it is not confined to it, just as travel as a mental act overcomes Nehru's physical incarceration as prisoner. Nehru creates the space for supplanting the prison narrative by a fully fledged autobiographical text from within prison itself, by arguing that the boundaries between prison and the outside world are porous. He suggests that his time in prison brings him face to face with the colonial state as a disciplinary regime, which leads him to sense the whole of British India like a prison.²⁸⁰ This further leads to the implication that release from prison can be a merely academic affair, since there is 'little freedom' outside jail anyway.²⁸¹ Nehru also comments that 'the more secluded and cut off one is from the larger world outside, the more publicity one's activities get inside the prison'.²⁸² The destabilising of the boundaries of the jail

is also conveyed by the sense that even when Nehru is released, he carries 'the gaol atmosphere' within himself, so that he views the happenings in the world as 'though through a glass darkly, with phantom and unreal figures moving hither and thither'.²⁸³ The continual mapping of the external world and the world of prison on to each other not only destabilises the space of prison, it also reinforces jail as a site of Nehru's self-elaboration because it echoes the language of the autobiography as a whole as it negotiates the relationships between interiority and the outside world. The rapid switches between 'inner' and 'outer', his fluctuating subject position in relation to the world, his moodiness and his oscillation between Olympian detachment and intense involvement are the stuff of his narrative whether inside or outside jail.²⁸⁴ It is in jail that the introspective mode of the autobiographical narrative is formulated, because as Nehru says, 'gaol encourages introspection, and my long years in prison have forced me to look more and more within myself'.²⁸⁵ But typically, this remark is immediately followed by the narrator reflecting upon how frequent and rapid the changes are in the measurement from 'introversion' to 'extroversion'.²⁸⁶ 'Introversion' and 'extroversion', the space of prison and the external world, interiority and the world of public politics are not ready-made and fixed categories in the Nehruvian project, but are instead categories which are negotiated and constructed as part of the enactment of a distinctive selfhood through forms of travel. For Nehru, the world of nationalist politics has to be rooted in the construction of a particular kind of selfhood, elaborated through processes of travel. It is for this reason that the self he represents in his autobiography is not a 'by-product' of the depiction of political events, as argued by Gopal.²⁸⁷ His self-representation and the language of interiority which accompanies it are central to the depiction of those events and his nationalist politics.

Notes

1. Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes. Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), pp. 4–5.
2. Tim Fulford and Carol Bolton (eds), *Travels, Explorations and Empires. Writings from the Era of Imperial Expansion 1770–1835*, 3 vols (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2001), 1: pp. xiii–xiv.
3. Robert Fraser, *Victorian Quest Romance. Stevenson, Haggard, Kipling, and Conan Doyle* (Plymouth: Northcote House Publishers, 1998), p. 2. Patrick Brantlinger, *Rule of Darkness. British Literature and Imperialism, 1830–1914* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1988), p. 35. For specific examples of fiction writers imitating or incorporating the narratives of explorers, and for the popularity of these narratives, see *ibid.*, p. 180, pp. 189–91. For the earlier part of the century, Fulford and Bolton argue that 'travel became the vogue, and popular culture was permanently changed by the stories which readers consumed in huge numbers' (p. xiii, see also p. xviii f.n.).

4. Martin Green, *Dreams of Adventure, Deeds of Empire* (London and Henley: Routledge, 1980), p. 284.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 3, p. 37.
6. Fraser, Chs 3 and 5, Green, Ch. 9, Brantlinger, Chs 6 and 8.
7. Fulford and Bolton, p. xxviii, Green, pp. 269–70.
8. Pratt, Ch. 2.
9. Pratt, p. 23, p. 27, pp. 34–6.
10. Fulford and Bolton, pp. xvii–xviii.
11. Pratt, pp. 33–35; Fulford and Bolton, p. xxv.
12. Brantlinger, pp. 21–3, pp. 186–8; Ann McClintock, *Imperial Leather. Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Context* (New York and London: Routledge, 1995), pp. 38–45, Nicholas Thomas, *Colonialism's Culture. Anthropology, Travel and Government* (Cambridge and Oxford: Polity Press, 1994), pp. 70–96.
13. Thomas, p. 96.
14. Richard Burghart, 'Ethnographers and their local counterparts in India', in Richard Fardon (ed.), *Localizing Strategies. Regional Traditions of Ethnographic Writing* (Edinburgh and Washington: Scottish Academic Press and Smithsonian Institution, 1990), pp. 260–79, p. 260, p. 263.
15. I rely on Habermas' definition of scientism here: "'Scientism" means science's belief in itself: that is, the conviction that we can no longer understand science as one form of possible knowledge, but rather must identify knowledge with science'; see Jurgen Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, translated Jeremy J. Shapiro (London: Heinemann, 1972), p. 4.
16. Thomas, p. 7.
17. Pratt, pp. 63–4.
18. Arjun Appadurai, 'Putting hierarchy in its place', *Cultural Anthropology*, 3, 1 (February 1988), pp. 36–49, p. 37. The emphasis is Appadurai's.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 37.
20. James Clifford, *Routes, Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1997), p. 33.
21. Pratt, p. 7. Pratt coins the term 'travelee' on an analogy with the term 'addressee'. Just as the latter is a person addressed by a narrative, so the former are 'receptors of travel'. *Ibid.*, p. 242.
22. Herbert Risley, *The People of India* (Calcutta: Thacker, Spink, 1908), p. 6.
23. Risley, p. 10, p. 75, p. 76, p. 109, pp. 236–7, p. 252 ff. Risley also reproduces previous reports, such as Ibbetson's report on the 1881 census in Punjab; see Appendix 6, pp. cxxv–cxxxiii.
24. I have taken this term from Derek Gregory, *Geographical Imaginations* (Cambridge and Oxford: Blackwell, 1994), p. 33.
25. For an excellent discussion of this, see Kenneth W. Jones, 'Religious identity and the Indian census', in N. Gerald Barrier (ed.), *The Census in British India. New Perspectives* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1981), pp. 73–99.
26. Clifford, *Routes*, pp. 22–3.
27. Risley, p. 5.
28. Risley, p. 270.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 6.
30. Appadurai, 'Putting hierarchy in its place', p. 37.
31. Donna Haraway, 'Situated knowledges: The science question in feminism and the privilege of partial perspective', in her *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women. The Reinvention of Nature* (London: Free Association Books, 1992), pp. 188–9.

32. Gregory, p. 7.
33. J.E. Alexander, *Shigurf Namah i Velaet, or Excellent Intelligence Concerning Europe; being the travels of Mirza Itesa Modeen, in Great Britain and France. Translated from the original Persian manuscript into Hindostanee, with an English version and notes* (London: Parbury, Allen, 1828), p. vi.
34. Alexander, *Shigurf Namah*, p. 6, p. 9.
35. Alexander, *Shigurf Namah*, p. 5.
36. Mirza I'tisam uddin, *Shigurf nāma man taṣnīf i'tiṣām ud dīn*, OIOC ms. Or. 200; pp. 7 f.1–8 f.2. All translations from the Persian manuscript are my own.
37. Alexander, *Shigurf Namah*, pp. 217–20.
38. Mirza I'tisam uddin, *Shigurf Nāma*, pp. 17 f.1–18 f.2.
39. 'Dar ḥālat amrika ke ānra dunyā'ī nau goyand' (on the condition of America which is called the New World) and 'khaṣuṣiyat mulk amrika' (the features of America) in Mirza I'tisam uddin, *Shigurf Nāma*, pp. 96 f.1–97 f.2, and pp. 97 f.2–99 f.1 respectively.
40. I have taken the term 'planetary consciousness' from Pratt, p. 5.
41. Charles Stewart, *Travels of Mirza Abu Taleb Khan in Asia, Africa, and Europe, during the years 1799, 1800, 1801, and 1803. Written by himself in the Persian Language*, 3 vols (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme and Brown, 1814), Ch. 1 (Dedication).
42. Stewart, *Travels*, p. vii.
43. Mirza Abu Taleb Khan, in Mirza Hasein Ali and Mir Qudrat Ali (eds), *Masīri tālibī yā safar nāma-ye Mīrzā Abū Tālib Khān* (Calcutta: Hindoostanee Press, 1812), pp. 455 ff. All translations from the Persian text are mine.
44. Abu Taleb Khan, pp. 396–8. Stewart includes in his translation an article written by Abu Taleb entitled 'Tract on liberties of Asiatic women, written by Mirza Abu Taleb Khan, during residence in England'. See Stewart, *Travels*, Appendix D, pp. 258–83.
45. I discuss this further below.
46. Abu Taleb Khan, pp. 19–20; see also his expression of ennui and world-weariness while on board the ship, pp. 41–2. For important discussions of the political and economic shifts in eighteenth-century India, see Michael H. Fisher (ed.), *The First Indian Author in English. Dean Mahomed (1759–1851) in India, Ireland, and England* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1996), Ch. 3, Muzaffar Alam, *The Crisis of Empire in Mughal North India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1986), C.A. Bayly, *Rulers, Townsmen and Bazaars. North Indian Society in the Age of British Expansion, 1770–1870* (1983; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).
47. Abu Taleb Khan, *Masīri tālibī*, pp. 64–5.
48. Munshi Mohan Lal, *Journal of a Tour through the Panjab, Afghanistan, Turkistan, Khorasan, and Part of Persia, in Company with Lieut. Burnes and Dr. Gerard* (Calcutta: Baptist Mission Press, 1834), p. iii, where he mentions travelling with Burnes and Gerard 'in the capacity of a Persian Munshi'. See also Alexander Burnes, *Travels into Bokhara; Being the Account of a Journey from India to Cabool, Tartary, and Persia; also, Narrative of a Voyage on the Indus, from the Sea to Lahore, with Presents from the King of Great Britain; performed under the orders of the Supreme Government of India, in the years 1831, 1832, and 1833*, 3 vols (London: John Murray, 1834), 1: p. xi, where Burnes refers to Mohan Lal as his munshi, with knowledge of the conventions of Persian correspondence, 'the forms of which amount to a science in the East'.

49. C.E. Trevelyan, 'Memoir', in Lal (ed.), *Journal of a Tour*, pp. ix–xviii; see p. ix, xiii, xviii. Trevelyan's 'Memoir of Mohan Lal' was re-published as the preface to the second edition of Mohan Lal's *Travels in the Panjab, Afghanistan, and Turkistan, to Balk, Bokhara, and Heart; and a Visit to Great Britain and Germany* (London: W.H.M. Allen, 1846).
50. Trevelyan, 'Memoir', p. xi. I discuss these aspects of Mohan Lal's travels in more detail below.
51. *Ibid.*, p. xi.
52. For another important discussion of Mohan Lal's travelogue, see Michael H. Fisher, *Counterflows to Colonialism. Indian Travellers and Settlers in Britain 1600–1857* (New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2004), pp. 352–64.
53. *Ibid.*, pp. 362–3.
54. Eardley Norton, 'Introduction', in G. Paramaswaran Pillai (ed.), *London and Paris Through Indian Spectacles* (Madras: Vajayanti Press, 1897), pp. ii–iii.
55. Norton, 'Introduction', p. iii.
56. This is discussed in more detail below.
57. Pillai, p. 33, p. 35, p. 44, p. 45.
58. Rey Chow, *Writing Diaspora* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Bloomington University Press, 1993), p. 23.
59. Fisher, *Counterflows*, pp 55–65, p. 102, pp. 150–51, and Ch. 4.
60. Shompa Lahiri, *Indians in Britain. Anglo-Indian Encounters, Race and Identity, 1880–1930* (London: Frank Cass, 2000), Ch. 4, where Lahiri details official policies of surveillance, control and restriction in response to the perceived political and sexual threats posed by Indian students in Britain. See also Antoinette Burton, *At the Heart of the Empire. Indians and the Colonial Encounter in Late-Victorian Britain* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), pp. 54–70 on the number of institutions in the Victorian period concerned with regulating the movements of Indians in Britain and supervising their encounters with Britons.
61. Fisher, *Counterflows*, p. 3, p. 181, pp. 201–13.
62. C.A. Bayly, *Indian Society and the Making of the British Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 142–3; Eugene Irschick, *Dialogue and History: Constructing South India, 1795–1895* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), p. 81, p. 83, p. 93, p. 97, on the entire project to mould a new civic order in which individuals were securely embedded within sedentary society as useful and productive citizens. On how the British campaign against thagi reflected this concern to control peripatetic groups in Indian society, see Radhika Singha, "'Providential' Circumstances: The Thuggee Campaign of the 1830s and Legal Innovation', *Modern Asian Studies*, 27, 1 (1993), pp. 83–146.
63. Burton, p. 39, p. 40, pp. 42–50.
64. *Ibid.*, p. 44.
65. Mirza I'tisam uddin, *Shigurf Nāma*, p. 38, f.1.
66. Nawab Karim Khan, in 'Ibadat Bareilvi (ed.), *Siyāḥet Nāma* (Lahore: Majlis-e Ishā'at Makhtūtāt Idārah-ye adab va tanqīd, 1982), entry for August 1840, p. 126. There is no English translation of this text.
67. A number of Indian travellers also noted on how the physical characteristics of 'colour' made them objects of curiosity. Mirza I'tisam uddin recounts how children would refer to him as a 'black man' [siyāh mard] and how some thought of him as a 'black devil' [dev siyāh tasavvur kardeh] and kept away in terror, so that he was an object both of wonder [ta'ajjub] and fear (*Shigurf Nāma*, p. 38, f. 2). G. Paramaswaran Pillai noted that 'colour is certainly an object of curiosity

- in Great Britain' and went on to recount how 'in the streets of London, I have been stared at; in Edinburgh, little boys and girls running about, have suddenly stopped to look at me; in Dublin, fair women found it impossible to suppress their laughter on seeing me; and in Chester, on the borders of Wales, I have been pointed at as a black man, by fond mothers to their little children' (Pillai, p. 100).
68. I have taken the term 'travelling subject' from Lahiri, *Indians in Britain*, p. 19, Grewal, *Home and Harem*, p. 16.
 69. Rudyard Kipling, *Kim* (1901; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1989), pp. 109–111.
 70. *Ibid.*, p. 105.
 71. *Ibid.*, pp. 75–77.
 72. The scene set in the train is also clearly one of social comedy, see *ibid.*, pp. 75–7.
 73. *Ibid.*, p. 77.
 74. *Ibid.*, p. 76.
 75. *Ibid.*, p. 75.
 76. Sara Suleri, *The Rhetoric of English India* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), pp. 117–118.
 77. *Kim*, p. 207.
 78. *Ibid.*, p. 207.
 79. In Lurgan's shop, the narrator stresses that 'the Hindu child played this game clumsily' (*Ibid.*, p. 207).
 80. *Ibid.*, p. 148, p. 149.
 81. Bart Moore-Gilbert, "'The Bhabha of tongues': reading Kipling, reading Bhabha", in Bart Moore-Gilbert (ed.), *Writing India 1757–1990. The Literature of British India* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), pp. 111–38, p. 122. See *Kim*, p. 166, p. 331.
 82. *Kim*, p. 191.
 83. Suleri, p. 114.
 84. *Kim*, pp. 109–111.
 85. *Ibid.*, p. 68.
 86. Appadurai, 'Putting hierarchy in its place', p. 36.
 87. For this concept of the wandering view point and the reader as a traveller through the text, see Wolfgang Iser, *The Act of Reading. A Theory of Aesthetic Response* (London and Henley: R.K. Paul, 1978), p. 16, p. 118.
 88. For discussions of the connections between spatialities and textualities, see Paul Carter, *The Road to Botany Bay. An Essay in Spatial History* (London and Boston: Faber & Faber, 1987), p. 50, Gregory, pp. 140–1.
 89. *Kim*, p. 273.
 90. McClintock, pp. 27–8.
 91. J.B. Harley, 'Deconstructing the map', in Trevor J. Barnes and James S. Duncan (eds), *Writing Worlds. Discourse, Text and Metaphor in the Representation of Landscape* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), pp. 231–47, p. 245.
 92. Gregory, *Geographical Imaginations*, p. 38, on the world exhibition in Paris in 1889, which included the enormous Villard-Cotard globe, over 40 metres in circumference. For a key discussion of the world as exhibition, see Timothy Mitchell, 'The world-as-exhibition', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 31 (1989), pp. 217–36.
 93. The term is Gregory's, p. 33.
 94. The concept of dwelling in travel is Clifford's, p. 5, p. 36.
 95. For which, see Gregory, p. 172.

96. Carter, p. 67.
97. Thomas, p. 7.
98. Jawaharlal Nehru, *The Discovery of India* (1946; New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 561.
99. M.K. Gandhi, *An Autobiography or the Story of My Experiments with Truth* (1927–1929; London: Penguin, 1982), translated Mahadev Desai, Part 2, Chs 5–6, Ch. 24, Part 3, Chs 1–3, Ch. 23.
100. *Ibid.*, Part 1, Chs 12–13, Ch. 25.
101. *Ibid.*, Part 4, Chs. 37 and 43.
102. For some key episodes in these travels, see *Ibid.*, Part 2, Ch. 8 for Gandhi's account of his train journey from Durban to Pretoria, Part 2, Ch. 20 for the train journey in India which ends in Benares, and Part 2, Ch. 20 for his journey to the Kumbha Mela and the Lakshman Jhula.
103. *Ibid.*, p. 234.
104. *Ibid.*, p. 196.
105. *Ibid.*, p. 279.
106. Elaine Savory: 'Ex/Isle: Separation, memory, and desire in Caribbean women's writing', in Adele S. Newson and Linda Strong-Leek (eds), *Winds of Change. The Transforming Voices of Caribbean Women Writers and Scholars* (New York: Peter Lang, 1998), pp. 169–77; the citation is from pp. 170–71. For the conception of home as the antithesis of travel, see Rosemary Marangoly George, *The Politics of Home. Postcolonial Relocations and Twentieth-century Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 2.
107. M.K. Gandhi, *Satyagraha in South Africa* (1924–1925), in *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi* (New Delhi: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, 1968), 29: p. 29, pp. 30–3, p. 35, pp. 79–80, on the restriction of Indian immigration into Natal, the Transvaal Republic and Cape Colony; Gandhi, *An Autobiography* pp. 236–7, p. 259, on how the requirement for Indians to obtain a permit for entry into the Transvaal was used to hamper their travel within South Africa. See also *Satyagraha in South Africa*, p. 32, p. 76 on laws restricting the ownership of land by Indians to certain locations, and p. 105, on the Asiatic Registration Act of 1907.
108. Gandhi, *Satyagraha in South Africa*, p. 242, p. 247.
109. *Ibid.*, p. 246.
110. Gandhi, *An Autobiography*, pp. 128–30.
111. *Ibid.*, p. 13. See also *Satyagraha in South Africa*, p. 38.
112. *Ibid.*, p. 39. Gandhi refers to the response by the railway authorities to his written communication regarding 'the disabilities about travelling under which Indians laboured', to the effect that first- and second-class tickets were issued to Indians who were 'properly dressed'. It was left to the stationmaster to decide who was 'properly dressed' (*ibid.*, p. 27).
113. *Ibid.*, p. 38.
114. Gandhi, *An Autobiography*, p. 425, p. 364.
115. Gandhi, *Satyagraha in South Africa*, p. 47.
116. Gandhi, *An Autobiography*, p. 150, p. 153; *Satyagraha in South Africa*, p. 22–23. Gandhi makes the point that in his speeches in India he had vociferously attacked the indentured labour system, and especially the plans of the Natal government to impose a tax on them. *Ibid.*, p. 47; see also Gandhi, *An Autobiography*, pp. 152–4, on this poll tax.
117. Gandhi, *An Autobiography*, p. 153.

118. Gandhi, *Satyagraha in South Africa*, p. 84–5, p. 105.
119. *Ibid.*, p. 166.
120. Gertrude Stein, *Everybody's Autobiography* (1937; Cambridge: Exact Change, 1993), p. 23.
121. Gandhi, *Satyagraha in South Africa*, p. 179.
122. *Ibid.*, p. 34.
123. *Ibid.*, p. 47; see also Gandhi, *An Autobiography*, pp. 152–4 on this poll tax.
124. Gandhi, *An Autobiography*, p. 179, *Satyagraha in South Africa*, pp. 47–56.
125. *Ibid.*, pp. 42–3.
126. *Ibid.*, p. 32.
127. Gandhi, *An Autobiography*, pp. 264–5.
128. *Ibid.*, p. 205.
129. *Ibid.*, p. 271. The entire population was moved to a camp 13 miles from Johannesburg, see *An Autobiography*, p. 271–2.
130. Gandhi, *Satyagraha in South Africa*, p. 235, p. 192–3.
131. For a discussion of location in these terms, see Clifford, *Routes*, p. 11.
132. Gandhi, *Satyagraha in South Africa*, p. 230.
133. *Ibid.*, p. 140.
134. *Ibid.*, p. 230.
135. *Ibid.*, pp. 191–2.
136. Gandhi, *An Autobiography*, pp. 296–7.
137. Alter notes that in following his 'principle of simplicity Gandhi often seemed to do very complicated things'; Alter, p. 31. See also Fox, pp. 44–5.
138. Gandhi, *An Autobiography*, pp. 274–5. On the importance of voluntary poverty for Gandhi, see Iyer, p. 35, p. 41, p. 340.
139. Gandhi, *An Autobiography*, p. 196. He also refers to how the 'tendency towards simplicity' began in Durban and then was pursued more carefully in Johannesburg (*ibid.*, p. 284).
140. Clifford, *Routes*, p. 33.
141. Gandhi stresses the 'simplicity' of the settlements at Phoenix and Tolstoy farm; see Gandhi, *An Autobiography*, pp. 275–80, pp. 302–10; *Satyagraha in South Africa*, pp. 186–207. However, the term 'simplicity' can be misleading; simplicity in Gandhi is always a paradoxically careful and elaborate construct.
142. Muhammad Iqbal, *Jāvid Nāma* (1932) in *Kulliyāt-e Fārsī* (Lahore: Sheikh Ghulam & Sons, 1985), 59/5, hereafter JN. 59/5 means page 59, couplet 5 – the page reference here is to the separate pagination of the poem which begins on p. 589. For an English translation, see A.J. Arberry, transl. *Iqbal's Javid Nameh* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1966), 52/965 (that is, p. 52, line 965). The use of the terms 'bairūn' and 'andarūn' stresses the senses of 'outwardness' and 'inwardness'. I have drawn on Arberry's translation when translating Iqbal's Persian poetry, but have modified it wherever I have thought it necessary.
143. JN, 193/7, 88/1. I shall discuss below in more detail the term 'station' as well as Iqbal's notion of selfhood.
144. JN 186/7, Arberry 135/3454.
145. JN 182/9, Arberry 132/3363–4.
146. JN 181/9, Arberry 131/3345–6. In Iqbal's poetic lexicon, the term 'commotion' or 'uproar' signifies, amongst other things, the work of the creative imagination.
147. JN 120/1, Arberry 93/2194.
148. JN 31/11, Arberry 37/486–7. The word 'jān' means life as well as soul.
149. JN 101/7, Arberry 81/1821–2.

150. JN 184/7, Arberry 133/3393–6.
151. JN 103/7, Arberry 82/1874 and JN 83/4, Arberry 70/1529–30. The combination of philosophical vocabulary with poetic imagery and diction is typical of Iqbal's verse as whole. I refer to this in more detail below.
152. For one example, see JN 89/1-5, Arberry 73/1597–1606.
153. JN 189/5, Arberry 136/3506.
154. Annemarie Schimmel, 'Iqbal's Persian Poetry', in Ehsan Yarshater (ed.), *Persian Literature* (Columbia: The Persian Heritage Foundation, State University of New York Press, 1988), p. 425. See also Mustansir Mir's excellent article, 'Wordplay and irony in Iqbal's poetry', *Journal of Islamic Studies* 3: 1 (1992), pp. 72–93.
155. JN 182/9, Arberry 132/3363–4.
156. JN 103/8, Arberry 83/1875–6.
157. *Shikva*, in *Kulliyāt-e Iqbal Urdū* (Lahore: Sheikh Ghulam & Sons, 1973), pp. 163–70, 170/9.
158. Muhammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* (1934; Lahore: Institute of Islamic Culture, 1989), p. 9. This work was first published as six lectures on the reconstruction of religious thought in Islam in 1930 in Lahore. The second edition with the addition of a lecture entitled 'Is religion possible?' was published in 1934 in London.
159. *Reconstruction*, p. 50.
160. 'Gulshan-e Rāz-e Jadīd', in *Kulliyāt-e fārsī*, 160/1, 161/9. This poem begins on p. 535.
161. *Ibid.*, 166/5 and 7.
162. JN 59/3–5, Arberry 53/962–5.
163. JN 68/9–10, Arberry 60/1173–4.
164. JN 91/2, Arberry 1643–4.
165. Geoff Eley and Ronald Grigor Suny (eds), *Becoming National. A reader* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 7.
166. See Ch. 2.
167. JN 88/1.
168. JN 193/7.
169. JN 88/3. I discuss this in more detail in Ch. 8.
170. Aziz al-Azmeh, *Islams and Modernities* (London and New York: Verso, 1993), p. 1.
171. Harris Birkeland, *The Legend of the Opening of Muhammad's Breast* (Oslo: I Kommisjon Hos Jacob Dybwad, 1955), p. 58, p. 60.
172. Dale F. Eickelman and James Piscatori, 'Social theory in the study of Muslim Societies', in Dale F. Eickelman and James Piscatori (eds), *Muslim Travellers. Pilgrimage, Migration, and the Religious Imagination* (London: Routledge, 1990), pp. 3–25, p. 16.
173. Muhammad Iqbal, *The Development of Metaphysics in Persia. A Contribution to the History of Muslim Philosophy* (1907; Lahore: Bazm-1 Iqbal, n.d.), p. 47, p. 82.
174. *Reconstruction*, p. 7.
175. *Ibid.*, p. xxii.
176. *Ibid.*, p. 1.
177. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Words*, translated Irene Clephane (1964; London: Penguin Books, 1967), p. 69.
178. *Ibid.*, p. 58.
179. *Ibid.*, p. 122, pp. 149–50.
180. *Ibid.*, p. 130.

181. Michel Leiris, *Manhood. A Journey from Childhood into the Fierce Order of Virility*, translated Richard Howard (1939, 1946; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), p. 6.
182. *Ibid.*, p. 153.
183. *Ibid.*, p. 83.
184. Paul de Man, 'Autobiography as de-facement', in *The Rhetoric of Romanticism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), pp. 67–81.
185. JN 13/3, Arberry 25/119–20.
186. For Europe (including Britain) see Jawaharlal Nehru, *An Autobiography* (1936; New Delhi: Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund, 1982), pp. 16–20, pp. 147–54, *Discovery*, pp. 39–46; for India see *Discovery*, pp. 63–4; for Ceylon see 'Letter to Krishna Nehru', 22 May 1931, in S. Gopal (ed.), *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru*, 11 vols (New Delhi: Orient Longman, 1972–1978; hereafter SW), 4: pp. 532–25; and for the USSR see 'A foreign policy for India' SW 2: pp. 379–451, which contains a collection of essays and sketches on Soviet Russia, first published in 1928. Accounts of Nehru's visit to the USSR are woven into these sketches, for example, pp. 420–2, see also 'Letter to Vijayalakshmi Pandit', 12 November 1927, SW 2: pp. 372–3.
187. 'To Father', 1 September 1922, SW 1: pp. 332–40, p. 334, 'To Indira Nehru', 26 October 1930, pp. 417–20, pp. 417–18. See also 'To John Gunther' 16 March 1938, SW 8: pp. 867–71, p. 868, where Nehru singles out his interest in travel literature as opposed to fiction.
188. Nehru, *An Autobiography*, p. xv.
189. *Ibid.*, pp. 559–60.
190. Nehru, *Discovery*, p. 25.
191. *Ibid.*, p. 25.
192. *Ibid.*, p. 566.
193. Nehru, *An Autobiography*, p. 596.
194. Nehru, *Discovery*, p. 91.
195. Nehru, *An Autobiography*, p. 374.
196. Mary Evans, *Missing Persons. The Impossibility of Auto/biography* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), p. 83.
197. These are identified as the typifying assumptions of Western autobiography by Evans, *Missing Persons*, p. 83, p. 1.
198. For example, see Nehru, *Discovery*, p. 22, p. 35, p. 37.
199. *Ibid.*, p. 37.
200. *Ibid.*, p. 211. For another expression of personal hurt, see p. 18.
201. *Ibid.*, p. 35, p. 68, where he refers to 'waves of unhappiness' and 'waves of thought and feeling'.
202. Gopal, 1: p. 198.
203. Nehru, *Discovery*, p. 68.
204. *An Autobiography*, p. 207.
205. Nehru, *Discovery*, pp. 558–9, which clearly sets out this problem.
206. *Ibid.*, p. 31.
207. *Ibid.*, p. 81.
208. *Ibid.*, p. 68.
209. *Ibid.*, pp. 22–3, Nehru, *An Autobiography*, pp. 207–8.
210. This is Nehru's characterisation of *An Autobiography*, see 'An Author Replies', 16 June 1936, in SW 7: pp. 139–40.

211. Liah Greenfeld, *Nationalism. Five Roads to Modernity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992), p. 487.
212. Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952; London: Pluto Press, 1986), p. 109.
213. 'To N.C. Kelkar', 6 July 1936, SW 7: pp. 151–2, p. 152.
214. Nehru, *Discovery*, p. 35.
215. 'To Indira Nehru', 29 June 1941, SW 11: pp. 638–40, p. 639.
216. Nehru, *Discovery*, p. 200.
217. *Ibid.*, p. 480.
218. 'The Congress in perspective', Address to Madras Students, 7 October 1936, SW 7: pp. 502–9, p. 503.
219. Nehru, *An Autobiography*, p. 174, where Nehru stresses that it was the 'mental shock' of 'physical injury' at the hands of a policeman which proved fatal for Lala Lajpat Rai, and 'To Betty', 2 December 1940, pp. 508–10, 'Physical risk and suffering are often all petty compared to the troubles and tempests of the mind' (p. 509).
220. Nehru, *An Autobiography*, preface, no pagination.
221. 'To J.C. Wedgewood', 23 April 1941, pp. 577–80, p. 579.
222. Nehru, *Discovery*, p. 495.
223. Nehru, *An Autobiography*, p. 596.
224. 'To Richard J. Walsh', 27 April 1940, SW 11: pp. 388–9, p. 388.
225. For the significance of this campaign, see Gopal, 1: pp. 214–16, Benjamin Zachariah, pp. 86–9.
226. Nehru, *Discovery*, p. 58.
227. *Ibid.*, p. 68.
228. Nehru, *An Autobiography*, p. 208.
229. See 'The futility of terrorism and the nature of the mass movement', 18 January 1934, SW 6: pp. 97–108, p. 108, where Nehru speaks of the peace of mind which comes from participating in 'a mighty cause'.
230. 'An author replies', 16 June 1936, SW 7: pp. 139–43, p. 140.
231. 'To Richard J. Walsh', 27 April 1940, SW 11: pp. 388–89, p. 388.
232. 'An author replies', 16 June 1936, SW 7: pp. 139–43, p. 140.
233. 'The problems of the provincial ministries', Speech at Allahabad, 17 December 1937, SW 8: pp. 370–1, p. 371, 'Indian sympathy for China', SW 8: p. 731, and 'Nonviolence and the state', Confidential note, 25 August 1940, SW 11: pp. 123–6, p. 126.
234. 'Presidential address', Lucknow, 12 April 1936, SW 7: pp. 170–95, pp. 187–8.
235. Nehru, *An Autobiography*, p. 414.
236. Nehru, *Discovery*, p. 364.
237. 'Mahatma Gandhi', 20 January 1936, SW 7: pp. 75–8, p. 76.
238. Nehru, *Discovery*, p. 369.
239. 'To the Maharajah of Patiala', 16 September 1931, SW 5: pp. 37–41, p. 38.
240. 'To Mirza M. Ismail', 4 November 1937, SW 8: pp. 561–5, p. 562.
241. Nehru, *Discovery*, p. 359. See also *Discovery*, p. 508, where in a typically ambiguous fashion the narrator describes opposition to colonial rule as 'conscious or unconscious'.
242. Gopal, 1: p. 101, p. 113.
243. *Ibid.*, p. 522.
244. 'The Presidential address', 12 April 1936, SW 7: pp. 170–95, p. 175.
245. 'To H.N. Spalding', 22 May 1940, SW 11: pp. 41–4, p. 43.

246. 'The parting of the ways', 10 August 1940, SW 11: pp. 101–14, pp. 101–2. This kind of language is also used when explaining why the British in India were 'mentally unfitted' to deal with the consequences of the Japanese advances in Burma and Malaya during the Second World War (*Discovery*, p. 450).
247. Nehru, *Discovery*, pp. 469–70. See also how Nehru refers variously to 'the mentality of subservience to England', 'a psychology of subservience' and 'mental slavery'; see 'India and the need for international contacts', 13 May 1928, SW 3: pp. 379–86, p. 382, 'Before India is reborn', June 1936, SW 7: pp. 631–42, p. 640, and 'The Indian states and the congress', 19 September 1937, SW 8: pp. 533–36, p. 533. In this last passage, he also opines that 'besides material harm, the greatest danger done by British rule in India is spiritual', p. 533.
248. Nehru, *Discovery*, pp. 508–9.
249. 'To Agatha Harrison', 25 September 1935, SW 7: pp. 25–30, p. 29.
250. Fraser, p. 26.
251. Nehru, *Discovery*, p. 141.
252. *Ibid.*, p. 314.
253. 'The cultivation of a scientific outlook', 3 January 1939, SW 9: pp. 613–17, p. 615.
254. 'The unity of India', 8 October 1937, SW 8: pp. 620–31, p. 624, and 'Federation', 27 May 1939, SW 9: pp. 665–71, p. 666.
255. Nehru, *Discovery*, p. 200, p. 94.
256. *Ibid.*, pp. 58–9.
257. *Ibid.*, p. 51.
258. Shankara, c. 700–c. 750, philosopher and theologian, who was a famous exponent of the Advaita Vedanta school of philosophy, from whose doctrines the main currents of modern Hindu thought are derived. Shankara wrote commentaries on the Brahma-Sutra and the principal Upanishads, affirming his belief in one eternal unchanging reality and the illusion of plurality and differentiation.
259. Nehru, *Discovery*, p. 190.
260. Nehru, *An Autobiography*, p. 353. The reference is to his prison cell at Dehra Dun Jail. I discuss Nehru's autobiography as prison narrative in Ch. 3. See also Nehru's prison diary, SW 5: p. 481, where he describes his cell as a 'thought-infested place'.
261. Nehru, *An Autobiography*, p. 38.
262. 'Letter to Indira Nehru', 21 June 1935, SW 6: pp. 374–81, p. 380. See also an earlier letter, 'To Father', 1 September 1922, written in the District Jail in Lucknow, SW 1: pp. 332–40, p. 334, on paying a visit, 'by thought and fancy, if not otherwise, to the glaciers and bleak mountain ranges of our homelands, to breathe the fine crystal-clear air again, to march along the high valleys of Ladakh, and see the glaciers creeping upto them, to rouse the snow leopard from his den or meet the lordly brown bear'.
263. 'Letter to Indira Nehru', 5 July 1935, SW 6: pp. 385–92, pp. 387–8, p. 389.
264. 'Letter to Indira Nehru', 7 June 1935, SW 6: pp. 367–71, pp. 367–8, also 'Letter to Indira Nehru', 21 June 1935, SW 6: pp. 374–81, p. 375.
265. 'Letter to Indira Nehru', 30 August 1935, SW 6: pp. 411–16, pp. 414–15.
266. Nehru, *An Autobiography*, pp. 392–3.
267. *Ibid.*, p. 352. See also other references to specific travel books in 'To Father', 1 September 1922, SW 1: pp. 332–40, p. 334, 'To Indira Nehru', 26 October 1930, SW 4: pp. 417–20, p. 417, and 'To John Gunther', 16 March 1938, SW 8:

- pp. 867–71, p. 868, on how ‘old books of travel or modern books dealing with out-of-the-way places – deserts, polar regions, jungles’ interest him.
268. Prison Diary, entry for 26 October 1941, SW 11: p. 714.
 269. ‘Letter to Padmaja Naidu’, 4 November 1941, SW 11: pp. 721–3, p. 722.
 270. Nehru, *Discovery*, p. 559.
 271. Nehru, *An Autobiography*, p. 352.
 272. ‘Reply to the address of welcome at London’, 31 October 1935, SW 7: pp. 30–1, p. 30.
 273. Nehru, Preface to the First Edition, *An Autobiography*.
 274. Nehru, *Discovery*, p. 10.
 275. Prison Diary, entry for 14 November 1940, SW 11: pp. 493–6, p. 493, ‘My diaries are entirely jail productions, and now that I am back in jail again, I pick up the old habit.’
 276. Nehru, *An Autobiography*, p. 599.
 277. Prison Diary, entry for 4 September 1941, SW 11: pp. 691–2, p. 691. See also entry for 24 November 1941, SW: pp. 745–6, p. 745.
 278. ‘To my colleagues and co-prisoners in the Ahmदनagar Fort Prison Camp from 9 August 1942 to 28 March 1945.’
 279. See Prison Diary, entry for 4 June 1934, SW 6: p. 256, entry for 6 February 1935, SW 6: 319, entry for 14 February 1935, SW 6: 320, entry for 10 March 1935, SW 6: pp. 329–30, p. 330, where *An Autobiography* is referred to as ‘In and Out of Prison’.
 280. Nehru, *An Autobiography*, p. 79, p. 90, and esp. pp. 224–5. See also Prison Diary, entry for 23 April 1930, SW 4: p. 325, ‘In the vast prison of India’, 6 February 1936, SW 7: p. 113, and ‘Before India is reborn’, June 1936, SW 7: pp. 631–42, p. 637, on Pax Britannica as a cage or prison.
 281. Nehru, *An Autobiography*, p. 231. See also ‘To Indira Nehru’, 21 April 1931, SW 4: pp. 518–20, p. 520, and especially ‘To Desmond Young’, 1 September 1933, SW 5: pp. 514–15, p. 515: ‘But the “freedom” that one gets outside prison does not deserve that name and personally I find it most distressing and suffocating. There are so many inhibitions, restrictions, and prohibitions, so many things we may not do, so many things we must do or suffer the consequences of our disobedience.’
 282. ‘To Nan’, 4 October 1932, SW 5: pp. 413–17, p. 413.
 283. ‘To Agatha Harrison’, 25 September 1935, SW 7: pp. 25–30, p. 26.
 284. See Nehru, *An Autobiography*, p. 354, for one typical expression of this while in prison.
 285. *Ibid.*, p. 571.
 286. *Ibid.*, p. 572.
 287. Gopal, 1: p. 197.

2

Nationalism's Travelling Autobiographies and Indian Travelogues

While Gandhi, Nehru and Iqbal are writing back to some of the grounding assumptions in colonial ethnography, colonialism itself is not conceived of as a unitary totality in their works. We shall see how Gandhi's autobiography contains a traveller's knowledge of the British Empire as a polycentric entity, rather than a monolithic institution with its centre in London. Nehru's open avowal in his autobiographies of his anglicisation also undercuts any such notion of colonialism in his works.¹ Moreover, they assert their intellectual freedom as readers by appropriating European texts for their own purposes, rather than rejecting the West and its intellectual products wholesale. More importantly, though, their travelling autobiographies need to be read in terms of their continuities with and discontinuities from preceding Indian travelogues, and not in relation to a colonial archive alone.

In their fusion of travel and autobiography, nationalism's travelling autobiographies represent a distinctive development of preceding narratives by Indian travellers. There are some crucial differences in the interplay between autobiography and travel in these preceding texts and those by Gandhi, Nehru and Iqbal. The majority of these texts draw attention to themselves as travelogues in formal terms. This is clear in their titles, but it is evident in other ways too. For example, Mohan Lal's texts are exclusively structured under headings giving the dates of travel, the distance covered for each period of time, the places of departure and arrival, the places of sojourn, persons met, sights seen and notable incidents. Like many of the other travelogues considered here, he calls attention to his texts as formal documents of travel.² The meticulous detail of travel also structures Karim Khan's *Siyāḥet Nāma*, where there is less a connected narrative of travel and more a series of entries in a diary of travel.³ This kind of detail and structure, characteristic of travelogues in general, is absent from the travelling autobiographies of Gandhi, Nehru and Iqbal.

Moreover, in late-eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Indian travelogues, autobiographical detail tends to be incidental to the narrative of travel rather

than fused with or elaborated through it, thereby demonstrating the dominance of travel as an empirical narrative over the interiority of the traveller and other possible trajectories of his life before and after his travels. Mirza I'tisam uddin relates those incidents of his life which are relevant to his departure for England alone.⁴ Similarly, Yusuf Khan begins with a brief account of himself, primarily to explain his departure for England,⁵ while Dean Mahomed's initial autobiographical details are used to explain his departure from India.⁶ The narratives of Malabari, Pandian and Pillai are structured around their departures from and returns to India, focussing almost entirely on the empirical details of their travels.⁷ In their texts, autobiography is less the self-conscious presentation of a travelling self and more a fragmentary narrative. This is in contrast to nationalism's travelling autobiographies, where the interplay between autobiography and travelogue is foregrounded more explicitly and formally. In addition to the details of travel in the life narratives of Nehru and Gandhi, the title of Nehru's first life story, *An Autobiography*, and its continuation as a separate volume under the title *The Discovery of India* points to how the genres of autobiography and travelogue are utilised by him in his autobiographical project. Similarly, Gandhi's title also explicitly refers to autobiography, but in it he also mentions another text, *Satyagraha in South Africa*, in such a way as to suggest that it is part of his autobiographical project as well.⁸ The subsuming of travelogue under the aegis of an autobiographical project is evident in the way that personhood is a self-conscious and explicit concern for Gandhi, Nehru and Iqbal, a dimension which is missing in preceding travelogues. In Gandhi's *An Autobiography*, the noun 'self' frequently appears in hyphenated form. These include 'self-control' and 'self-restraint',⁹ as well as variants such as 'self-help',¹⁰ 'self-reliance',¹¹ 'self-possessed',¹² 'self-respect',¹³ 'self-realisation',¹⁴ 'self-sacrifice',¹⁵ 'self-purification',¹⁶ 'self-taught',¹⁷ and 'self-examination'.¹⁸ These hyphenated forms are indicative of his focus on selfhood and his tendency to hyphenate 'self' with other nouns of ethical import articulates a sense of urgent agency.

Iqbal's journey

We have already seen how Nehru's travelling autobiography is a questioning and self-interrogating text. In this he also breaks from preceding travelogues, in which Indian travellers tend to respond to the questions asked of them by powerful others, rather than questioning themselves. This is the case with Mirza I'tisam uddin, who has to respond to hostile questions regarding his religious identity from his patron, Captain Swinton.¹⁹ Yusuf Khan gives a detailed account of his conversation with two Christian priests in London, in which he defends both Hinduism and Islam against their aggressive questions.²⁰ Similarly, as mentioned previously, Sayyid Ahmad Khan has

to define his beliefs and identities in response to the antagonistic questions of a European fellow passenger.²¹ There is also a relative absence of self-questioning in the texts of later travellers such as Pillai, Pandian and Malabari. In part, this is because, as we shall see, they tend to internalise a narrative of progressive modernity, in which India's place and so their own individuality are supposedly fixed. While Nehru's readiness to interrogate himself therefore counters the notion of Indians as unselfconscious insiders, it also breaks with the general lack of self-reflexive questioning in preceding Indian travelogues. In the case of Iqbal, not only is the poet's self-development and the nature of selfhood the subject matter of the *Jāvid Nāma*, the poet interrogates others in the course of that self-development. Each figure he meets in his journey is explicitly questioned by him. This marks a decided shift from preceding travelogues in which Indians tend to be the interrogated rather than the interrogators. Furthermore, it is through this questioning of others that he develops his own philosophical and religious views, which are in contrast to the ready-made labels of 'Muslim', 'Christian', 'Hindu' or 'Parsi', which Indian travelogues of the nineteenth century tend to fall back on in response to their interrogation by others. In Iqbal's case, the development of his views is self-driven and self-generated, rather than a reactive response.

Iqbal's *Jāvid Nāma* stands in a complex relationship to Urdu and Persian travelogues by Indians in the nineteenth century. Many of these travelogues contain accounts of social, political and economic institutions, particularly those of Britain. Mirza Abu Taleb Khan's is the most detailed in this respect, containing as it does meticulous descriptions of the British army and navy,²² relations between social classes,²³ parliament,²⁴ the position of the Church of England in British society and its hierarchy²⁵ and Britain's judicial system.²⁶ As Bernard Lewis points out, Abu Taleb Khan's travelogue was the first by a Muslim traveller to attempt a description of European institutions of political representation.²⁷ Karim Khan also provides an account of the British Parliament and the British political system, although in less detail than Abu Taleb Khan.²⁸ He does, however, include a full account of the workings and structure of the East India Company in London.²⁹ As Schimmel has stressed, Iqbal's *Jāvid Nāma* addresses political and social issues,³⁰ although it is less concerned with the details of empirical description and more with abstract reflections on these issues. In particular, as we shall see, Iqbal focuses on the significance of the concept of nationalism. The *Jāvid Nāma*, then, does share some of the preoccupations with social and political issues which are addressed by Urdu and Persian travelogues of the nineteenth century. But for Iqbal, engaging with social and political issues in the external realm goes hand in hand with the progressive inwardness of a subjective interiority, which is itself fashioned as a form of travel. The focus on interiority as securing social and political processes in the external realm is also stressed in *Reconstruction*, where Iqbal refers to the impact of the destruction of

Baghdad in the thirteenth century on the Islamic world. He argues that in order to prevent the disintegration of the social order, the ulema 'focused all their efforts on the one point of preserving a uniform social life for the people by a jealous exclusion of all innovations in the law of Shari'at as expounded by the early doctors of Islam'. The problem with this, though, was that 'in an over-organized society the individual is altogether crushed out of existence'. For Iqbal, the only way to counter the decline of 'a people' is to recover the category of the individual, or what he calls, in an evocative phrase, 'self-concentrated individuals'.³¹ It is precisely the interiority of a 'self-concentrated' individual, enacted as a travel narrative, which he constructs in his work.

While there are many references in the poem to an empirical geography in the *Jāvid Nāma*, this is enfolded in the imaginary geography of the poet's ascent through the spheres. Moreover, as we have seen, the journey is not a bodily one but an imaginative act of introspection as the poet travels into himself. This represents an obvious break from preceding travelogues. The progressive interiorisation which the *Jāvid Nāma* represents in relation to preceding travelogues is evident in other ways too. Two of the nineteenth-century Persian/Urdu travelogues refer to dangerous storms at sea. Mirza Abu Taleb Khan has a compelling description of his experience of a storm at sea, in which he cites a verse by the Persian poet Hafez,³² translated by Charles Stewart as 'Dark is the night, and dreadful the noise of the waves and whirlpool/Little do they know of our situation, who are travelling merrily on the shore.'³³ In his entry for 11 May 1840, Karim Khan also describes a storm at sea, at the end of which he also cites the same verses of Hafez.³⁴ By the late nineteenth century, however, the literary image of the storm at sea was used effectively by the poet Altaf Husain Hali in his epic Urdu poem *Musaddas: Madd-o jazr-e islām* ('On the flow and ebb of Islam', 1879), in which, as the title of the poem suggests, the ebb and flow of tides was used as the governing image of the historical fluctuations of Islam. Hali also used the simile of the boat in danger to represent the fragile and vulnerable condition of contemporary Islam.³⁵ As we have seen, in Iqbal's *Jāvid Nāma*, the sea and ocean come to represent a spacious interiority, and the stormy sea is internalised as an image for a tempestuous and travelling selfhood: 'I am the sea [baḥr-am]; in me lack of tumult [āshobi] is a fault/Where is he who can plunge into my depths [qa'r]?'³⁶ In part, then, the interiorisation of travel in the *Jāvid Nāma* is evident in Iqbal's use of images of the sea and ocean to represent the inwardness of selfhood, in contrast to earlier travelogues in which stormy seas represent one of the obvious hazards of sea voyages.

The interiorisation of travel in Iqbal is also evident in his use of the framework of the *mi'rāj* for his adventure in interiority. Muslim travellers have used specific and complex concepts of travel as ways to understand their own journeys, but these all refer to 'travel' in the physical sense of the word, and

are grounded in the external realm. Piscatori and Eickelman have outlined four categories of journey in an Islamic lexicon of travel. These include *ḥajj* (pilgrimage), *hijra* (emigration), *riḥla* (travel for learning) and *zīyāret* (visits to shrines). While these may involve spiritual or temporal movement, they are rooted in physical travel.³⁷ They also point out that other forms of travel unrecognised in doctrine can have equal or even greater significance. Muslims have often mixed travel for trade purposes with religiously motivated travel, while travel is obviously informed by the social, cultural and political contexts in which Muslims are located.³⁸ This mixture is clear in Mirza Abu Taleb Khan's travelogue, which contains accounts of *zīyāret* in the Middle East alongside his account of his travels to Europe.³⁹ Moreover, scholars have also stressed the historically shifting nature of these categories of travel.⁴⁰ Some of these categories of travel also had subcategories within specific cultural milieus, as in the case of North African Muslims from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries, for whom there were three types of *riḥla*.⁴¹

Iqbal's travelling autobiography incorporates some elements of these categories of travel. For example, the desire for learning partly propels his travels. However, the *Jāwīd Nāma* represents a distinctive (and even an audacious) break from these traditions of travel by utilising as its framework the *mi'rāj*, or the narrative of the prophet Muhammad's ascension through the Heavens, as referred to in the Qur'ān Chapter 81: 19–25, and 53: 1–21.⁴² There have been and continue to be many interpretations of these verses,⁴³ involving the controversial question as to whether the journey was made in a bodily sense or in spirit alone. There is no straightforward divide between 'orthodox' and mystical responses to this question, since while many mystics favoured an allegorical interpretation of the ascension, as symbolising the rise of the soul from the bonds of sensuality to the heights of mystical knowledge,⁴⁴ other mystics have seen the journey as a bodily one.⁴⁵ But mystics have seen the *mi'rāj*, whether physical or not, as a model of a certain kind of ecstatic state, and a paradigm for a specific type of spiritual experience,⁴⁶ while modernists who have favoured a rationalist interpretation of Islam have tended towards seeing the *mi'rāj* as a vision.⁴⁷

So not only does Iqbal break with previous travelogues in Urdu and Persian with his internal account of travel, he uses a narrative framework for this travel which is the subject of a wide range of interpretations and accounts, which has also inspired a comprehensive literature, as well as representations in pictorial art.⁴⁸ Iqbal's sense of the evolving nature of Islam is reflected, therefore, in the choice of this already contested framework as well as his re-working of it. In particular, as we shall see, it resonates with his own reinterpretation of and engagement with the mystical dimensions of Islam. In choosing the narrative framework of the *mi'rāj*, Iqbal reinforces his sense of the inwardness of travel and its grounding of selfhood. While Piscatori and Eickelman have stressed how 'travel of several kinds is . . . significant

for Muslim self-expression', for Iqbal the self that is being articulated is constructed through a highly specific form of travel, rather than being expressed through it alone.

There are other ways in which Iqbal's travelling texts represent a distinctive development of preceding Urdu and Persian travelogues from South Asia. A number of these travelogues refer to the archives and libraries which their authors visit in Europe, primarily in Britain and France. These descriptions are redolent of the increasing power of Europe in its age of imperial expansion or, more precisely, of the 'textuality of empire' as Elleke Boehmer has called it.⁴⁹ I have noted elsewhere that colonial officials in nineteenth-century India sometimes associated the power and prestige of the British state with its archives of printed documents and books.⁵⁰ This illuminates not just the central role of information gathering and analysis in the maintenance of British rule, but also the way in which officials distinguished the colonial state's archive of information from the archives of its predecessors in the subcontinent.⁵¹

Mirza Abu Taleb Khan pays particular attention to libraries, both noting the extent of the collections in these libraries and focussing in particular on the Persian and Arabic parts of the collections. In the case of the Trinity College library [kitābhāna] in Dublin he refers to 40 000 volumes on all disciplines [āz anvā'alūm], and points to manuscripts of Nizami's poems, and the *Shāh Nāma*.⁵² Similarly, he describes the 10 000 Persian and Arabic books on Islamic knowledge ['ulūm-e islāmī] in the Bodleian library, Oxford,⁵³ and refers to the Persian manuscripts in the King's Library, London. Here he singles out a copy of the *Shāhjahān Nāma*, whose process of acquisition he describes. After the unrest [fitrat] at Delhi, it fell into the hands of Asif ud Daula, who then gave it to Sir John Shore, who in turn presented it as a gift [nazr] to the King of England.⁵⁴ The transfer of the Memoirs of a famous emperor of the Mughal empire at the point of the decline of its capital into the monarch's library in London resonates with the supplanting of one empire by another, and the shift of power from Delhi to London. In his epic poem on the 'Flow and Ebb of Islam', Altaf Husain Hali also articulates how the travelling of texts from one continent to another parallels shifts in political and cultural power. In one verse he refers to how 'archives [daftar] of Egypt and Greece' were loaded on camels and brought to the precincts of the Abbasid Caliphate, while the decline of Islam is in part suggested in the verse following this, when he describes how these texts [navishton] now adorn [muzayyan] the libraries of Paris, London and Rome.⁵⁵ This suggestion of the migration of texts is touched upon earlier with a brief picture of the state of India and Persia in the period which saw the rise of Islam. Here the 'tent [ḍera] of knowledge and skill' had been loaded up and taken away, before the arrival of Islam resurrected it.⁵⁶ The *Musaddas* is acutely aware of what political and imperial power can command in archival terms.

Later travelogues written in English also convey a sense of the authors' awe at the size of archives in Britain. Pandian refers to the library of King's College, Cambridge, which contains 'over 400 000 volumes and 3000 rare MSS. This library is considered next to that of the British Museum and the Bodleian in respect to size and educational value.'⁵⁷ Yusuf Khan describes the King's library [kitābhāna shāh] in London, referring to its global collection of books in Arabic, Persian, Greek, Syriac and English, as of such a size that from afar it appeared to be like a mountain [pahār]. On a second visit he refers again to its collection [dher] of books on every branch of knowledge ['ilm] and in every language [zabān].⁵⁸ Here, though, he puns on the verb 'seir karna' which means both to travel and to read, when he says that if one were to read/travel through this collection day and night, one would not reach its extremities [nihāyet].⁵⁹

The *Jāvīd Nāma* emerges from this conflation of travel and reading. But Iqbal is concerned less with reading texts and more with questioning the authors of those texts themselves. He personifies and personalises texts by representing them in terms of their authors with whom he can either have a dialogue in a face-to-face encounter, or whose views he represents and mobilises on his own ascent through the spheres. He depicts the vision [rūyā-ye] of Tolstoy, described as a sage [ḥakīm], in the sphere of the moon. Here the poet presents himself as a participant in the encounter and dialogue between Tolstoy and a woman who identifies herself in response to the poet's questions as 'Ifrangīn' ['the European']. In this scene, Iqbal presents Tolstoy as the exponent of true Christianity and a critic of contemporary European life who calls attention to Europe's betrayal of the love of Christ.⁶⁰ The high regard Iqbal has for Nietzsche is clear in the poet's placing him beyond the spheres, which is presented as Nietzsche's station [maqām]. Here the poet sees 'a man with a voice full of agony' [sadā-ye dardmand]. The poet's guide, the great Persian poet Rumi,⁶¹ identifies this figure as Nietzsche,⁶² and proceeds to outline his significance and importance in terms of the visionary ascent in the poem itself. Alongside these European writers and thinkers in the *Jāvīd Nāma*, the poet also has extended dialogues with the Urdu poet Ghalib⁶³ and the mystic al-Hallaj in the sphere of Jupiter.⁶⁴

In Persian and Urdu travelogues of the nineteenth century, the archives and libraries of Europe are among many other powerful sights. In Iqbal's work, however, the archive is transformed by the poet's creative imagination into either authors he engages with in dialogue, or those he passes on his ascension with his guide. In doing so, Iqbal calls attention to his own creative powers of reading, summoning these authors and bringing them to life as figures he engages with. The imaginative style of his reading and his creative appropriation of texts is also evident in the eclecticism of *The Reconstruction*, as we shall see. In keeping with the internal geography of subjectivity in the poem, this style of reading exemplifies one of the strategies of a 'self-concentrated' individual who in part fashions his or her own interiority

through the selective appropriation of texts. In this imaginary geography, the 'West' is not just a place in an empirical geography, but also one strategic location for articulating subjectivity, a reading space for the appropriation of selected texts in the project of selfhood and an interlocutor in a cross-cultural dialogue. It becomes a textual and archival territory in which reading, thinking and travelling are conflated.

Iqbal's *Jāvid Nāma*, and his work in general, represents a distinctive development of preceding travelogues in a variety of other ways. Persian and Urdu travelogues of the nineteenth century either express an inability to distinguish between appearance and reality, or raise the issue of the relationship between the two. Mirza Abu Taleb Khan details his visit to an exhibition, in which he describes seeing a panoramic representation of a sea battle between the English and the French at Gibraltar. He describes how the lighting makes the picture so realistic that it is like witnessing a real scene.⁶⁵ He also wonders at how, in their masquerades, the English are able to represent either foreigners or the working classes so well that their imitations [naql] are as excellent as the originals [aṣl].⁶⁶ The words 'aṣl' and 'naql' have important connotations in this regard, since 'aṣl' means not only an original, but also origin, principle and essence, so that it is a term laden with significant senses of what constitutes reality. During his visit to the Tower of London, Yusuf Khan uses the word 'aṣl' in a similar context, when he tells his readers that an equestrian statue was no different at all from its original. He goes on to describe how he mistook a portrait [shibh] of Queen Victoria for the real thing [aṣl], arguing that this would be a common mistake, for any viewer would perceive this portrait to be alive [zinda].⁶⁷ He also expresses an inability to distinguish between a copy [naql] and an original [aṣl], when he visits Madame Tussaud's.⁶⁸ There are other instances of this expression of confusion in the text.⁶⁹ Elsewhere, he uses the language of dreams [khvāb] and enchantments [tilsim] to describe his confused sense of reality.⁷⁰ Karim Khan uses similar vocabulary when he describes seeing a model of the Taj Mahal at 209 Regent's Street, London, which is so well executed that as far as the author is concerned, the makers of the model had rendered the imitative model [naql] into an original [aṣl]. The image [naqsh] becomes the walls of the building [dīvār] itself.⁷¹

In Indian travelogues, then, there is a shifting vocabulary of appearance and reality, mimesis and original, which is indicative of the disorienting effect travelling has on these authors' sense of reality. In Iqbal, however, this becomes a metaphysical question, not one raised in relation to specific sights seen or experiences undergone in bodily travels alone. There are a number of aspects to this, which I will discuss in more detail in Chapter 8. Here, though, we can note again the way in which the *Jāvid Nāma* is structured around key questions about selfhood and its relation to reality. We have seen earlier how the poet raises questions about what constitutes the internal and the external. This clearly raises the question as to the nature of selfhood and

whether or not the self shapes the reality it perceives and interacts with. This question is also pursued in his *Metaphysics in Persia*. Here Iqbal considers the impact of Plato and Aristotle on Persian metaphysics, and argues that the 'interpreting intellect' aims to internalise the external.⁷² This question is addressed in the *Reconstruction of Religious Thought*, where Iqbal explores the relationship between the self (or 'ego') as he calls it, and its environment, and also the relationship between mind and matter. He tends to incline towards the position that the 'hypothesis of matter as an independent existence is perfectly gratuitous'.⁷³ He also explores the relationship between thought, reality and individuality,⁷⁴ ultimately tending towards a quasi-Hegelian view when he criticises the ontological and teleological arguments for God on the basis that they 'look upon "thought" as an agency working on things from without'. But for Iqbal, thought is a 'potency which is formative of the very being of its material', and is not 'alien to the original nature of things; it is their ultimate ground and constitutes the very essence of their being'.⁷⁵

There is a further dimension to the question of what constitutes reality in Iqbal's work. This is the issue of dualist and monistic views of reality, which Iqbal treats as the organising theme in his intellectual history of Persian metaphysics. Beginning with Zoroaster, he traces the history of Persian metaphysics in relation to this ongoing question.⁷⁶ He shows his awareness of the complexities of these issues by suggesting that the two positions of monism and dualism are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Thus, he argues that Zoroaster was 'theologically a monotheist and philosophically a dualist'.⁷⁷ This divided position is seen as being reinforced by the advent of Islam in Persia, which is described as bringing 'the new concept of an uncompromising monotheism as well as the Greek dualism of God and matter, as distinguished from the purely Persian dualism of God and Devil'.⁷⁸ Distinguishing between these strands of dualistic thought, he argues that the history of Persian metaphysics needs to be studied, as he has done, in terms of its engagement with two kinds of dualistic thought, a pre-Islamic Magian dualism and a post-Islamic Greek dualism.⁷⁹ These represent two different approaches to a problem which 'remains essentially the same' for both.⁸⁰

There is yet a further aspect to this issue of the constitution of reality, which emerges from the impact of mystical Islam on Iqbal's thought. This is the question as to the ultimate nature of Reality, and whether or not the individual self is annihilated [*fanā*] when it achieves union with an ultimate Reality, conceived of as Divine. This issue was a central point for Muslim mystics, with many taking a range of positions between those who believed in the ultimate annihilation of the individual self in God, and those who did not. Nor were the two always seen as mutually exclusive.⁸¹ Iqbal explores this in some detail in both verse and prose, and, as we shall see, it is in relation to the notion of *fanā* that he elaborated his own concept of selfhood or *khudī*, and also his notion of ultimate reality as an 'ego'. Again, this question is raised in *Reconstruction of Religious Thought*, and here Iqbal draws

upon thinkers from the Muslim tradition as well as F.H. Bradley's *Appearance and Reality* (1893) to support his view that the self cannot be erased by any mystical union with a Divine Reality.⁸²

In Iqbal's travelling texts, then, the question of appearance and reality becomes a metaphysical and philosophical problem which he explores in some depth in both his poetry and prose texts. In dealing with this problem, Iqbal also elaborates on an esoteric notion of sight and insight, encompassed by the Sufi term 'ṣauq', which he defines as a kind of 'inner perception' that reveals atemporal and non-spatial planes of reality.⁸³ Iqbal's engagement with the politics and metaphysics of sight represents another way in which he writes back to South Asian travelogues of the nineteenth century. Most of these, as we have seen, noted the experience of being transfixed in the ethnographic gaze of powerful others. Some of them also draw attention to European ways of constructing sights.⁸⁴ Others note technological enhancements of sight. Karim Khan's travelogue contains an account of his visit to the Royal Observatory [dūr bīn bādshāhī] in Greenwich, in which he details, in a rather speculative and sometimes garbled manner, the possible ramifications of astronomical observations made by the telescope, including the possibility of life on other planets, the huge distances between stars and the earth, and the relative size of the earth in relation to other heavenly bodies.⁸⁵ These huge distances reflect Karim Khan's sense that, to adopt a phrase from Haraway, visualising technologies are without apparent limit.⁸⁶ In later travelogues, the concern of the authors is also not to question or destabilise such technologies, but to adopt them in order to construct their own point of view. Thus Pandian's travelogue is subtitled *English Pictures from an Indian Camera*, with the reference to photographic reality supposedly reinforcing the documentary realism of his travelogue. As Susan Sontag has eloquently argued, while the photograph might distort, 'there is always a presumption that something exists, or did exist, which is like what's in the picture'.⁸⁷ She also argues that the dependence on the camera as 'a device that makes real what one is experiencing' does not fade when people travel more. Instead, travel becomes a way of accumulating photographs, and the camera is used to assuage feelings of unease: 'The very activity of taking pictures is soothing, and assuages general feelings of disorientation that are likely to be exacerbated by travel. Most tourists feel compelled to put the camera between themselves and whatever is remarkable that they encounter. Unsure of other responses, they take a picture.'⁸⁸

Pandian's subtitle points to just such an attempted use of the camera to legitimise his travels, attempted because his travelogue does not contain any photographs, or indeed any illustrations. This suggests a precarious sense of his own vision, as though sights seen by his naked eye need to be secured by further reference to this technology of visualisation. On its own, the eyesight of an individual Indian traveller, in the judgement of that traveller himself, does not have enough substance. It has to be supplemented by a

specifically Western and modern technology of visualisation to underpin its representation of reality in England. A similar strategy is also apparent in Pillai's *London and Paris Through Indian Spectacles*. The reference to spectacles is reinforced by the cover illustration of an Indian male with a turban wearing a pair of spectacles. Norton opens his introduction to Pillai's travel account by referring to 'these views of English and French life seen through the focus of a pair of spectacles'.⁸⁹ Once again, the eyesight of an Indian traveller, unaided by any optical instruments, is deemed by that traveller to be too weak or unfocussed to be reliable.

This overt reliance on instruments of seeing and visualising technologies by Indian travellers, while it may call attention to their desire to make a spectacle of London and its imperial treasures,⁹⁰ only does so by revealing how that reliance on such technology is rooted in their self-conscious sense of their fragility as subjects as 'see-ers'.⁹¹ This reliance also reveals, in the case of Pandian, an internalisation of the narrative of modernity as technological progress, manifested here in his acquiescence to what Sontag calls the 'imperial scope' of photography, and his participation in the 'spread of that mentality which looks at the world as a set of potential photographs'.⁹²

However, not all the travelogues evince this reliance on such technology. For Mirza Abu Taleb the reorientation of human sight to the technologically enhanced sight of a telescope is problematic on at least one occasion, when he thinks he spies land from his ship, and finds that he cannot see it through a telescope. An officer on the ship tries to explain this in terms of refraction, but Abu Taleb concludes instead that the telescope is out of order or that the crew are tricking him.⁹³ What is interesting about this episode is Abu Taleb's assumption that the telescope must be out of order if land which can be spied by the naked eye cannot be seen through the telescope. This suggests that for him at least, it is not his sight which he assumes to be unreliable. But Abu Taleb's refusal to endorse optical instruments highlights the usually uncritical reliance on these instruments.

Some historians have stressed the availability of imperial London and Victorian culture for appropriation, challenge and transformation by Britain's colonial subjects,⁹⁴ but others have been more cautious in emphasising the asymmetries of power which put serious constraints on the self-conceptions of Indians and their challenges to their status as colonial subjects.⁹⁵ In Indian travelogues the immediacy of the experience of being trapped in the ethnographic gaze of others tends to be the norm. There is one revealing exception to this which occurs in Mirza I'tisam uddin's *Shigurf Nāma*. This occurs when he mentions going to see an exhibition of a 'giantess' in Haymarket. He recalls how she stared at him, having never seen a dark-skinned Indian man [mard sīyāh hindūstānī] before, while he stared back at her, lost in wonder [gharq taḥaiyyur kasht].⁹⁶ In the travelogues under consideration here, this is the only description of an Indian staring back. What is significant here, though, is that this reciprocal equality of

stares can only occur when the object of Mirza I'tisam uddin's stare is herself set apart as an exhibit for others. It is also important to stress that while the assemblage of perspectives in some of these travelogues does counter the ethnographic gaze and construct ethnographies of Britain and Europe, this is not in and of itself necessarily self-empowering. This is because these travellers are often less concerned with defining different ways of seeing against the ethnographic gaze of their powerful others, and more with adopting those very styles of seeing through which they themselves are objectified. They strive to invoke panoramic points of view, rather than to create ways of seeing which are partial, embodied and situated. This is apparent in Dean Mahomed's travelogue, which frames the landscape of India in the English pastoral tradition of landscape poetry and art, in particular through the aesthetic categories of the sublime and the picturesque.⁹⁷ Here Mahomed imagines the panoramic views from the houses of British officers, depicted as country retreats, even when these residences are located within barracks. In his description of the 'very fine barrack' at Denapur, he refers to 'the General's residence, an elegant and stately building, commanding a full view of the country many miles around'.⁹⁸ Similarly, he represents the house of an English gentleman, writing 'as it stood on a rising ground, it seemed to rear its dome in stately pride, over the aromatic plains and spicy groves that adorned the landscape below, commanding an extensive prospect of all the fertile vales along the winding Ganges flowery banks'.⁹⁹ In Chapter 3, I discuss Mahomed's strategies for representing the landscapes of India in more detail, but here we can note that throughout his *Travels*, his reliance on the aesthetic language of the sublime and picturesque underpins his organisation of Indian landscape around the panoramic views he imagines are commanded by the English houses, which he himself cannot enter.

The invocation of panoramic views is also apparent in later travelogues. Pandian characterises his representation of London as 'like vivid scenes in a grand panoramic view' and as 'our panoramic view of the sights and scenic attractions of the queen of modern cities'.¹⁰⁰ The title of Malabari's travelogue *The Indian Eye in English Life* is remarkable not just for its monolithic and homogenising use of the term 'Indian', and its assumption of a single 'Indian' point of view represented by the author ('The Indian Eye' rather than 'An Indian Eye'), but also for the way in which 'The Indian Eye' becomes a disembodied abstraction. The eye is not part of a sensory apparatus tied to an embodied self. It is disconnected from the perceptual apparatus of such a self, for which a field of vision is also always a tactile and acoustic field. As Merleau-Ponty has argued, 'the lived perspective, that which we actually perceive, is not a geometric or photographic one'.¹⁰¹ Instead, each object we perceive is an 'intersensory entity' which relates to ourselves as embodied beings.¹⁰² The focus on the eye in these travel accounts, then, suggests how the eye, prised apart from the perceptual apparatus of an embodied self, comes to represent a decorporealised, third-person point of view.

The privileging of the eye in Indian travelogues points to another dimension to the decorporealisation of vision in these travelogues. This privileging also needs to be read against the background of the retention of a 'high oral residue'¹⁰³ in the societies of South Asia. Ong has stressed how in oral cultures, verbal communication takes place by direct word of mouth, in face-to-face encounters, so that interpersonal relations are kept high. Direct semantic ratification is what controls the meaning of the word. As a result, knowledge tends to be embedded in the human life world. Words acquire meanings from their actual habitats, and are closely tied to body language, such as gestures, rocking to and fro, and manipulating beads on strings. The oral word always exists in a total existential situation which engages the body. On the other hand, writing separates and sets up the conditions for personal disengagement or distancing. In written texts, words lack their full phonetic qualities whereas in oral speech, the word must have one or another intonation or tone of voice. But in writing you have to make yourself clear with no existential contact.¹⁰⁴ Moreover, Ong also argues that with writing, and especially print, words are locked into a 'visual field forever'.¹⁰⁵

I have already discussed the association made between colonial power and chirographic and printed archives by Indian travelogues of the nineteenth century. The privileging of the eye in these travelogues suggests how these authors had a self-conscious sense of their literacy, highlighted against the background of the high oral residue in the societies of South Asia. For this reason, some of these authors point to the power of print, as if it were a newfound discovery.¹⁰⁶ By its very nature, this literacy privileged sight and also disembodied the word, and so underpinned the decorporealisation of vision which is enacted in these travelogues. We will see how Gandhi tries to counter this decorporealisation in his autobiographical project.¹⁰⁷ Here, though, I wish to focus on the politics and metaphysics of sight in Iqbal's work. We have already seen that in Iqbal's case the journey he takes in the *Jāvid Nāma* is not a physical one alone but primarily an adventure of interiority. As the poet journeys through the cosmos into increasingly rarefied atmospheres, so too his body becomes increasingly rarefied and nimble.¹⁰⁸ This progressive refinement of the body becomes one of the signposts of the poet's ascent, and his sight and perception become keener as his body grows lighter. In this sense, then, Iqbal's *Jāvid Nāma* is continuous with the enactment of a disembodied sight and decorporealisation in Indian travelogues of the nineteenth century. However, for Iqbal this decorporealisation opens up other ways of seeing, rooted in notions of insight and intuition, which draw on the Sufi notion of *zauq*. These alternative ways of seeing underpin the visionary quality of the poem, eloquently evoked as a 'soul drunk with vision' [jalva mast],¹⁰⁹ which is enacted as part of the argument of the poem itself. Moreover, unlike the travelogues of the nineteenth century, there is a self-conscious play between different modes of seeing in the *Jāvid Nāma*, so that the poem becomes a site for the struggle to see in different ways.

Two possibilities of seeing are explored throughout the *Jāvid Nāma* in which there is an opposition between the control of sight which transforms the objects it gazes upon and being objectified in another's sight. On the one hand, there are instances of losing one's autonomy by becoming transfixed in the stare of others. Here the gaze is trapped by the objects it looks upon. Throughout the poem science is characterised as being trapped in seeing as sensory perception so that it cannot go beyond the externalities of phenomena. This is contrasted to the transforming vision of gnostics.¹¹⁰ There is also a complex play on blindness throughout the poem, where blindness to the external world is conducive to introspective insight into inner spaces and worlds. When the poet encounters the lifeless landscape of the moon, he describes himself as placing a hand on his companion's shoulder, and like a blind man walking into the darkness of a deep cavern. But his guide reassures him that 'Its interior [bātin] is fairer than its exterior [zāhir]/Another world lurks hidden in its hollows/If the eye has vision [bīn], everything is worth seeing.'¹¹¹ The connection between blindness and insight is also clear in the evocation of light in the poem. The fading of light and twilight scenes are the backdrop to the development of insight, and the opening up of the inner space of subjectivity through the internal dialogue which constitutes the poet's argument: 'I, who saw among my friends none to confide in/rested a moment on the shore of the sea/the sea and the hour of the setting sun/the blue water was a liquid ruby in the gloaming/Sunset gives to the blind man the joy of sight [zauq-e nazar]/sunset gives to evening the hue of dawn/I held conversation with my heart [dil]/I had many desires, many requests.'¹¹² The play of light in the poem reaches its apotheosis when at the end of the poem the poet is addressed as having become 'brighter than the all-illuminating sun'.¹¹³ The process of self-transformation in the *Jāvid Nāma* is partly figured through images of illumination which make the poet not a body which reflects light, but one who actually radiates light as the source of a newly won vision: 'Man is but sight [dīd], the rest is mere skin/true sight signifies seeing the Beloved [dost]/Dissolve the whole body [tan] into sight [beṣīr]/go into the gaze, go to gaze, go to gaze [nazar]'.¹¹⁴ Throughout the poem the fixation on the sun as the source of light is taken to be a sign of immaturity of vision, so that the poem's ending signifies the final act of self-envisioning.

In part, then, this play between different kinds of seeing and light can be read in terms of re-affirming one's agency to fashion one's self.¹¹⁵ However, it also needs to be read in terms of the sharpening of sight as *zauq*, which, as we have seen, Iqbal defines in *The Development of Metaphysics in Persia* as an 'inner perception' which reveals 'non-temporal and non-spatial planes of being'. He argues that 'it is the study of philosophy, or the habit of reflecting upon pure concepts, combined with the practice of virtue', which sharpens this sense of discrimination.¹¹⁶ This fusion of philosophical concepts with ecstatic poetry in a Sufi mode is one of the achievements of the *Jāvid Nāma*.

What binds these together is a visionary seeing which transforms the world it beholds. This transforming possibility is sketched out for the poet by his guide: 'View the world otherwise and it will become other/This earth and heaven will become other.'¹¹⁷ For Iqbal, decorporealisation opens up another way of seeing which, moreover, precedes thought itself. Discussing the work of Suhrawardi, Iqbal argues that for Suhrawardi 'unaided reason is untrustworthy' and 'must always be supplemented by Dhaug [zauq]'. But he then goes on to invert this, arguing that Suhrawardi's speculative philosophy is really 'the results of the inner perception as formulated and systematized by discursive thought'.¹¹⁸ For Iqbal, styles of seeing precede rather than follow upon thinking. The basic importance of this notion of seeing is clear when in the *Jāvid Nāma* he defines religious faith in Islam as 'attaching the eye to the invisible [ghā'ib]'. This vision includes denying distinctions between tribes and ethnic groups, and especially denying the 'supremacy of the Arabs' [fazl-e 'arab],¹¹⁹ so that in the ultimate analysis 'zauq' and a sociological vision of the nature of Islam become conflated.¹²⁰

The notion of *zauq* as a combination of gnostic vision, intuition and insight is thus in keeping with Iqbal's construction of inwardness through a distinctive notion of travel. It signals how Iqbal's ways of seeing are steeped in Sufi notions of sight, but in a typically complex move, as we shall see in Chapters 5 and 8, while drawing on these styles of vision, Iqbal inverts Sufi notions of selfhood to articulate his own sense of self in relation to group identities. Here, though, we can note how for Iqbal ways of seeing are always processes to be enacted, subverted and reconfigured, and the visionary quality of his magnum opus emerges from a conflict between different modes of seeing. For Iqbal, what is at stake in the *Jāvid Nāma* is not just the poet's self but also the self-conscious nature of the vision and styles of seeing which bring that self into being.

Nehru's unblocking of an Indian adventure narrative

Nehru's travelling autobiographies also need to be read in terms of their discontinuities from earlier Indian travel writing. In some of these travelogues, there is a conflict between the attempt to articulate a first-person voice and the imposition of imperial frameworks of travel on these travellers. The uncertain and fragile nature of self-authorship which results from this conflict is evident in Dean Mahomed's *Travels*, whose autobiographical narrative is in many ways a self-alienated one. While he is keen to call attention to himself as an author who has produced a text, with the phrase 'Written by himself' in his title, he includes in his travelogue passages from other travel accounts by British travellers without citing them, as well as descriptions of military engagements and cities he himself had not witnessed or visited.¹²¹ His glossary of Indian terms in letter XVI borrows heavily from John Henry Grose's *Voyage to the East Indies* (1766).¹²² While Fisher suggests

that despite these borrowings Mahomed retained his own voice,¹²³ it may be more accurate to say that his first-person voice was articulated through the voices of powerful others. This is evident in his politics of patronage. On the one hand, Mahomed is keen to emphasise his status as an eyewitness of the events he relates, but on the other hand, he seeks the patronage of Colonel Bailie in his dedication, in order to 'shield' his narrative with 'the armour of security, as the judicious must be highly gratified with the peculiar propriety of inscribing them to a Gentleman so perfectly conversant with scenes, which I have attempted to describe'.¹²⁴ Moreover, he is only able to travel as the client of an East India Company officer, G.E. Baker, whose patronage he actively sought, 'following him without restraint' and making himself known to him by surveying him 'with a kind of secret satisfaction'.¹²⁵

The tensions between Dean Mahomed as a travelling subject and imperial frameworks of travel manifest themselves in other ways too, particularly in the double consciousness of his travelogue. There is another voice in the text, which is at odds with the tone of deference to his British patrons and the 'literary attainments' of the refined and polished European.¹²⁶ At times there is a defensiveness about the possible 'barbarity' of some scenes in India, and here Mahomed tries to humanise such scenes, calling attention to Indians as human subjects, and stressing a shared humanity with the British.¹²⁷ His double consciousness is also evident in his proud representation of the superior munificence and hospitality of Indian rulers in relation to their European counterparts, alongside other passages where the trope of Oriental despotism and its dissolute pleasures figures strongly.¹²⁸ This ambivalence reflects his own complex and divided position as a self-ascribed Indian (Muslim) 'native'¹²⁹ who converted to Christianity in Britain and was closely aligned to the rise of the East India Company in India.

The divided and vacillating nature of Dean Mahomed's autobiographical narrative in his travelogue is indicative of the tension between his attempt at self-empowerment through travel and the actual framework in which that travel takes place. This tension is also central to Mohan Lal's travelogues. As we have seen, his travel account is preceded not by an autobiographical note written by himself, but a 'Memoir of Mohan Lal', by his patron, C.E. Trevelyan, to whom his travelogue is dedicated in terms of filial affection and respect.¹³⁰ As with the case of Dean Mahomed, Mohan Lal also describes his search for patrons as a traveller, and it is as an employee of the East India Company that he travels as munshi to Sir Alexander Burnes.¹³¹ Moreover, while Trevelyan presents Lal as successful proof of the Anglicist policy in India, Lal internalises this by anglicising his travel account and his own persona in different ways. He in fact models himself as a travelling subject on Trevelyan's 'Memoir'. First, he seeks to disavow his status as Burnes' munshi. While the 1834 version of his travelogue states that he travelled with Burnes and Gerard 'in the capacity of a Persian Munshi', the 1846 text states that Burnes asked 'me to accompany him to Turkistan, in

the capacity of interpreter, and Persian secretary'. In a footnote he adds, 'I was not munshi of Sir A. Burnes; he had a munshi from Bombay, named Mahomed Ali, whose family now receive a pension from the government for his services with Sir A. Burnes.'¹³² This linguistic self-anglicisation is evident in one other defining difference between the two texts. The 1834 Journal contains numerous passages of Persian, inserted into the narrative in the Persian script, sometimes but not always followed by a translation and sometimes by transliteration as well. However, the 1846 text erases all these passages, and either translates them alone or omits any reference to the Persian text.¹³³

Lal's travels thus enact a progressive linguistic self-anglicisation, which is reflected in his fragile status of self-authorship. He tells how Burnes instructs him in the art and technique of keeping a journal, and details his indebtedness to Prinsep for 'verbal instruction in various branches of science. He showed me how to draw, and take sketches of different views, which he said every traveller ought to know.'¹³⁴ His tutoring in the arts of travel by colonial officials is clear. He states that in some cases he simply took his account of a place and/or sight from Burnes' own diary.¹³⁵ There are a number of occasions when he defers to Burnes' account, referring the reader to the latter's *Travels into Bokhara* (1834) for descriptions of specific sites and episodes.¹³⁶ In many ways, then, Mohan Lal's autobiographical travelogue is less a self-authored one and more one produced in deference to and collusion with colonial officials. The self-alienated position he inhabits as a result, articulating himself as a travelling subject through a framework and language which at the same time muffles his voice, is best summed up in his statement of the personal circumstances which led to his travels. He mentions how the government deprived his family of its hereditary lands, granted to them by the Mughal emperor, which caused him serious financial hardship while he was a student attending the English class at Delhi College.¹³⁷ The government which fostered him as a travelling exemplar of the Anglicist policy in India at the same time deprived him of his traditional sources of revenue, simultaneously empowering and disempowering him, as it set him on his travels.

It is this conflict between Lal's travelling identity and his position as a colonial subject which Nehru picks up on in his 'Foreword' to Hari Ram Gupta's *Life and Work of Mohan Lal Kashmiri 1812–1877* (1943). Nehru repeatedly uses the word 'adventure' to describe Mohan Lal's travels, and argues that the structure of British rule at the time prevented him from being given his due reward. He also believes Lal's claim that 'he gave definite pledges on behalf of the British authority, which were not subsequently kept'.¹³⁸ He further points to the artistically crafted tableaux of scenery which interrupts Mohan Lal's 'narrative of political happenings and economic data'.¹³⁹ Nehru's 'Foreword' suggests ways in which his own autobiographical project is a development of and a break from Lal's multivocal narrative. Like Lal's travelogue,

Nehru's *Autobiography* and *Discovery* combine political critique and economic narrative with reflections on the 'charms of nature'.¹⁴⁰ Nehru's description of Lal as 'a politician and scholar, with something of the poet and the artist in him'¹⁴¹ might apply to himself as well. Nehru's appropriation of the language of the adventure romance is also used to describe his 'excitement, as of a new discovery',¹⁴² when he came across Lal's texts in a bookshop, so that even the possible links between himself and Lal are described in the terms of that language. These links include their shared regional identity, since Lal originates from 'my old homeland of Kashmir'.¹⁴³ At the same time, Nehru represents Mohan Lal's texts as a blocked adventure narrative, which becomes an indictment of nineteenth-century British colonialism. Nehru also laments the inconsistent appearance of the 'personal' in both the *Memoirs* and Gupta's study.¹⁴⁴ Elsewhere, he comments on the manuscript of an unpublished memoir as 'astonishingly personal', and wonders if this might not reflect a kind of self-centred introspection which is discrepant with 'worthwhile activities'.¹⁴⁵ The main orientation of Nehru's autobiographies is the attempt to rework the autobiographical adventure narrative as a critique of colonialism, in which the relations between the interiority of subjectivity, the construction of historical agency and the external realm of public politics are negotiated through and secured by processes of self-definition.

In Nehru's counter-discourse of adventurous travel, his definition of the Indian traveller recovers a historical narrative of adventurous travel interrupted by British colonialism, of which a recent example for Nehru is Mohan Lal. In a letter written in prison, Nehru writes of his desire to 'undertake a long pilgrimage [to Ladakh, Kashmir, and Tibet] as soon as Swaraj is obtained'.¹⁴⁶ Here he explicitly links political self-rule with the freedom to travel, so that self-empowerment, travel and self-rule are configured together in parts of his nationalist discourse. However, Nehru also tries to renew precolonial memories and narratives of travel and adventure, which tied India to other parts of Asia. For Nehru, a sense of being Indian includes the recovery of lost habits of travel and exploration. The historiographical and autobiographical task of Nehru's project dovetail. In *The Discovery of India* the language of adventurous travel frames the story of India's decline from its status as a world civilisation. Nehru contrasts the 'urge to adventure and the overflowing life which led to vast schemes of distant colonization and the transplantation of Indian culture in faraway lands' in the ancient and medieval world, with a contemporary 'narrow orthodoxy' which 'taboos even the crossing of the high seas'.¹⁴⁷ This past 'search of adventure' which led to the establishment of colonies of Indian settlers in South-east Asia, stands in sharp contrast to India's present stagnation and isolation, 'cut off by mountain and sea'.¹⁴⁸ In keeping with Nehru's persona as a travel writer who engages with the accounts of other travel writers, he discusses the accounts of Chinese travellers to India in the ancient and medieval world,

in which he reviews the movement of pilgrims, missionaries, traders and scholars between China and India. This is contrasted with the present condition of India under British rule, and specifically the opium trade and wars between the East India Company and China in the first half of the nineteenth century.¹⁴⁹ At the same time, he argues that decolonisation would in part open up opportunities again for the renewal of contacts between China and India.¹⁵⁰ In part, India's isolation is the consequence of British imperialism, since the British 'barred all the doors and stopped all the routes that connected us with our neighbours in Asia'. Instead India was brought 'nearer to Europe' and especially to Britain. But as Asia emerges from European domination, 'world developments and common interests' now afford opportunities for overcoming 'this sudden isolation [of India] from the rest of Asia', an isolation which was 'one of the most remarkable and unfortunate consequences of British rule in India'. Now it will be possible for Asiatic states to renew memories of not just 'old friendships' but also 'common adventures'.¹⁵¹

Thus, it is through the framework of adventurous travel that Nehru envisages the re-opening of precolonial trade and travel routes between different parts of Asia, now controlled, dominated or blocked by European imperial states. What is partly elaborated in Nehru's travelling autobiography is the imagining of an alternative postcolonial geopolitical map to that drawn by Western narratives of travel and exploration in the age of European expansion, in which Europe is central and its colonies are peripheral. In this geographical imagining, the category of 'native travelees' is challenged, and Indians become seasoned and adventurous travellers, by virtue of being Indian: 'We, who are of India . . . have undertaken many a voyage in time and space, as well as geographically in the present, for the discovery of India . . . It has been an amazing quest, full of adventure, full of hope-filling discoveries.'¹⁵²

Notes

1. This is discussed in more detail in Chapter 4.
2. This is the format of both his 1834 *Journal of a Tour* and his 1846 *Travels*.
3. In his introduction to his edition of the *Siyāḥet Nāma*, Barelvi argues that the *Siyāḥet Nāma* is the first diary written in Urdu which has been published; see Karim Khan, *Siyāḥet Nāma*, p. 8.
4. Mirza I'tisam uddin, *Shigurf Nāma*, p. 3 f.2 ff.
5. Yusuf Khan, *Safar Yusuf Khān Kammāl Posh Kā Mulk Inglistān Mein* (Delhi: Pandit Dharam Narāyan, 1847), pp. 3–4. There is no English translation of this text; all translations are my own.
6. Michael H. Fisher, *The First Indian Author in English. Dean Mahomed (1759–1851) in India, Ireland, and England* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 9.

This text is an excellent critical edition of *Travels of Dean Mahomet*, first published in 1794.

7. Behramji Malabari, *The Indian Eye in English Life or Rambles of a Pilgrim Reformer* (Westminster: Archibald Constable and Company, 1893), Reverend T.B. Pandian, *England to an Indian Eye: Or Pictures from an Indian Camera* (London: Elliot Stock, 1897), and Pillai, *London and Paris*.
8. See Introduction.
9. M.K. Gandhi, *An Autobiography*, p. 195, p. 197, p. 263, p. 290, p. 299, p. 300, p. 303.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 201, p. 202, p. 218, p. 270, p. 345.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 235, p. 278.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 444.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 130, p. 138, p. 139, p. 374, p. 386, p. 393, p. 450.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 155, p. 289.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 242.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 206, p. 353, p. 413, p. 453.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 276.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 301.
19. Mirza I'tisam uddin, *Shigurf Nāma*, pp. 61–71.
20. Yusuf Khan, p. 270. He does not specify the denominational affiliations of these two priests. He refers to them as simply 'padri'.
21. Sayyid Ahmad Khan, in Sheikh Muhammad Ismail Panipati (ed.), *Musāfirān-e Landan* (Lahore: Majlis-e Taraqqī-ye Adab, c. 1960), pp. 63–8.
22. Mirza Abu Taleb, pp. 357–69.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 404.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 250 ff.
25. *Ibid.*, pp. 430–2.
26. *Ibid.*, pp. 492–6.
27. Bernard Lewis, *The Muslim Discovery of Europe* (New York and London: W.W. Norton, c. 1982), pp. 215–16.
28. Karim Khan, pp. 121–2, pp. 274–6.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 198, pp. 278–83.
30. Annemarie Schimmel, *And Muhammad is His Messenger. The Veneration of the Prophet in Islamic Piety* (Lahore: Vanguard Books, 1987), p. 175.
31. Iqbal, *Reconstruction*, p. 120.
32. Mirza Abu Taleb Khan, pp. 43–5.
33. Stewart, Ch. 1, p. 55.
34. Karim Khan, pp. 86–7.
35. For a discussion of these images in the context of the poem, see Christopher Shackle and Javed Majeed, *Hali's Musaddas. The Flow and Ebb of Islam* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. 49–53. See also my 'Nature, hyperbole, and the colonial state: Some Muslim appropriations of European modernity in late nineteenth century Urdu literature', in John Cooper, Ron Nettler and Mahomed Mahmood (eds), *Islam and Modernity* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1998), pp. 10–37, where I analyse these images further.
36. JN 11/3; Arberry 24/107–8.
37. Eickelman and Piscatori, 'Preface', in *Muslim Travellers*, p. xii.
38. Eickelman and Piscatori, 'Social theory', *ibid.*, p. 5.
39. Mirza Abu Taleb, pp. 708–15.

40. Muhammad Khalid Masud, 'The obligation to migrate: The doctrine of hijra in Islamic law', in Eickelman and Piscatori (eds), *Muslim Travellers*, pp. 29–49, p. 45, and Sam I. Gellens, 'The search for knowledge in medieval Muslim societies: A comparative approach', *ibid.*, pp. 50–65, p. 53.
41. Abderrahmane El Mouddeh, 'The ambivalence of rihla: Community integration and self-definition in Moroccan travel accounts, 1300–1800', in Eickelman and Piscatori (eds), *Muslim Travellers*, pp. 69–84, p. 70.
42. 'Mi'rādī', *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd edn, vol. 7 (Leiden and New York: E.J. Brill, 1993; hereafter EI2), pp. 97–105, p. 97.
43. For which, see 'Mi'rādī', EI2, pp. 97–105, Annemarie Schimmel, *And Muhammad is His Messenger* (Lahore: Vanguard Books, 1987), Ch. 9.
44. 'Mi'rādī', EI2, p. 99, p. 100.
45. Schimmel, *And Muhammad is His Messenger*, p. 162.
46. *Ibid.*, p. 161, p. 172.
47. *Ibid.*, p. 162.
48. 'Mi'rādī', EI2, pp. 104–5.
49. Elleke Boehmer, *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 50. Ballantyne has recently developed this perspective by arguing for the need to conceptualise empire as a series of archives, 'each arising out of local concerns, but braided together, however imperfectly, by institutional exchanges, webs of personal correspondence and shared bodies of knowledge'. See Tony Ballantyne, *Orientalism and Race. Aryanism in the British Empire* (New York and Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), p. 9.
50. See my '“The jargon of Indostan”: An exploration of jargon in Urdu and East India Company English', in Peter Burke and Roy Porter (eds), *Languages and Jargons. Towards a Social History of Language* (Oxford: Polity Press, 1995), pp. 182–205.
51. C.A. Bayly, '“Knowing the country”: Empire and information in India', *Modern Asian Studies*, 27 (1993), pp. 25–9, pp. 33–4.
52. Mirza Abu Taleb, p. 133.
53. *Ibid.*, p. 216.
54. *Ibid.*, pp. 313–14.
55. Shackle and Majeed, *Hali's Musaddas*, verses 88–9, pp. 134–5.
56. *Ibid.*, verse 64, pp. 124–5.
57. Pandian, p. 61.
58. Yusuf Khan, p. 110.
59. *Ibid.*, p. 110.
60. JN, pp. 51–3.
61. Jalal ud-din Rumi, 1207–1273, is generally considered to be the greatest mystic poet in the Persian language. He is famous for his lyrics and for his didactic epic, the *Masnavi-ye Ma'navi* or 'Spiritual Couplets'. This consists of some 26,000 couplets and is a compendium of different aspects of Sufi thought in the thirteenth century. The work is difficult to systematise, and perhaps part of the point of the work is to resist such systematisation.
62. JN, pp. 151–3. For an important discussion of Iqbal's treatment of Nietzsche, and for the latter's influence on Iqbal, see Annemarie Schimmel, *Gabriel's Wing. A Study into the Religious Ideas of Sir Muhammad Iqbal* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1963), p. 93, p. 101, p. 104, pp. 118–19, p. 213, p. 266, p. 270, p. 282, pp. 323–7. For Iqbal's perception of parallels between Nietzsche and Sufism in general, see *Reconstruction*, pp. 154–5.

63. Mirza Asadullah Khan Ghalib (1797–1869) was a pre-eminent Indian poet who wrote in Urdu and Persian. His Urdu poetry is highly Persianised and condensed. For an excellent commentary on his Urdu poetry, see Ghulam Rasul Mihr, *Navāy-e Sarosh* (Lahore: Sheikh Ghulam Ali and Sons, n.d.). For two useful books in English, see Annemarie Schimmel, *A Dance of Sparks. Imagery of Fire in Ghalib's Poetry* (New Delhi: Ghalib Academy; The Hague and London: East–West Publications, 1979), and Ralph Russell and Khurshid ul Islam (ed.), *Ghalib. Life and Letters* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1994).
64. JN, pp. 115–34/Arberry, pp. 90–105. For an extended discussion of al-Hallaj's philosophy, see Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, pp. 62–77. Ibn Mansur al-Hallaj c. 858–c. 922, a controversial Sufi figure whose death in Baghdad is an important reference point in the history of Sufism. He was arrested and imprisoned for apparently uttering the words 'Ana al-ḥaqq' ('I am the Truth/God'). He was accused of claiming to be divine, and was executed in 922.
65. Mirza Abu Taleb, pp. 154–5.
66. Ibid., p. 343.
67. Yusuf Khan, pp. 49–50.
68. Ibid., pp. 86–7.
69. Ibid., p. 60, pp. 72–3, p. 82.
70. Ibid., pp. 72–3, p. 103.
71. Karim Khan, p. 245.
72. Iqbal, *Metaphysics*, p. 21.
73. Iqbal, *Reconstruction*, p. 83. See lecture 4 as a whole for the relationship between self and reality. See also p. 98 for the 'creative unfolding' of the self, and p. 62 for his remark that 'we possess no word to express the kind of knowledge which is also creative of its object'.
74. Ibid., p. 5, pp. 41–2.
75. Ibid., p. 25. See also p. 123.
76. Iqbal, *Metaphysics*, p. x, p. 7, p. 28, pp. 50–1, pp. 54–8, pp. 134–9.
77. Ibid., p. 5.
78. Ibid., p. 18.
79. Ibid., p. 147.
80. Ibid., p. 147.
81. Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, pp. 142–5.
82. Iqbal, *Reconstruction*, pp. 78–9.
83. Iqbal, *Metaphysics*, p. 111. The term 'zauq' therefore includes the senses of enjoyment, taste and rapture, as well as discrimination. Ahl-e zauq refers to those who are able to perceive spiritual realities.
84. Mirza Abu Taleb, pp. 154–5, pp. 524–5.
85. Karim Khan, pp. 216–17. In this account, Karim Khan makes no distinction between stars and planets, describing both as 'sitāra'.
86. Haraway, p. 188.
87. Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (London: Allen Lane, 1977), p. 5.
88. Ibid., p. 9.
89. Norton, 'Introduction', in Pillai, p. 1.
90. Burton, p. 186.
91. The formulation of subjects as see-ers is Burton's, p. 186.
92. Sontag, p. 7. I discuss this in more detail in Chapter 3.
93. Mirza Abu Taleb, pp. 28–9.
94. Burton, p. 187.

95. Fisher, *Counterflows*, p. 49, p. 181, pp. 201–13.
96. Mirza I'tisam uddin, *Shigurf Nāma*, p. 49, f.1.
97. I discuss this in more detail in Chapter 3.
98. Mahomed, pp. 23–4.
99. Ibid., p. 21.
100. Pandian, p. 19, p. 25.
101. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, 'Cezanne's doubt', in Galen A. Johnson (ed.), *The Merleau-Ponty Aesthetics Reader. Philosophy and Painting* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1993), p. 64.
102. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, translated Colin Smith (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), p. 317.
103. The phrase is Walter J. Ong's, see his *Orality and Literacy. The Technologizing of the Word* (London and New York: Methuen, 1982), p. 65.
104. Ibid., p. 181.
105. Ibid., 11–12.
106. For example, see Pandian Ch. 10, Malabari, pp. 170–1, pp. 174–5.
107. See Ch. 3.
108. JN 26/13, Arberry 35/439–40.
109. JN 163/4, Arberry 119/2961.
110. 'The task of science [ḥikmat] is to see and consume [farsūdan]/the work of gnosis [ʿarīfān] is to see and augment [afzūdan]/science casts its gaze upon phenomena [tajallī]/gnosis loses phenomena in itself' (JN 115/4, 7, Arberry 90/2103–4, 2109–10).
111. JN 33/2, 4, Arberry 38/519–20, 523–4.
112. JN 17/3–6, Arberry 28/187–94.
113. JN 196/1, Arberry 141/3641.
114. JN 23/11–12, Arberry 33/363–6.
115. For example, see JN 69/13, Arberry 60–1/1203–4.
116. Iqbal, *Metaphysics*, p. 111.
117. JN 109/13, Arberry 87/2019–20.
118. Iqbal, *Metaphysics*, p. 98.
119. JN 54/7, 58/1, Arberry 51/921, 925–6.
120. I discuss the tensions in Iqbal's politics in Chapter 5.
121. Fisher, *Dean Mahomed*, pp. 213–14, pp. 226–31, p. 246.
122. For the glossary, see the text of Dean Mahomed's *Travels*, in Fisher (ed.), *Dean Mahomed*, pp. 51–6; for a detailed comparison between Mahomed's glossary and Grose's, see pp. 228–32.
123. Ibid., p. 233.
124. Mahomed, *Travels*, p. 9.
125. Ibid., pp. 18–19.
126. Ibid., p. 10.
127. For example, see *ibid.*, pp. 27–8, on Baker marvelling at an example of 'humanity in a savage breast' when Mahomed is abducted by Indian villagers; p. 51, on an example of an Indian courtesan in whose heart is the 'voice of humanity'; and p. 93, on his humane treatment by some villagers after their battle with Company sepoy.
128. For some examples, see *ibid.*, pp. 17–18, on Raja Sataproy's fireworks display 'far surpassing anything I ever beheld in Europe'; pp. 70–1, on the Nawab of Murshidabad's procession from his palace to the temple; pp. 70–1, on Shuja ud

- daula's dissolute pleasures; and pp. 71–3, on the decline of the Mughal court at Delhi and its decadence.
129. Fisher points to how Dean Mahomed played on his status as an Indian 'native'; Fisher, *Dean Mahomed*, pp. 273–5, pp. 286–7.
 130. The dedication refers to how Trevleyan, 'besides educating me in youth . . . taught me to think and act as a man'. In his Preface he mentions how Trevleyan sometimes supported him 'with pocket-money'; Lal, *Travels*, p. v.
 131. Lal, *Journal*, p. 3.
 132. Lal, *Journal*, p. iii, *Travels*, p. 1. This change occurs elsewhere in the 1846 text. He describes Sultan Muhammad Khan asking Burnes who 'was his Persian secretary, and by whom the letter which he got was written', while the 1834 text has the Sultan quizzing Burnes as to the identity of 'his munshi' (Lal, *Travels*, pp. 44–5, *Journal*, p. 39).
 133. To give just two instances: in his *Journal*, Lal mentions a Persian inscription on the gateway to the Fort at Rota, which he reproduces in full, without translation. In his *Travels*, no mention is made of this inscription. Similarly, he reproduces the Persian inscription over the tomb of the Emperor Babar in his *Journal*, again without translation, but this is omitted in his *Travels* (Lal, *Journal*, p. 26, *Travels*, p. 27; and *Journal*, p. 66, *Travels*, p. 75).
 134. Lal, *Journal*, p. iii, p. v. See also *Travels*, p. 381, on Lal's receipt of a letter from Captain Wade in December 1835 instructing him on how to record his travels after Lal's appointment as a British agent in Kandahar.
 135. Lal, *Journal*, p. iv.
 136. Lal, *Travels*, pp. 27–8, p. 48, p. 117.
 137. Lal, *Journal*, p. iii f.n.
 138. Jawaharlal Nehru, 'Foreword', in Hari Ram Gupta, *Life and Work of Mohan Lal Kashmiri 1812–1877* (Lahore: Minerva Book Shop, 1943), pp. v–vii. For details of Lal's later problematic relationships with the British state especially with reference to his time as an envoy in Afghanistan, see Fisher, *Counterflows*, pp. 358–9, pp. 360–4, and Gupta, *Life and Work*, Chs 12 and 14. For Lal's own account of his time as a British agent in Afghanistan during 1841–2, see *Travels*, Chs 7 and 8.
 139. Nehru, 'Foreword', p. vii. Nehru refers to Lal's admiration of the 'charm of nature' (p. vii). For some of these tableaux of nature, see Lal, *Travels*, p. 11, pp. 21–2, p. 52, p. 65. Nehru also refers to Lal's description of 'the beauty of the women he saw in the market-place or drawing water from a village well'. He may have been thinking of the scene depicted in *Travels*, p. 23, entry for February 22, 1832. Nehru's 'Foreword' is also reproduced in SW 8: pp. 399–400.
 140. I discuss Nehru's concept of nature in Chapter 3.
 141. Nehru, 'Foreword', p. vii. The scholarly touches in Nehru's autobiography are evident in the apparatus of footnotes in *Discovery*.
 142. *Ibid.*, p. v.
 143. *Ibid.*, 'Foreword', p. v.
 144. *Ibid.*, 'Foreword', p. vii.
 145. 'To Bharati Sarabhani', SW 9: pp. 105–6, p. 106.
 146. 'To Father', September 1, 1922, SW 1: pp. 332–40, p. 334.
 147. *Discovery*, p. 54.
 148. *Ibid.*, p. 203, p. 207. For Nehru's discussion of Indian colonies in Southeast Asia, see pp. 200–7.

149. Ibid., pp. 192–200. Also see Michael Greenberg, *British Trade and the Opening of China, 1800–1842* (1951; New York and London: Monthly Review Press, 1979).
150. *Discovery*, pp. 199–200.
151. Ibid., p. 149. See also 'The psychology of Indian nationalism', January 1927, SW 2: pp. 259–70, p. 270.
152. To J.C. Wedgewood April 23, 1941, SW 11: pp. 577–80.

3

Travel and Modernity

Thus, the travelling autobiographies of Nehru, Gandhi and Iqbal emerge from, and write back to, a tradition of Indian travelogues in the nineteenth century, in which there was a conflict between the travelling identities of these Indians and the political and imperial frameworks in which they had to travel and represent themselves. One of the ways in which travel disempowered Indian travellers in the nineteenth century was the increasing awareness they had of the global extent of British power as they journeyed from India to Britain, usually on British ships. The further they travelled, the more disempowered they sensed themselves to be in relation to the empire which unfolded before their eyes. They experienced a Eurocentred global planetary consciousness as subjects who were aware of being caught up in its web of power. The self-consciousness of Indian travellers born out of disempowerment is indicative of 'the simultaneous nonconsistency of subject-positions'¹ in their travelogues. As they travelled, Indians became self-aware in the ethnographic gaze of others, while simultaneously being frozen and disempowered by that gaze.

The nature of British power is made obvious in the locations at which Indian travellers disembarked on their way to Europe in the first half of the nineteenth century. This journey usually involved a stopover at South Africa, where there was ample evidence of the scope of British power.² In the latter half of the nineteenth century, Indian travellers journeyed through the Middle East, where alongside the obvious evidence of European imperial power were clear signs of its global technological power as well, especially in the construction of the Suez canal. This technological power received explicit comment in these travel accounts.³ Some also commented explicitly on British military power. Sayyid Ahmad Khan refers to how the British fort at Aden impresses one as a sign of the power, splendour and [qūvvat, shān va shaukat] of the English government.⁴ In Indian travelogues throughout the nineteenth century the fragility of Ottoman imperial power is contrasted with the more substantial nature of European imperial power in the Middle East, evincing an imaginative geography of competing global empires. The contrast between these two imperialisms is noted early on by Mirza Abu Taleb Khan and Yusuf Khan.⁵ Discussing the defeat of the Ottoman armies

in Egypt by the French, Abu Taleb Khan comments on how this defeat unveiled [bī-pardah kardan] the weaknesses of the Ottoman empire.⁶ Later travellers also comment on the decline as well as perceived despotism of the Ottoman empire.⁷ For the earlier travellers the global theatre of war between the British and the French impinges on their journeys, in terms of the dangers posed to their ships by the French navy. This becomes clear to Abu Taleb before he even leaves India. He describes how his ship cannot be launched on the open seas outside Calcutta because of a French frigate, which has to be engaged and destroyed by four English warships.⁸

These localised manifestations of the reach of the British and European imperial power, observed by Indians as they travel to Britain and Europe from India, underpin their reflections on India's place in the geopolitics of an emerging world order. This understanding is on one level continuous with the Eurocentred planetary consciousness described by Pratt, because it is organised around the European imperial metropolis as the centre and India as the periphery. Abu Taleb Khan, Karim Khan and, to a lesser extent, Yusuf Khan discuss India's role as just one theatre of war among many in the conflict between the French and the British in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and focus on Tipu Sultan's role in this global conflict at some length.⁹

The sense these Indian travellers have of the global reach of imperial power and its impact on the world is also clear in their descriptions of the museums and zoological gardens of London, which are depicted in terms of power.¹⁰ Pandian's description of the British museum as an institution 'where all that history has recorded, all that Science has taught, and all that Art has accomplished, is effectively illustrated in concrete forms by all manner of exhibits brought together and set forth like so many silent "object lessons" taken from the Book of Nature and the archives of universal literature' is representative of these travelogues as a whole.¹¹ While later Indian travellers are more habituated to this sense of British global power, they also comment on it in various ways, either by reflecting upon the significance of London as a world city¹² or by describing some of its institutions, such as the press, in terms of a global reach.¹³

These authors, then, treat London as the originating site of a globalising power, whose many sights reflect the nature of that power in different ways, in terms of its commodities, peoples, museums and exhibitions, rather than, as Burton has argued, seeing it as a 'quintessentially English commodity'.¹⁴ For them London is a showpiece of modernity and progress, with reference to which they shape their own perspectives on modernity.

Pratt has discussed the self-conceptions of European travellers in the age of imperial expansion as vanguards of progress and modernity.¹⁵ In general in this period travel was seen as a modern activity, a movement away from traditional ties, entailing an attitude of displacement towards those traditions.¹⁶ Grewal has discussed the formation of colonial modernity through

the discourse of Euroimperial travel, and how it became incorporated into the lives of colonised peoples.¹⁷ The Indian travelogues under consideration here reveal elements of this incorporation in the self-formation of their travelling identities, which underpins their imaginative geographies. Although most of the travellers examined here visited what might be called 'tourist sites' in London,¹⁸ for the majority of them by far the most important sights in their itinerary of travel in Britain are scenes of technological progress. These include extended descriptions of steam power, steam railways and boats, industrial manufacturing processes, the infrastructure of London and other European cities, and electricity.¹⁹ It is mainly these scenes which fall under the formal rubric of wonder [*'ajāibāt*] in the Urdu travelogues, but are also described as wondrous in the later travelogues in English.²⁰ These travelogues often read like itemisations of the signs of technological progress in Britain, in contrast to tourist sites and English institutions, which are sometimes found to be disappointing.²¹ Sayyid Ahmad Khan's historical sketch of London exclusively in terms of the development of its infrastructure and Pandian's revealing description of electric lighting as 'the coming Raj – the Imperial brilliance of the electric light in perfected power and majesty'²² are representative of the orientation of these travelogues as a whole towards London as a showpiece of modern technology. As Malabari writes at the outset of his travelogue, for the student of 'human progress' no other city can offer a 'wider scope for the exercise of his observation than in the metropolis of the world'.²³

This focus on the sites and scenes of modern technology means that the imaginary geography of these travelogues is also plotted in terms of a modern core and a backward periphery, on to which are mapped historical trajectories of progress and decline. The decline of India and other parts of the non-European world in relation to the 'West' is reflected upon by all these travellers. Yusuf Khan closes his travelogue with thoughts on the decadence and decline of Hindustanis,²⁴ while Dean Mahomed reflects on the decline of the Mughals in Delhi.²⁵ As a traveller, Karim Khan learns a new political language centred on the concept of progress. He differentiates between different political groups in Britain according to their stance on social development and progress.²⁶ The internalisation of the narrative of progress in these travelling subjects is clear in the motives they express for travelling in the first place. Mirza Abu Taleb, Sayyid Ahmad Khan, Malabari and Pandian justify their journeys to Britain in terms of this narrative. Their aim is to observe progress in action in Britain, in order to enable India to emulate the latter as a model of modernity.²⁷ Sayyid Ahmad Khan's travelogue amounts to an ethnography of progress, in which each ethnic group [qaum] he encounters on his travels is assessed according to the concept of progress [taraqqī]. He combines the two words [qaumī taraqqī] so that 'ethnic progress' underpins his internalisation of a master narrative of modernity.²⁸ He argues that travelling to Europe is mandatory for those

who wish their countries [mulk] to develop, since the wondrous ['ajāi'bāt] signs of progress there cannot be explained, but have to be witnessed first hand.²⁹ *Musāfirān-e landan* ends on an elegiac note with a reflection on the decline of Muslims and an endorsement of British imperialism as an opportunity for Muslims to tutor themselves in the ways of modernity. So far, he argues, it is the bigotry, ignorance and ineptitude [ta'aṣṣub, jehālīt aur nālā'iqī] of Muslims which has prevented them from not taking this opportunity.³⁰ Pandian's travelogue is also centred on Britain as a model to emulate. He makes specific recommendations for Indians to imitate what he sees as the influential institutions and practices of modernity.³¹ Malabari defines his travelogue as 'a study of human progress', and argues that the Indian National Congress should send delegates to London for the sole purpose of conducting a 'study on the spot of the political development' as well as 'material progress' of England. It is for this reason that he 'has given up sight-seeing on purpose', because 'human progress is my only study now'.³²

Thus, the travelogues of Indians journeying to Britain often read like case studies of technological progress and fieldwork accounts of modernity, rather than studies of Englishness as such. The effects of the internalisation of the narrative of progress on these travellers' sense of selfhood are evident in their texts. Just as these travellers became paradoxically self-conscious when trapped in the ethnographic gaze of powerful others, they were also rendered self-conscious through their sense of what they lacked in relation to the power of modernity. The travelogues enact a progressively self-conscious sense of inferiority as they plot their trajectories along the axis of a progressive modernity. In his dedication, Dean Mahomed draws attention to his 'want of the literary attainments, that refine and polish the European'.³³ While it is true that this expression of the author's modesty was a literary convention at the time,³⁴ what is striking about it are the cultural terms in which it is expressed. It becomes a cultural self-statement with reference to the figure of the articulate 'European'. A simultaneous devaluation of India and valorisation of Britain occurs when Mirza Abu Taleb describes the beauties of Phoenix Park in Dublin, adding that its attractions help him to understand the justness of the British desire to return home in spite of their status [jāh va bazurgī] in India.³⁵ This is the reverse of his own changing evaluations as he journeys. He begins his journey with a sense of Calcutta as a great city but ends with a sense of its inferiority.³⁶ On his return to India, Yusuf Khan frequently makes comparisons between London and cities in India, to the detriment of the latter.³⁷ He approves of Calcutta because, according to him, it is like London in so many ways.³⁸ This devaluing of the cities and practices of India by continual reference to European cities and monuments is also evident in Sayyid Ahmad Khan's travelogue. Like Yusuf Khan, the only positive evaluation he offers of an Indian city (in this case Bombay) is because of its approximation to an English city.³⁹ In fact, the

self-devaluation in *Musāfirān-e landan* reaches such a pitch that the author argues Hindustanis as whole are like a dirty and savage animal [meile aur vehshī jānvar] in relation to the English who are compared to a worthy and beautiful man [lāi'q aur khūbshūrāt ādmī].⁴⁰ A similar self-devaluation is at work in Pandian's travelogue, which is peppered with references to the 'separation' and the 'moral gulf' between the 'position of things in England' and those in India.⁴¹ His travelogue reads like an enactment of ever more dismal examples of Indian inferiority. Malabari's valorisation of London as the epitome of modernity and the 'metropolis of the world' has a religious intensity about it. This is apparent when he compares the city to Mecca, Medina, Benares, Jerusalem and Budh-Gaya, all in the space of a few lines.⁴² It is in relation to this plenitude that his entire travelogue is organised, with London as the microcosm of the world.

In their travelling autobiographies, Gandhi, Nehru and Iqbal seek to define empowering forms of travel which break from the self-awareness rooted primarily in the sense of a lacking selfhood, but they do so without fashioning a ready-made and fulsome selfhood. As they explore the ties and conflicts between interiority and politics, they try to move beyond an interiority which is focussed on the failures of selfhood in relation to the power of modernity. It is also through the concepts and trajectories of travel that Gandhi, Nehru and Iqbal reflect upon the consequences of modernity and shape their different perspectives on it.

Gandhi's counter-modern travels

Unlike these earlier Indian travelogues, Gandhi's autobiographies enact a notion of travel which forms the basis of his critique of modern technology and the colonial state. His narratives elaborate alternative kinds of travel as forms of resistance to colonialism and modernity. His notion of travel as the rejection of modern forms of transport also counters Nehruvian nationalism, which, as we shall see, celebrates the technological enhancement of travel as a way of opening up India to further reflection. In his stress on the corporeality of travel, Gandhi also differs in key respects from Iqbal's view of travel, in which the body is rendered progressively ethereal as the poet enacts his journey. Their different concepts of travel map the body and its location in society differently.

Gandhi's itineraries of travel also form a counter-discourse to colonial ethnology's fixing of the 'native'. James Clifford has shown how ethnography privileged relations of dwelling over travel relations. He has argued that the category of fieldwork in ethnology erased the means and technologies of transport, technologies which suggested systematic prior and ongoing contacts and commerce with exterior places and forces that were not part of the field. These technologies were marginalised in favour of separating being there from getting there.⁴³ This is the case with Risley's *The People of India*

where the means of transport disappear into the third-person narrative voice of ethnology. There is no indication in the text of how the ethnographer moves around India in order to view it in its constructed totality.

There are a number of important features of Gandhi's itineraries of travel as a counter-discourse to colonial ethnology in this context. First, Gandhi does not separate being there from getting there. The means of transport are not erased but are instead foregrounded. He lets his reader know how he is travelling, rather than just where he is travelling to. In this, Gandhi's travelling autobiography is continuous with some preceding Indian travelogues, which also highlight modes of transport. In the case of Sayyid Ahmad Khan, the focus on modes of transport marginalises his accounts of the places he visits, so that his travelogue is less a narrative of travel in the conventional sense, and more a reflection on the technology which makes travel possible. This is in keeping with his general interest in infrastructure, from water and gas supplies, to the building of roads. On arriving in Aden, he first gives a detailed account of the ship he has travelled in, before describing Aden itself.⁴⁴ The prioritising of modes of transport over sights seen and places visited is also evident in the first instance of the verb *seir karna* (to travel and to tour) in the text. This occurs when he uses it to describe visiting the steamship he is to set sail on, and is followed by an extensive description of the inside of the ship.⁴⁵ There are also a number of other detailed descriptions of the ships he sails on.⁴⁶ Malabari's travelogue also foregrounds modes and means of transport, although to a lesser extent than *Musāfirān-e landan*. While Chapter 5 is entitled 'Life as seen in the streets and shops', it is in fact a depiction of London traffic and its modes of transport. This attention to modes and kinds of transport is also clear in other passages in the travelogue.⁴⁷ Malabari is also keen in one passage to detail the workings of the ship he sails on.⁴⁸

While *Musāfirān-e landan* is unusual in the space it devotes to describing modes of transport, in its exclusive focus on modern technologies of transport it typifies the bulk of Indian travelogues, which give no consideration to possible alternatives to this technology. Gandhi, on the other hand, describes travelling not just by train or ship, but also by stage coach, horse carriage, bullock cart and by foot. Moreover, as we shall see, he actively seeks out alternative ways of travelling to modern forms of transport, such as walking. In doing so, he breaks with the celebration of modernity in these travelogues, in which the technology of transport becomes a powerful sign of a wondrous modernity.⁴⁹ For some of these travellers, London is an exhibition of modernity precisely because 'it has the largest traffic to show',⁵⁰ while for others, even before the coming of engines on the roads, their most abiding impression of the cities of Europe is the traffic. Abu Taleb eloquently attests that from the time he arrived in Dublin until the time he left Europe, six years later, the sound of coach wheels was never far from his ears, day or night.⁵¹ It is striking that Gandhi makes no mention of traffic in his account

of London, in contrast not only to detailed accounts of London traffic in preceding travelogues, but also to the positive recommendation of forms of transport, such as the omnibus, as one of the best ways to see London.⁵²

Instead Gandhi concentrates on what the subtitle of his autobiography calls 'My Experiments with Truth', including 'Experiments with Dietetics',⁵³ and searches for the nature of religious truth.⁵⁴ Alongside this are his reflections on dress and social deportment in his interaction with others.⁵⁵ While earlier Indian travellers raise the question of diet, none of them considers experimenting with diet or changing it in any way. For them diet is a fixed practice, reflecting pre-given and stable religious identities, rather than a process, which can be actively shaped and experimented with as part of an ongoing project of self-formation. The first explicit sense of cultural difference in Yusuf Khan's and Karim Khan's narrative occurs in relation to questions of diet.⁵⁶ Sayyid Ahmad Khan discusses the problems of diet for both Muslim and Hindu travellers, while Malabari raises the issue in relation to his Zoroastrian identity.⁵⁷ The tensions between Mirza I'tisam uddin and his patron, Captain Swinton, in part arise from the former's adherence to a Muslim diet.⁵⁸ However, these questions of diet are raised in passing only, whereas in Gandhi's travelling autobiography the question is part of the central theme of his experiments with 'Truth', raised to a level of introspective self-reflection absent from preceding travelogues. On occasion it actually frames what in other travelogues would be a wondrous sight of technological power, for example the 1890 Great Exhibition of Paris and its centrepiece, the Eiffel Tower. After one paragraph on the Exhibition itself, Gandhi turns to the question of finding a vegetarian restaurant in Paris. He then cites with approval Tolstoy's view that the Eiffel Tower was a 'monument to man's folly, not his wisdom,' explained by Tolstoy, in Gandhi's paraphrase, as the product of a man addicted to tobacco, which like all 'intoxicants' 'clouded his intellect and made him build castles in the air'. Gandhi argues that the Tower was 'the toy of the Exhibition' and a 'good demonstration of the fact that we are all children attracted by trinkets'.⁵⁹ This framing of modernity through the question of diet is also evident in *Hind Swaraj*, where the effects of colonial modernity are likened to those of intoxicating and addictive substances, and the relationship between Indians and the British to that of a bhang addict and supplier blamed for his or her habit.⁶⁰

Gandhi's orientation towards traffic and modern technologies of transport breaks with preceding Indian travelogues in other ways. In his travelling autobiography, Gandhi moves away from an instrumentalist view of transport. In keeping with one of his general principles that the means are as important as the end,⁶¹ and that in some way the means is the end, the mode of transport is represented not as a means of travel but becomes an end in itself.⁶² This principle is extended to the communication of texts themselves. Conveying his letter to the Viceroy regarding the war conference the means of conveyance was as important as the letter itself; hence, his choice of the

Reverend Ireland to carry the letter, and the importance of the Reverend travelling intermediate class on the train.⁶³ The 'truthfulness' of the letter cannot be separated from the mode of conveying it and this 'truthfulness' would have been compromised had Ireland travelled first class.

Moreover, while some preceding Indian travelogues admired the facilities created for the comfort of travellers either in Europe or by European technology,⁶⁴ Gandhi wilfully courts discomfort in his travels, by choosing to travel third class.⁶⁵ This is on the face of it counter-intuitive, since most travellers seek to make their travels as comfortable as possible. Gandhi's foregrounding of transport through active discomfort becomes a way of unmasking what Heidegger calls the 'essence'⁶⁶ of modern technology. Heidegger argues we are blinded to this if we see technology as a means to an end alone, and therefore as somehow neutral. To do so means 'we are delivered over to it in the worst possible way'.⁶⁷ For Heidegger, technology as *ge-stellen* or 'setting upon' is above all an 'enframing'.⁶⁸ Hubert Dreyfus reads Heidegger's reflections on technology in terms of showing how the technological paradigm embodies and furthers our technological understanding of being, according to which what is not yet at our disposal will eventually be brought under our control.⁶⁹ As Heidegger puts it, 'Everything everywhere is ordered to stand by, to be immediately at hand, indeed to stand there just so that it may be on call for further ordering'.⁷⁰ In the 'totalizing paradigm' of modern technology, human beings also become a resource to be used and enhanced like any other part of a system that no one directs but that moves towards the total mobilisation and enhancement of all beings.⁷¹ Heidegger suggests that it is modern technology's 'Enframing' which threatens 'to sweep man away into ordering as the supposed single way of revealing', which thereby thrusts man 'into the danger of the surrender of his free essence'.⁷²

The importance of modern and integrated transportation systems is this 'essence' of technology. In the definition of transportation as the 'safe and efficient movement of people and goods',⁷³ no distinction is made between human beings and inert objects. Human road users are looked upon by technically trained traffic experts as the weakest link in the sophisticated technical system of traffic. Traffic psychology is supposed to 'fix' this link in order to ensure that travellers behave 'like machines' that can be controlled, regulated and manipulated so that common goals such as safety, efficiency and comfort can be achieved.⁷⁴ Transportation systems of modern industrial society are systems of managing persons in whom any sign of personhood is apt to be seen as deviant.⁷⁵ Gandhi's active courting of discomfort on the trains, choosing third-class travel when he can afford to travel first class, is such a kind of deviant behaviour which highlights the systematic disciplinary regime that is the modern transportation system. He also notes how passengers who travel third class are treated like 'sheep'.⁷⁶ It is only in third-class compartments that the governing paradigm of modern transportation systems becomes obvious, disguised as it is by the trappings of comfort

in first-class carriages. Furthermore, 'human' factors in modern transport systems are generally predetermined by the need to produce an 'immediate fit between the transport system and the user'.⁷⁷ Gandhi repeatedly shows that there is rarely an immediate fit between the modern transportation system and its officials, and the traveller, demonstrating how the impact of a transportation system and the experience of the passenger are continually made and re-made by the ethnicity and class of the passenger.⁷⁸ The differential experience of passengers is also determined by a contest of power between themselves and transport officials, so that Gandhi sees negotiating one's way about the transport system as a third-class passenger in terms of a servant negotiating with an official.⁷⁹ As the incident on the train in South Africa also shows, the ticket becomes a document whose fluidity of meaning is contested between traveller, official and railway company.⁸⁰ Gandhi here differs significantly from previous Indian travellers, some of whom also mention hostile behaviour from European passengers on board the ship. Abu Taleb refers to the 'cruel and oppressive attitude' [*'ādat-e zulm va tajabbar*] of one of his English travelling companions, which he takes as typical of vulgar Englishmen [*'amūm-e inglish*] in their dealings with Indians [*hindīyān*].⁸¹ Sayyid Ahmad Khan recounts the hostile behaviour of some English passengers towards him on board two ships.⁸² There is a hint in Karim Khan's travelogue that he encounters similar hostility, but he does not elaborate on this. Instead he mentions how he recollects in sorrow [*hālat-e ranj*] his sincere and intimate friends [*dostān-e šādiq va yārān-e muvāfiqq*] from childhood.⁸³ However, such incidents do not lead to life decisions of the kind Gandhi faced after his ejection from the train in South Africa: 'I began to think of my duty. Should I fight for my rights or go back to India, or should I go on to Pretoria without minding the insults, and return to India after finishing the case? It would be cowardice to run back to India . . . I should try, as far as possible, to root out the disease [of 'colour prejudice'] and suffer hardships in the process.'⁸⁴ Moreover, other Indian travellers who suffer in this way are not thereby led to critically reflect upon modern technology and modernity as a whole. Their texts remain rooted in an admiration for technological progress, and enact a consequent internalisation of inferiority in relation to that progress.

We could also interpret Gandhi's account of his reading of Ruskin's *Unto this last* on a train from Durban to Johannesburg in terms of the construction of a subjectivity which is resistant to modernity. Gandhi represents this episode as akin to a conversion experience, bringing 'about an instantaneous and practical transformation of my life'.⁸⁵ Ruskin's book engages with and critiques key texts of political economy such as Ricardo's and John Stuart Mill's, and stresses that we need to ask what frames their discussions of the nature of the market and the circulation of goods? In *Hind Swaraj*, Gandhi lists Thomas Taylor's *The Fallacy of Speed* (1909) as one of the works he consulted.⁸⁶ Taylor argues that it is the transport system which makes

possible the economy which is the subject of modern political economists.⁸⁷ It is important to stress the centrality of episodes of reading in the autobiographical narratives of Gandhi, Nehru and Iqbal. All three are anxious to foreground their reading of other texts, especially European texts, through appendices, footnotes, or in the main body of their texts. To a certain extent, such reflection also occurs in the autobiographies of other writers. For Rousseau, to become a reader is to become conscious of one's self as a person: 'it is from my earliest reading that I date the unbroken consciousness of my own existence'.⁸⁸ Sartre takes this further by dividing his autobiography into two parts entitled 'Reading' and 'Writing'. For him, though, his reading processes engender not consciousness, but compliance with illusions on multiple levels, of which the grandest is the bourgeois illusion of culture itself. His determinedly anti-heroic view of reading and writing ('my books reek of sweat and effort')⁸⁹ serves as an attempt to demystify many of the illusions foisted on him through his upbringing and literary education. The overt textuality of his book, and the way in which he is constructed in and through books, speaks more of ennui than of heroic intellectual effort ('I know very well that I am only a machine for making books').⁹⁰

Conversely, for Gandhi, Nehru and Iqbal the display of the reading list is a recurrent device to secure their intellectual authority, emblematic of the achievement of a first-person voice.⁹¹ This is the case, for example, with Gandhi's reading of Maine and Seeley, both of whom he appropriates for his own purposes. His selective appropriation of Ruskin is evident in his translation of *Unto This Last* into Gujarati,⁹² a translation which was proscribed by the British authorities in India along with *Hind Swaraj*.⁹³ He also refers to the influence of Ruskin on his 'tendency towards simplicity [which] began in Durban'.⁹⁴

Gandhi's reading of Ruskin on the train can be interpreted as the irruption of a recalcitrant subjectivity which refuses to be tamed or erased by the technology of transport, even as he is using that technology. By contrast Indian travellers tend to represent themselves as overwhelmed and engulfed by London's traffic and the technology of transport in general. Mohan Lal says, 'I can hardly express the astonishment which overpowered my senses' when he first travelled by train, while Malabari presents the crowds at the major stations in London as 'indescribable', elaborating, 'To say that it is tremendous, is to give but a feeble description of it . . . If I were to be detained in such a crowd for a few hours I am afraid I would either be stunned, or distracted beyond cure'.⁹⁵ Pandian describes his experience on alighting at Victoria station thus: 'the Oriental stranger is bewildered by the number of such landings he views about him, his unaccustomed eyes being familiar with no more than three on Indian lines'.⁹⁶ Pandian's third-person self-ascription as an 'Oriental stranger' bewildered by a British railway station is in sharp contrast to Gandhi's insistent first-person voice, articulated in part by enacting a critical perspective on modern technology.

In Gandhi's autobiography, travel becomes a way of contesting modern technology rather than a means of celebrating it.⁹⁷ As Dreyfus argues, we are less subjects that use the modern transportation system as a tool, rather we are used by it to fill its vehicles.⁹⁸ The experience of travel in Gandhi's autobiography opens an alternative space for what Heidegger called a 'free relationship' to technology.⁹⁹ Gandhi's travels also undermine the universalist imperatives of systems of technology with their homogenisation of the human 'user'. Implicit in his autobiography is the argument that modern technology, as represented par excellence by transport systems, is in fact a 'Western' phenomena designed for the 'Western' user, which reconfigures notions of the sacred. In particular, Gandhi is concerned with the way in which the easy accessibility to pilgrimage sites afforded by the modern technology of transport undermines the difficulty of approach which is a necessary part of their sacredness.¹⁰⁰ In this, he once again breaks from preceding travelogues by Indians.

The struggle between a sacred/spiritual geography and an externally imposed colonial, Western-oriented one is especially apparent in Mohan Lal's *Travels*. Lal repeatedly refers to or describes sites of religious or spiritual significance in his travels, while Burnes makes no mention of these sites at all in his *Travels*. For example, Lal describes 'a religious place of the Hindus', where there is a 'sacred pond', in the vicinity of the salt mines at Pind Dadan Khan. Burnes only describes salt mines not a religious site.¹⁰¹ Lal later refers to the tomb of Cheragh Shah, and the temple of Gorakh Nath, neither of which Burnes mentions.¹⁰² As they travel through Central Asia and Afghanistan, Lal mediates his geographical account through Shi'i legends and traditions, noting the locations of important events in Shi'i religious history.¹⁰³ However, alongside this spiritual geography is the narrative of Lal's progressive anglicisation of himself, which I have discussed above, as well as his stress on Greek classical geography, so that he notes spots and localities which Alexander passed through in ancient times.¹⁰⁴ He also often gives the ancient Greek names for rivers and cities, alongside their indigenous names.¹⁰⁵ In this, there is an overlap with Burnes, who on the first page of his *Travels* cites as one of his reasons for travelling the desire to 'visit the conquests of Alexander'.¹⁰⁶ Throughout his journey, he searches for an identity between 'the topography' of Alexander's route and his own.¹⁰⁷

Other Indian travelogues also involve sacred geography. I have discussed above how Abu Taleb foregrounds his Shi'i identity in the Ottoman provinces of the Middle East, often in relation to sacred sites. Sayyid Ahmad Khan also notes sites of sacred significance in his travels.¹⁰⁸ Pandian has a non-conformist Christian perspective on the 'fretful, ever-changing unrest' of Christianity in England,¹⁰⁹ but his travelogue has few observations on sites of religious or spiritual significance, and, as we have seen, it is framed by the narrative of global progress. Malabari's travelogue conflates religiosity with the modernity of London as a world city, rather than defining it against that

modernity. This is evident in his description of London as encompassing cities of faith and pilgrimage sites, as Mecca, Medina, Benares, Jerusalem and 'Budh-Gaya' all rolled into one, and his representation of his journey to London as a pilgrimage, but one to the defining site of modernity, as a 'vantage ground' from which the pilgrim might 'look at the world's fair around'.¹¹⁰

By contrast, Gandhi describes the sacred against modernity. When he reflects upon the Lakshman Jhula in his travelling autobiography, he notes that the rope-bridge has been replaced by an iron suspension bridge over the Ganges. He also notes that the keys to this bridge have been entrusted to the government ('this was too much even for my loyalty of those days'),¹¹¹ and that he feels the bridge is 'entirely out of place with its surroundings and mars their beauty'.¹¹² The significance of this passage is clear. The combination of industrial technology with the control of the State, coupled with the fact that the bridge has been erected by an Indian and its keys handed over to the British, resonates with some basic themes of Gandhi's thinking, in particular the contention that the British do not rule Indians, rather it is the Indians who have enabled the British to rule them.¹¹³ In the first place, Indians imitate 'Western' technology; then, almost as if they are aware of the culturally derivative nature of this iron structure, they hand it over to the British as if they (the British) had built it in the first place and so are its rightful owners. Instead of the progression of self-empowerment which Gandhian autobiography tries to map out, we have here a staging of self-surrender which is a parody of his autobiography. This self-surrender is based on a key insight that modern technology does not in fact 'belong' to Indians, a point that is made in *Hind Swaraj* when Gandhi tries to explain why modern technological inventions have all taken place in the 'West' and not in India.¹¹⁴ That this insight leads to self-surrender rather than self-empowerment demonstrates the difficult project of self-knowledge which faces autobiography in general.¹¹⁵ The problem for Gandhian autobiography is how to deploy hard-won self-knowledge to break out of spirals of self-defeat. Moreover, this self-subjugation takes place under the rubric of Indian 'philanthropy', demonstrating yet again how in their zeal to better themselves in terms of a modern 'Western' paradigm Indians in fact defeat themselves.

There is a discrepancy between the name 'jhula' (meaning 'swing') and the immobility and massiveness of the iron bridge. The rope-bridge not only fitted into the landscape, it was also light and, as its name implied, could swing in the wind, and so was part of the landscape, whereas the landscape is organised around the iron bridge itself. Added to this, the technology of transport and consequent spoiling of the place of pilgrimage has led to a deterioration of the landscape, much of it due to the actions of the so-called 'pilgrims' themselves. If we read this passage alongside Heidegger's passage on the river Rhine in his essay 'The Question concerning technology', we can see that Gandhi is making similar points about how landscape can be

ordered and framed by technology. For Heidegger a wooden bridge spanning the river Rhine is 'built into' the landscape, while the construction of a hydroelectric plant on the banks of the Rhine means that the river is 'built into' the power plant; 'what the river is now, namely a water power supplier, derived from out of the essence of the power station'.¹¹⁶ The river is set to work by the power plant, and it appears as something that is at our command because it is dammed up by the power plant. For Gandhi, however, what is obstructed is the flow of the river as it signifies access to the sacred. Heidegger argues that although the river Rhine is still a river in the landscape, it is an 'object on call for inspection by a tour group ordered there by the vacation industry'.¹¹⁷ We might say that for Gandhi the river Ganges at the location of 'Lakshman jhula' is also now an object on call for the inspection of groups of pilgrims, 'ordered' there by the pilgrimage industry and the technology of modern transportation, under the auspices of the colonial state. Heidegger reflects upon Holderlin's ode to the Rhine as a way of bringing it into 'unhiddenness'. It is only in the realm of art, he argues, that we can have a decisive confrontation with technology.¹¹⁸ For Gandhi, however, the confrontation with technology is dramatised in the art of the 'native's' travelling autobiography. It is through autobiography that we can elaborate a kind of landscape in which rivers such as the Ganges are not blocked but can flow unimpeded once again. In a sense the physical location of the Ganges as a geographical feature on the map traps and fixes the river as a literal entity through the technologies of cartography. We might recall here the role of cartography in Kipling's *Kim* and the geographical image of India which is unfolded through the travels of its boyish protagonist and its elderly pilgrim in search of a river. Here India is laid out for the (map) reader as a territory criss-crossed by rivers, railways and roads, its borders secured by the British state. The wandering view point enacts a panoramic perspective in which India becomes a totality brought into being by the British state, a spatial text with a succession of conceivable places and fixed natives to be read. The confrontation with technology by Gandhi as a traveller helps to free the Ganges, dammed up on the map, so that it is no longer fixed in a circumscribed and secured space. In *Hind Swaraj* the connection between the elaboration of selfhood and the flowing of rivers becomes clear when Gandhi describes how for ancient Indians the Ganges flowed in 'their own homes'.¹¹⁹

Gandhi's view of the iron suspension bridge and its impact on sacred geography is in contrast to Cornelia Sorabji's perspective in her autobiography, *India Calling* (1934). Sorabji's text is partly held together by the mutually reinforcing categories of ancient India and the 'progressive' West.¹²⁰ This is clear in a passage where she describes the charitable works of a widow which included 'a wonderful Pilgrims' Way over the Ganges – which was also of great use in the economic development of the countryside. While the bridge was building, she camped beside the river, "praying

blessings into every stone”: and fasting in apology to Mother Ganga for the modern machinery which must overshadow her’.¹²¹ Sorabji’s perspective here captures the split identification of an Indian subjectivity with the antagonistic but also mutually reinforcing categories of ‘ancient’ India and ‘modern’ Western technology. However, this split identification is also at work in her own persona.¹²² The picture of a ‘superstitious’ India being overcome by the ‘modern machinery’ ostensibly used to increase access to a sacred site, and the word ‘must’ denoting the historically inevitable and morally imperative, both underline Sorabji’s own overt identification with the supposed values of modern progress.

Gandhi’s views of the iron bridge are also in contrast to Sayyid Ahmad Khan’s paean to the iron suspension bridge in Bristol, to which he devotes four pages, extolling it as an example of technological progress. As with other Indian travelogues, these pages express an acute sense of a failing self. It is in relation to the construction of this bridge that Sayyid Ahmad Khan defines the British as men [ādmī] and Hindustanis as animals [ḥeivān], who dare not show their faces to any polished and developed nation [tarbiyat yāfta mulk].¹²³ James Duncan has argued that the translation of cultural beliefs into the visible motifs of landscape exteriorises that which was hitherto internal vision, and so helps to shape, control and reinforce the internalisation of vision.¹²⁴ In Gandhi’s text, the relationship is less exteriorising what is internal, and more dramatising an interplay between the interiority of subjectivity and the external, public realm, in which landscape becomes a site of struggle for the elaboration of a first-person voice in relation to a group identity. This interplay produces an ambiguous space, in which the terms ‘internal’ and ‘external’ are rendered problematic as oppositions.¹²⁵ Duncan also argues, following Pierce Lewis, that landscape is our ‘unwitting autobiography’. It is cultural amnesia which allows landscape to act as powerful ideological tool. By becoming part of the everyday, landscape masks artifice and the ideological nature of its form and content, and so it is unwittingly read even as it is unwittingly written.¹²⁶ Gandhi’s project aims to transform the landscape of the Lakshman Jhula from being one of unwitting autobiography, to one in which the creation of landscape is consequent upon autobiography as a self-conscious project of political empowerment.

Here there is also a contrast between Gandhi’s travelling autobiography and Dean Mahomed’s *Travels*, where the Indian landscape is less an example of an unwitting autobiography, and more a reflection of his alienated autobiography. This is clear in his attempt to frame the landscape of India in the English pastoral tradition of landscape poetry and art. The language of pastoral retreats, rural idylls and picturesque prospects runs through the text, and is sometimes underpinned by allusions to specific authors in the bucolic tradition.¹²⁷ At times the attempt to squeeze the representation of Indian landscape into this literary framework results in an inversion, in which the landscape and geography of India become scenes inserted into the grounds

of an English country retreat. In this way, Indian scenes become alien within India itself, for example, when Mahomed refers to the 'very fine seats and villas round Monghere, built by European Gentlemen in the Company's service, who retire to the country . . . among others, is the house of Mr Grove, an elegant building finished in the English style, and standing in the centre of every rural improvement . . . amid such scenes, the riches and luxuries of the East, are displayed with fascinating charms'.¹²⁸ The adoption of this literary language needs to be read alongside Mahomed's probable knowledge of Persian and Urdu forms of travel writing, neither of which is reflected in his *Travels*. Instead he uses the epistolary form fashionable in the fiction and travel literature in English at the time.¹²⁹

Dean Mahomed's travelogue articulates a strong sense of the militarisation of space, and his geographical imagination is dominated by colonial military manoeuvres and marches. The picturesque landscape of India becomes organised around the depiction of military encampments. Thus, Mahomed refers to the British military camp at Godagarhi as 'extremely pleasant; the tents being almost covered with the spreading branches of mangoe [sic] and tamarind tree, which under the rigours of a torrid sun, afforded a cool shade, and brightened the face of the surrounding country; whilst the Ganges, to heighten the beauty of the varied landscape, rolled its majestic flood behind us'.¹³⁰ Here the military camp almost becomes a rural retreat in a picturesque setting. At other instances in the text, military camps and manoeuvres are described as aesthetic spectacles, as when he represents one of his camps as having a 'grand military appearance', with the 'superb marquees of the general Officers' rising in 'military grandeur' on an eminence.¹³¹ These manoeuvres are seen as carefully and artistically wrought spectacles which impress the 'natives'. At one point, Mahomed describes how 'the natives, who flocked from all quarters, for many miles around, were delighted and astonished at the sight' of our 'military array' and 'uncommon abilities' in manoeuvres.¹³² Here the alienated sense of an Indian landscape commanded by colonial military spectacles and camps is reinforced by Mahomed's reference to 'natives', as though neither he nor the other sepoys could fall into that class. Mahomed's distance from that landscape is once again underpinned by the projection of his post-conversion self, after his arrival in Ireland, on to his earlier life, so that even in India he represents himself as somehow outside it.

The category of the sublime was also central to Dean Mahomed's travelogue. Partha Mitter has shown in detail how in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries European travellers and observers in India used the category of the sublime to re-interpret Indian art and architecture.¹³³ Paradoxically, the terrors of the sublime were deployed to domesticate the perceived monstrosity of Indian art and sculpture. Dean Mahomed's use of the sublime therefore reflects the prevalence of a certain kind of European aesthetic lexicon. The first page of his travelogue calls attention to his

perception of the contrast between Ireland and 'those *striking scenes* in India, which we are wont to survey with a kind of sublime delight'.¹³⁴ These include 'sublime scenes of rural imagery, which at once astonish and delight the enraptured view'.¹³⁵ Elsewhere, the sublimity of Indian architecture is secured through comparisons with ancient Rome, as when he refers to the palace at Allahabad, with its 'sublime air of grandeur' and its 'lofty gateways . . . which resemble in some manner, the old triumphal arches of the Romans'.¹³⁶ However, ultimately the terrors of the sublime highlight the even more awesome nature of British military power. Mahomed describes his sight of the fort at Gwalior as the 'most sublime view I ever beheld', writing that it strikes the imagination 'with a kind of horrible astonishment far beyond simple imagination'. However, he then stresses the ease with which this sublime and seemingly impregnable fortress fell to the British forces, so that its sublimity displays less the awesome nature of Indian architecture, and more the military might of the British, 'the greatness of the undertaking', and the truth in the 'general opinion that there is no difficulty so arduous which may not be subdued, by the resolution and perseverance of a British soldier'.¹³⁷ Moreover, Mahomed tries to inhabit the panoramic viewpoint which is underpinned by the category of the sublime, but in doing so he stresses his distance from the landscape, rather than his active participation in it. Once the fortress is taken and occupied by the British, Mahomed 'looked down, and beheld, as it were from the clouds, the town, four hundred feet below me: such an awful scene forms a subject for the pencil of the most sublime artist'.¹³⁸ Thus, Mahomed takes over wholesale a European language of aesthetics which extracts him from the landscape of India, rather than emphasising his creative participation in it. What Donna Haraway has called the 'god trick of seeing everything from nowhere', or the 'conquering gaze from nowhere',¹³⁹ is here made possible by the text's endorsement of colonial military power. The view from the clouds echoes the attempt Mahomed makes throughout his text to transcend his conflicting subject positions. Mahomed's construction of a sublime India is rooted in an attempt to transcend India into an unchanging post-conversion self, which is projected backwards on to his earlier narrative. The sublime alienates him from India, and results in the freezing of his agency.

We have already seen how in his travelogue Malabari uses the language of pilgrimage to celebrate modernity and its consequences. Gandhi's travelling autobiography uses similar language but for radically different purposes. In keeping with the combination of the spiritual and political in satyagraha, Gandhi repeatedly refers to the long marches of protest he organises in South Africa as 'pilgrimages' with the marchers as 'pilgrims'.¹⁴⁰ The spiritual and political ideology of walking in Gandhi's thought is brought to the fore when it becomes clear that the state in South Africa tries to control where and when Indians might walk on the pavements. In *An Autobiography*, Gandhi refers to legislation passed in the Transvaal, applied to 'coloured people',

which forbade Indians to walk on public footpaths, and prohibited them from moving outdoors after 9 p.m. without a permit. Gandhi recounts how he was himself 'pushed and kicked into the street' when on one occasion he walks on the footpath,¹⁴¹ and another incident when he is almost lynched by a mob in Durban when he is walking through the streets.¹⁴² The long march of the miners in South Africa also highlights how the State commands space in an attempt to immobilise the 'pilgrims'. When it becomes clear that the incarceration of large numbers of miners in jails would be expensive and play into the hands of the miners, since their mass imprisonment would mean that the mines could no longer operate, the government decided to surround the mine compounds with wire netting and proclaimed the compounds 'outstations to the Dundee and Newcastle jails and appointed the mine-owners' European staff as the warders. In this way, they forced the labourers underground against their will and the mines began to work once more'.¹⁴³ This attempt to reconstitute a disciplinary space through the dictatorial fiats of the State in order to immobilise Indians foregrounds the State's command and constitution of space as central to Gandhi's travel accounts. His travelling autobiography dramatises the attempt to counter this production of incarcerating space by the State through the labour of walking. For Gandhi, space is not ontologically given or defined by others, but corporeally practised through the labour of walking.

The imbrication of this rejection of the modern technology of transport and spiritual geography is evident in Gandhi's picture of an India elaborated through the walking of pilgrims. In *Hind Swaraj* he refers to the places of pilgrimage located in the corners of India, which mapped out India as a geographical entity through the travels on foot and by bullock-cart of pilgrims. This geography was disrupted, he argued, by the 'advent of railways' which brought to the fore 'distinctions' and differences between Indians.¹⁴⁴ However, there is another way in which space is corporeally produced in Gandhi's autobiographical project. It is no accident that Gandhi's insights into the complexities and difficulties of embodiment take place when he is walking. Specifically, his crucial reflections on brahmacharya take place on his long marches during the so-called Zulu rebellion.¹⁴⁵ Once again, insights into the difficulties of what Gandhi calls 'self-realisation'¹⁴⁶ are intertwined with the choice of the style of travelling. Moreover, brahmacharya is not just unfolded through walking; it is part of the continuing narrative of divesting one's self of possessions in order to secure one's mobility as an itinerant. Gandhi refers to cutting down 'heavy household expenses' and his move to Phoenix as preparations for the brahmacharya vow.¹⁴⁷ Reducing one's possessions also means tackling our attitudes of possessiveness, in part as they are rooted in our sexual relationships with others. Gandhi gives the reader a vivid and perceptive account of how he was tormented by sexual jealousy in the early days of his marriage and for him brahmacharya is one way of tackling these sexually possessive attitudes.¹⁴⁸

The figure of the traveller as a brahmachari is a striking counterpoint to the European male traveller in one specific way. Ronald Hyam has shown how for British men the Empire afforded all kinds of sexual opportunities in their travels. The Empire for the British male was a place of adventure and this included sexual adventures.¹⁴⁹ This was partly reflected in the language of cartography, saturated with perceptions of female sexuality, so that maps sometimes abstracted 'the female body as a geometry of sexuality held captive under the technology of imperial form'.¹⁵⁰ There have been a number of important scholarly discussions of Gandhi's notions of brahmacharya.¹⁵¹ My concern here is to suggest an additional perspective by showing how brahmacharya is also an alternative to a mode of travel whose pleasure stemmed from the possibility of sexual liaisons conducted as a display of power. In this, Gandhi's travelling autobiography is also a counterpoint to preceding Indian travelogues, whose authors sometimes mention encounters with European women ranging from flirtations to the possibilities of liaisons. For example, Abu Taleb mentions an encounter with Dutch women in the Cape, which is heavy with sexual innuendo.¹⁵² He also composes a number of odes to British women as their admirer.¹⁵³ Malabari details the possibilities of flirtation with women on London's public transport system, particularly on the omnibuses.¹⁵⁴ Indian travellers sometimes feminise London itself. Abu Taleb writes an ode to London, using the conventional love language of the ghazal, with London as the beloved and himself as the lovelorn suitor,¹⁵⁵ while Pillai relates how London is 'silently majestic when you see her in her naked grandeur' at night.¹⁵⁶ In contrast to this, in Gandhi's travelling autobiography brahmacharya becomes another kind of power which re-figures travel as the renunciation of sexuality, and in which cartography becomes a narrative of that renunciation. As an itinerant, Gandhi's sexuality is frequently challenged, ports of call in particular being zones of vulnerability.¹⁵⁷ It is only with the abandonment of modern systems of transport and his embracing of walking as an alternative mode of travel that he can begin to contemplate brahmacharya. It is not surprising then that brahmacharya itself is figured in terms of the walking of a perilous path: 'Every day I realize more and more that it [brahmacharya] is like walking on the sword's edge'.¹⁵⁸ For Gandhi, brahmacharya does not signify the abandonment of travelling; rather it signals the beginning of a new kind of voyage.

There is a further aspect to Gandhi's ideology of walking. In the *Fallacy of Speed*, referred to by Gandhi in his appendix to *Hind Swaraj*, Taylor argues that hitherto we 'have looked on distance as an enemy to be conquered' but perhaps we ought to consider that 'distance has virtues', so that we may come to regard it as a 'friend rather than a foe'.¹⁵⁹ By suggesting the labour of walking as an alternative to technologies of transport, Gandhi is in agreement. Rather than opting for the diminishing of distance by modern systems of transport, he suggests ways in which distance might be

magnified and lengthened. Courting discomfort in travel includes slowing things down so that journeys take longer to complete. At a basic level, this is in keeping with the motif of travel as the exemplar of autobiography itself; travelling becomes the ground for constituting one's subjectivity: in the symbolic economy of Gandhi's texts, prolonging journeys offers deeper opportunities for self-formation. Taylor also suggests that with the fallacy of speed, there is a 'loss of peace or poetry in the immediate surroundings', a loss of the 'poetry . . . of place'.¹⁶⁰ We have already seen how the 'poetry of place' is important for Gandhi's autobiographical project, in that landscape is a product of self-conscious design, an artifice part of the elaboration of a geography of subjectivity. At the same time, in so far as the ease of access to pilgrimage sites undermines their sacred significance for Gandhi, there is a sense in which the prolongation of physical distance and so of journeying time leads to a density of significance in localised spots. It is as though location itself is re-located as the site of self-formation, so that places are no longer 'phantasmagoric' and emptied of their local meanings.¹⁶¹

Gandhi's concern to give physical distance its due also needs to be interpreted against Seeley's *The Expansion of England* (1883), which Gandhi read and appropriated for his own purposes.¹⁶² Seeley argued that the apparently far-flung nature of the British empire was no longer a problem because 'distance is dissolved by science'. This is in contrast to the earlier period of the nineteenth century, before the advent of electricity and steam, when the 'strong natural bonds of race and religion seemed practically dissolved by distance'.¹⁶³ The admiration of modern technology in Indian travelogues, even when qualified, implicitly celebrates the dissolution of distance which Seeley argues strengthens the British Empire as a global entity. Even where there is some ambivalence towards this technology, as in the case of Malabari, the overall value of speedy travel is not questioned. While Malabari points to some of the stressful consequences of rush hour in London on public transport, at the same time he describes some of the railway lines from and to London as 'the slowest and tamest I have ever used'.¹⁶⁴ He complains that when his steamer is 'crawling [through the Suez canal], you more than once realize the force of the expression – "Dull as ditch water"'.¹⁶⁵ We have also seen that he does not problematise, as Gandhi does, his reliance on the modern technology of transport, a reliance in tension with his self-description as a 'rambler' in the subtitle of his text, 'rambles of a pilgrim reformer'. Here 'rambling' is no longer exclusively tied to the peripatetic, but is extended through his utilisation of the modern technology of transport, in contrast to Gandhi, who defines the peripatetic against that technology. Pandian also celebrates the speedy transport system of London, in contrast to the railway system of India which is repeatedly criticised for its slowness.¹⁶⁶ The passages describing the efficiency of London's transport system reveal a sense of exhilaration at its speediness: 'London is pre-eminently a city of brisk – I might say breathless – activity, and the means of locomotion

may be said to be as manifold as they are multitudinous. The city is ramified with a network of railway and tram lines running in every possible direction, and there is an amazing variety of vehicles to choose from. Besides the rail cars worked by steam, electricity or horses, there are omnibuses, broughams, hansoms, flies, cabs, cycles of all sorts, carts, wagons, steam-boats, ferry-boats, tugs, barges, and a dozen or more of other kinds of carriages . . . Rapid locomotion constitutes the prevailing rule of life in the great metropolis.¹⁶⁷ For Pandian the greatness of the metropolis is closely connected with the 'rapid locomotion' of its transport system. The importance of the 'idea of speed' to conceptions of modernity has been recently stressed by Zygmunt Bauman, arguing that 'once the distance passed in a unit of time came to be dependent on technology, on artificial means of transportation, all extant, inherited limits to the speed of movement could be in principle transgressed'. For this reason, 'velocity of movement and access to faster means of mobility steadily rose in modern times to the position of power and domination'.¹⁶⁸ In Gandhi's travelling autobiography, then, the magnifying of distance through the labour of walking, and the disentangling of the human body from the technology of transport, can in part be read as writing back to both Seeley and previous Indian travelogues.

For Gandhi, manual and pedestrian labour become ways of re-integrating the body at the centre of a visual and tactile field, and of recovering an embodied responsibility. Haraway has argued that it is the instruments of visualisation in particular that have compounded the meanings of disembodiment, and underpinned the trick of seeing everything from nowhere.¹⁶⁹ In Chapter 2, I argued that the reference to optical instruments in Indian travelogues suggested how these authors felt the need to secure their perspectives through this technology, and that this signifies a decorporealisation of their vision. Gandhi's attempt to reclaim the body and its sensory apparatus is enacted in another scene, during a ship voyage, which focuses on one such instrument of visualisation. Gandhi describes how he and Kallenbach, standing near the porthole of their cabin, argue about Kallenbach's binoculars, and how in the end Gandhi, with Kallenbach's apparent acquiescence, throws them into the sea.¹⁷⁰ What is dramatised here is the attempt to reclaim (in Haraway's words) the 'sensory system that has been used to signify a leap out of the marked body . . . into a conquering gaze from nowhere'.¹⁷¹ Moreover, in the *Fallacy of Speed*, Taylor argues that hitherto we have 'have looked on distance as an enemy to be conquered' but perhaps we ought to consider that 'distance has virtues', so that we may come to regard it as a 'friend rather than a foe'.¹⁷² The binoculars episode is another exemplification of Gandhi's attempt to counter the abolition of distance, since binoculars are instruments of visualisation that abolish distance by making far objects seem closer.

However, there is another dimension to what might be called Gandhi's 're-corporealisation' of vision. In Chapter 2, I argued that the privileging

of the eye in Indian travelogues of the nineteenth century suggested the self-consciously literate nature of these accounts, as well as a further level of disembodiment. In his autobiographies, Gandhi elevates the term 'illiteracy' to the extent that it almost becomes a term of commendation. Illiteracy is associated with having a multilingual repertoire to draw upon in conversation. Gandhi discusses how one of the leading Indians who was in the first batch of prisoners in South Africa, Thambi Naidoo, had received virtually no schooling but yet had a command of a variety of spoken languages, both Indian and African. In this he was typical of Indians in South Africa, among whom 'a working knowledge of so many languages was not a rare accomplishment'. In fact, these Indians 'become such good linguists almost without effort' because they are not taught in a foreign medium and they acquire languages by 'talking with people who speak them'.¹⁷³ Similarly, he refers to another co-worker who 'while "illiterate" according to our standards' spoke English and Zulu 'from experience'.¹⁷⁴ In general, then, the elevation of the term 'illiterate' or 'unlettered' is part of Gandhi's criticism of formal learning, in which what he calls the 'fetish' of a knowledge of letters is central.¹⁷⁵ Illiteracy is also associated with an openness to dialogue with others. We will see how dialogue is central to Gandhi's key texts in a variety of ways. Gandhi tries to capture the dynamics of this alternative notion of learning in his scheme of education for his children, in which he combines a deliberate minimising of what he calls 'literary education' with a peripatetic mode of travel.¹⁷⁶

In Chapter 2, I referred to Ong's view on how orality is entangled with existential situations that engage the body. In many ways, Gandhi is concerned with the full existential context of what might be called the 'human condition.' Gandhi's body-reflexive practices such as fasting and brahmacharya are interventions in, and clarifications of, the nature of embodiment, in which he treats the body as an ongoing situation.¹⁷⁷ His engagement with illiteracy and orality mark also reflects his concern to foreground the nature of embodiment, even as he seeks to discipline and manage it. This counters the enactment of disembodiment in Indian travelogues of the nineteenth century, in which vision, to use Haraway's phrase, becomes the 'route to disembodiment'.¹⁷⁸

Nehru and the travelling Indian scientist

In contrast to Gandhi, Nehru's travelling autobiography is on one level continuous with the celebration of modern technology in Indian travelogues. To some extent, this reflects his own university education since he read the Natural Science Tripos at Cambridge, from 1907 to 1910. Nehru associates a post-colonial India with the infrastructure of travel and technology opening up remoter regions of India. This is clear in his essay 'A visit to Garwhal', in which, commenting on the isolation and poverty of the

region, he represents Swaraj as taking the 'semblance of a road leading from the heart of the mountains to the plains below'. He amplifies this by referring to the necessity of 'improving the productive capacity of the people', by providing hydroelectric power, a water supply and medical facilities.¹⁷⁹ I have discussed how Pratt and others have stressed that the scientific expedition was an important component of European travel literature in the age of imperial expansion. Nehru uses the language of adventurous and exploratory travel to represent scientific endeavour as a whole. He describes modern science as 'having no end to its journeying', as 'widening the bounds of the charted region of knowledge', and as leading us into 'a new region'.¹⁸⁰ He also represents the scientific enterprise in terms of 'the exciting adventure of fresh and never ceasing discoveries, of new panoramas opening out',¹⁸¹ and as carrying humanity 'forward relentlessly . . . to unknown shores'.¹⁸² Elsewhere he represents the scientist as on a 'quest' in which there is 'no fixed anchorage'.¹⁸³ At times, *The Discovery of India* reads like a paean of praise to the achievements of science and modern technology.¹⁸⁴ There are also hints that modern science becomes a determining discourse of Nehru's autobiography, as when he argues that the 'adventurous inquiries of science and its applications'¹⁸⁵ chart out the 'way along which man should travel'.¹⁸⁶

Nehru's celebration of science and technology is on one level evident in his valorisation of 'national planning'. Scholars have discussed the concept of national planning in Nehru's thought and work, for which the USSR was the prime model.¹⁸⁷ Here, however, I wish to discuss the tensions generated between Nehru's autobiographical project and the language of planning of some sections. Nehru's confidence in 'national planning' is on one level an extension of the supposedly all-embracing applicability of scientific and technocratic methodology, which must be adhered to 'in our thought and activities, in research, in social life, in political and economic life, in religion', and applied to 'all of life's problems', the 'problems relating to our family, religion and everything else'.¹⁸⁸ *The Discovery of India* is intertwined at key points in the text with the language of 'large-scale state planning',¹⁸⁹ and includes a section dedicated to the Congress National Planning Committee.¹⁹⁰ Nehru's imagining of a post-colonial India deploys this language of technocratic planning, which elsewhere is described as a way of learning to 'visualise India as she would be ten years hence or five years hence',¹⁹¹ of envisaging a 'full picture' or drawing up 'a complete outline' of what India should become.¹⁹² The scientific prescriptivism of future projection, deploying the idiom of pictorial representation, is one of the key ways in which the nation is imagined by Nehru. At times the language of national planning becomes self-proliferating, as suggested by Nehru himself when he notes that 'the more we thought of this planning business, the vaster it grew in its sweep and range till it seemed to embrace almost every activity'.¹⁹³ When, in another text Nehru writes of the need to 'translate' the 'planned activity of the mind' into 'the planned activity

of the nation',¹⁹⁴ this language is extended to the very subjectivity which Nehru's autobiography struggles to articulate.

However, Nehru has ambiguous views on science. This is clear when he draws attention to the limited applicability of scientific methodology, stating in the language of exploratory travel, that the 'scientific method of observation is not always applicable to all the varieties of human experience and cannot cross the uncharted ocean that surrounds us'.¹⁹⁵ In particular, the domains of aesthetics and ethics may lie beyond the scope of scientific methodology.¹⁹⁶ Nehru is also inconclusive on the relationship and conflict between science and religion.¹⁹⁷ But Nehru breaks from preceding Indian travelogues in his self-conscious focus on constructing selfhood, as a form of resistance to the global universalisation of science and its systematic intrusion into everyday life, without rejecting modern technology wholesale. He stresses that a third-person, scientific point of view is unable to capture the interiority of subjectivity, or what he calls the 'inner spiritual life of the individual'. As he puts it, 'there is an intimacy about one's inner life, one's feelings and thoughts, which may not and cannot be conveyed to others'.¹⁹⁸ The question of whether science or religion can offer some insight into 'inner' processes remains an open one,¹⁹⁹ and it is also unclear to him whether the development of human personality can ever be fully understood scientifically.²⁰⁰ Science is unable to tackle fundamental questions about the 'purpose of life', and evades philosophical questions regarding 'ultimate purposes'.²⁰¹ Science itself is 'impersonal, purposeless and almost unconcerned with our application of the knowledge it puts at our disposal'.²⁰² In itself, science is 'lifeless'.²⁰³ For Nehru the enactment of a first-person voice and the interiority of subjectivity impose a limitation on the totalising ambitions of scientific language.

Nehru's articulation of subjectivity also contains the self-proliferating language of planning cast in a scientific idiom. He evokes his individual subjectivity in terms of his moods, so that the historiographical task of the 'adventure' of discovering India is not undertaken through any consciously planned and systematic methodology. On the contrary, 'I let my mind wander or take root for a while, keeping in tune with my mood, allowing impression to sink in . . .'²⁰⁴ He attempts to give 'my moods and thoughts at the time of each event', but recapturing a past mood is much more difficult than remembering 'subsequent happenings'.²⁰⁵ He refuses his publisher's request to add a chapter to *An Autobiography* in order to bring it up to date because he finds he cannot capture his mood in prison.²⁰⁶ In reflecting upon the genesis of his autobiographical project, he writes of how he would write when 'the mood to do so has seized me'. It is for this reason that there were gaps of up to a month in the writing of *An Autobiography*.²⁰⁷

In its very writing, then, Nehru's autobiography is inimical to the notion of systematic planning. His vacillating constructions of the project of science can be read as part of the articulation of a distinctive first-person voice. As

we have seen, this project is enabled by and cast in a self-interrogative mode, with many expressions of doubts, confusions and anxieties,²⁰⁸ in contrast to ethnographic novels such as *Kim*, in which it seems that Indians are unable to question themselves. His autobiographies are produced at the behest of the fickle moodiness of the author, himself not entirely in charge, and are the product of what he calls 'the mood of retrospection'.²⁰⁹ He reflects, 'Looking back at what I have written, it seems inadequate, disjointed and lacking in unity, a mixture of many things, with the personal element dominant and giving its colour even to what was intended to be an objective record and analysis. That personal element has pushed itself forward almost against my will; often I checked it and held it back but sometimes I loosened the reins and allowed it to flow out of my pen, and mirror, to some extent, my mind.'²¹⁰ The lack of authorial control over 'the personal element' which carries the burden of the narrative against the conscious intentions of the author to produce an 'objective' record, is indicative of how the autobiographical articulation of selfhood cannot be commanded by Nehru himself, let alone by the third-person language of planning. Instead, this language is just one among many within a disjointed and mixed text whose characteristic style is that of the collage.²¹¹ As I shall argue in Chapter 4, the collage captures Nehru's distinctive voice in relation to his evocation of the space of India. His autobiographical selfhood is in conflict with the language of third person planning on a variety of levels. In this enactment, the latter is destabilised and charged with having an 'air of unreality about it', a 'certain vagueness and indefiniteness', and a diffuseness.²¹² Elsewhere, one of the documents produced by a subcommittee of the National Planning Committee is depicted as 'a fantastic Utopian and airy document which has no relation to fact'.²¹³ The language of conscious planning is contained and sometimes dissipated by Nehru's enactment of a first-person voice.

There are also ways in which Nehru subverts the language of science as adventurous travel. Clifford has pointed out that in European travel writing the 'non-white' is not only denied the status of heroic explorer, but also that of scientific authority.²¹⁴ While stressing the commonality of the 'quest' which science represents, Nehru also addresses the asymmetrical relations of power embedded in this discourse of travel by emphasising that Indians can only travel as 'equals and as comrades in a common quest', rather than as 'interlopers'.²¹⁵ I have pointed out that Nehru envisages a post colonial India through the infrastructure of travel and technology opening up isolated regions of India. This parallels his imagining of an alternative geopolitical map, in which India's isolation from the world, seen as one of the results of British colonialism, is overcome as travelling routes with other Asian territories are opened up. Nehru stresses that the enterprise of science is not intrinsically European but is a global narrative in which Indians can participate, thereby overcoming their isolation on another level. In this, he undermines the essentialist distinction between the epistemic superiority²¹⁶

of the scientific West and a pre-scientific India, opening up a way in which India could take its 'proper station with others in the van of human civilization and progress'.²¹⁷ Nehru also uses the language of adventurous travel to argue that the evidence of intellectual endeavour in pre-modern India, the 'early adventures of the Indian mind', provide a basis for cultivating the scientific temper and approach.²¹⁸ Like the Indian traveller, the Indian scientist would be both a development of and a return to a forgotten portion of Indian history. To underline his sense of the continuity between ancient India and modernity, Nehru recasts the modern scientist in terms of the wise figure envisaged in texts such as the *Bhagavad Gita*, as 'the sage unattached to life and the fruits of action, ever seeking truth wheresoever this quest might lead him'.²¹⁹ This is in sharp contrast to Gandhi's deployment of the *Gita*.²²⁰ Nehru also argues that the more precise conclusions of science were in some ways prefigured by the speculations of the Advaita Vedanta theory.²²¹ In this Nehru sees his autobiography as continuous with ancient India. The questions of identity he grapples with are continuations of 'the old question which . . . troubled the thinkers of the Upanishads', with which he argues contemporary science is now engaging.²²²

So the creation and recovery of the figure of the travelling Indian in Nehru's project extends to the figure of the Indian scientist, participating in a global narrative of scientific endeavour, which is itself cast in the language of travel. Moreover, Nehru sees his autobiography as grappling with questions that were addressed in ancient India. In the colonial adventure romance, the value of practical know-how and engineering was often stressed.²²³ This led to the development of what can be called 'scientific romances'.²²⁴ In Nehru's appropriation of the adventure romance, 'science' is in interplay with, rather than dominating, an Indian autobiographical self-enactment, both on an individual and on a collective level. Nehru stresses that Indians as a whole need to 'imbibe' the 'spirit' and 'the adventurous and yet critical temper' of science.²²⁵ The powerful enterprise of Western science is subsumed under the construction of an Indian interiority. This becomes one way of steering the project of science on its travels, the 'vast forces' of which would otherwise carry mankind 'forward relentlessly, and often an unwilling victim, to unknown shores'.²²⁶

Nehru, Gandhi and Nature

Nehru's representation of the Indian peasantry is indicative of the crucial interplay between subjectivity and modern technology. He conflates the Indian peasantry with Gandhi as a figure rejecting modern technology, and in doing so defines himself against Gandhi. Katherine Verdery has argued that the nation is a basic operator in a widespread system of social classification. It is a sorting device which both homogenises and differentiates.²²⁷ She points to other categories of differentiation such as ethnicity,

race, gender and class, which are all aspects of identity formation alongside the nation, and which often appear alongside one another, interacting in complex ways.²²⁸ One axis of difference in *The Discovery* is clearly class difference. Partha Chatterjee has pointed to the difficulty in the Indian nationalist project of reconciling modes of thought characteristic of peasant consciousness with rationalist forms of 'enlightened' nationalist politics.²²⁹ The heterogeneous form and diverse content of *The Discovery* parallels the attempt to build an alliance across classes, especially between a nationalist bourgeoisie with its commitment to industrialisation, and the peasantry. Sanjay Seth has argued that for Nehru the Indian peasant displays the enviable virtues of solidity and rootedness which are so lacking in the Westernised Indian elite.²³⁰ By contrast, Nehru argues that until Gandhi's arrival upon the political scene the Indian middle classes were 'like derelicts, frantically seeking some foothold of security for body and mind and finding none'.²³¹ He contrasts the peasant's 'calm dignity' in his endurance of suffering and the 'incompletely developed and frustrated' middle classes who are disorientated and 'submerged in [an] all-pervading gloom'.²³² However, for Nehru the Indian peasant also represents what Ernest Gellner has termed 'entropy-resistant traits' that pose a threat to the imperatives of nationalism.²³³ They embody what Nehru sees as India's immemorial ways,²³⁴ and so point to the gulf between himself as a member of an anglicised elite and the mass of Indians whom he is struggling to represent both politically and textually.

The ambivalent figure of the Indian peasant as rooted and resistant to modern technology gives play to Nehru's ambivalence towards Gandhi, whom he describes as 'the embodiment of the Indian peasant'.²³⁵ At times, Nehru goes further than metaphorical equivalence and suggests a near literal equivalence when he asserts that Gandhi 'almost is peasant India',²³⁶ 'so utterly unlike and beyond a peasant' and 'yet withal he is the great peasant',²³⁷ a figure who 'seemed to emerge from the millions of India, speaking their language'.²³⁸ Scholars have observed how Gandhi was both threatening and alluring for Nehru because of Gandhi's success at bridging the gap between the mass of peasants and the nationalist elite.²³⁹ However, the complex presence of Gandhi in Nehru's autobiography needs to be explored further. Developing Sanjay Seth's and Partha Chatterjee's line of argument, we can say that by bridging the gap between the Indian elite and the peasant mass,²⁴⁰ Gandhi is bringing Nehru himself closer to India. At the same time, Nehru points to the 'vast distance' which separates himself from Gandhi.²⁴¹ Gandhi reminds the autobiographer of the gulf between himself and the India he tries to represent, even as Gandhi is bridging it. This in part accounts for Nehru's acute ambivalence towards Gandhi, in whom his ambivalence towards the Indian peasantry as a whole is focussed. Gandhi also comes to represent an unknowable India, untranslatable and impenetrable by Nehru's creative powers of understanding. Hence in the shifting

relationship between Nehru and Gandhi, the latter becomes a figure of the unknown and impenetrable, from whose eyes 'often the unknown stared at us'.²⁴² Moreover, 'his way of springing surprises upon us frightened me; there was something unknown about him which . . . I could not understand at all and which filled me with apprehension'.²⁴³

However, in the shifting relationships between Nehru and Gandhi, Nehru also struggles to translate Gandhi into his narrative project, so that Gandhi becomes an enabling presence, rather than only a fearful figure of a gigantic, almost gargantuan, peasant. First, on a general level, while the knowability and narrativity of India is circumscribed by Gandhi it is also demarcated by his enigmatic unknowability. Nehru, by confronting what cannot be known, also defines what can be known about India. Secondly, Gandhi is translated into the language of Nehru's autobiographical project. He becomes a figure for the inner emotional turmoil within a divided Nehru; he is the cause of a 'battle within myself' and of 'commotion within me'.²⁴⁴ Nehru's autobiographical persona expands to incorporate and internalise Gandhi as part of his multifaceted self. This also extends into the collage of styles in the project, because Nehru juxtaposes cool-headed critiques of Gandhi's political philosophy²⁴⁵ with internal emotional upheaval or 'commotion'.

Sturrock has made the important point that as a writer, the autobiographer seeks to gain recognition as a singular being, so that autobiography begins in dissociation and puts an end to anonymity. Autobiography is the enactment of the writer's own sense of singularisation, which distinguishes him or her from the anonymous masses.²⁴⁶ Nehru frequently associates, and sometimes conflates, Gandhi with the vastness of India's population. He emerges 'from the millions of India', he is the 'personification of those vast millions' and he represents the wills of 'those millions'.²⁴⁷ Here Gandhi marks those anonymous masses from which Nehru emerges into his own conspicuous selfhood. By merging with India, Gandhi represents the threat of a regressive anonymity to Nehru as an autobiographer. Furthermore, while Gandhi is represented by Nehru as a complete insider to India, Nehru is anxious to depict himself as both inside and outside India: 'India was in my blood and there was much in her that instinctively thrilled me. And yet I approached her almost as an alien critic . . . To some extent I came to her via the West'.²⁴⁸ But it is clear that this alienation from India also gives Nehru the necessary critical distance from his subject matter, and it enables his narration to take place. While it counters the reductive incarceration of Indians as unself-conscious insiders in colonial ethnography, it also gives Nehru an authority which Gandhi lacks.

Nehru's dual stance as both insider and outsider, while presented in terms of a personal loss, underpins his authority against Gandhi, kept in play by Nehru as a figure of necessary alienation. While commentators have discussed the complexity of Nehru's political relationships with Gandhi,²⁴⁹ another level of complexity in this relationship is Nehru's representation of

both Gandhi and the Indian peasantry as the anonymous masses who are the antithesis of Nehru's autobiographically conspicuous selfhood. This is further underscored by the way in which Nehru sets up a series of equivalences between Gandhi, the Indian peasantry, and the category of Nature, arguing that the ennui and anomie of modern civilisation stem from the fact that 'modern industrialized communities have lost touch with the soil and do not experience that joy which nature gives and the rich glow of health which comes from contact with mother earth'.²⁵⁰ He contrasts this with the 'pantheistic outlook' of ancient Greece and India,²⁵¹ and argues that both ancient Greece and ancient India exemplified an 'old philosophic approach seeking an integration and harmony in man and with nature'. In part, this approach showed itself in the way the 'year was divided up by popular festivals which heralded the changing seasons and kept man in tune with nature's moods',²⁵² reflected in ancient Indian poetry and music, which 'express the essential harmony of man with nature',²⁵³ and also evident in the way 'ancient Indians chose their sacred places of pilgrimage'.²⁵⁴ Nehru sees this ancient culture as a living part of contemporary peasant society. The peasantry who embody India's immemorial ways, and who are also close to the land, represent both closeness to nature and a harmonious antiquity lost to the Indian middle classes, 'cut off from the land and incapable of any kind of manual and technical work'.²⁵⁵ Because of Gandhi's closeness to the Indian peasant, and his stature as 'the great peasant', he is seen as helping Congressmen to stay 'in touch with the soil'.²⁵⁶ There are also occasions when Gandhi is depicted by Nehru in terms of natural phenomena, for example, when he is likened to 'a powerful current of fresh air', 'a beam of light' and a 'whirlwind'.²⁵⁷

'Nature', then, is a complex category in Nehru's autobiography, one not previously noted.²⁵⁸ In the slippage between 'Nature', Gandhi and the Indian peasant, the category of 'Nature' becomes a site of equivocation which enables Nehru to play out both his political differences from Gandhi, and his ambivalence towards Gandhi and the Indian peasant as resistant to modernity. As we have seen, there is also a slippage between the term 'Nature' and ancient Indian society. Here, to use Kate Soper's formulation in another context, 'Nature' becomes a spatial and temporal marker which is used to think through the relations of the ancient to the modern.²⁵⁹ On the one hand, it is used alongside ancient Greek society to secure the pre-eminence of ancient Indian society. But Nehru is also ambivalent towards the legacy of India's ancient past. His sense of an oppressive Indian past is clear in a series of images in his autobiographical texts. India's surfeit of antiquity is evoked as 'the odour of decay' under a 'hot, pitiless sun',²⁶⁰ and as an 'old world [which] still clings to our fancies'.²⁶¹ He represents India as a grotesquely colossal figure; her 'tremendous inertia of age and size have weighed her down, degrading custom and evil practice have eaten into her, many a parasite has clung to her and sucked her blood'.²⁶² Given this

ambivalence, while the conflation of ancient India with Nature represents a lost plenitude, it is clearly not conceived of as a place of return.²⁶³ Such a conception, threatening the narrative of progress in Nehru's autobiographical project, is attributed to Gandhi and criticised.²⁶⁴ Nehru, then, articulates a 'nature-sceptical' rather than a 'nature-endorsing' position.²⁶⁵ The anti-thesis between 'nature/the ancient' and history as progress expresses what Kate Soper has called the metaphysical view of Nature, in which 'Nature' is employed as a concept through which humanity thinks its difference and specificity.²⁶⁶ 'Nature' is used as a binary opposition to the constructed character of history as progress, and thus to history as the conscious creation of human agency. Here we can note that 'Nature' is also deployed as the anti-thesis of Nehru's own creative agency as an autobiographer. This becomes clear in Nehru's focus on 'Nature' as sensory landscape.

Biographers have discussed Nehru's extended stays in prison,²⁶⁷ rightly focussing on the sometimes harsh conditions he had to endure.²⁶⁸ My concern here has been different. I have argued above that prison becomes a site for Nehru's autobiography, underpinned by the notion of travel as mental activity.²⁶⁹ I will also argue for the importance of the category of Nature in Nehru's construction of his selfhood, as revealed in his prison narrative. The representation of 'Nature' as vividly apprehended landscape is a recurring motif within the prison narratives of Nehru's autobiography.²⁷⁰ In keeping with the collage of styles in Nehru's autobiography as a whole, passages of lyrical intensity are juxtaposed with the prosaic narrative of prison life. Nehru explains how the drab nature of prison life, with its discipline, routine and sensory deprivation, especially when in solitary confinement, predisposes him to the vividness of 'nature as landscape' as a form of relief and escape. The greyness of his surroundings become the background to the intense coloration of vegetation and natural phenomena as a foreground: 'There were no colours anywhere, and our eyes hardened and grew dull at seeing always that same drab view of mud-coloured wall and barrack. They must have hungered for some light and shade and colouring, and when the monsoon clouds sailed gaily by, assuming fantastic shapes, and playing in a riot of colour, I gasped in surprised delight and watched them almost as if I was in a trance. Sometimes the clouds would break, and one saw through an opening in them that wonderful monsoon phenomenon, a dark blue of an amazing depth, which seemed to be a portion of infinity.'²⁷¹ In another prison, Nehru refers to his 'sudden glimpse of the outside world' whenever the warder opened the iron door of the prison yard. This glimpse gives him a view of 'green fields and trees, bright with colour and glistening with pearly drops of rain', which was like a 'flash of lightning'.²⁷² This vividness of colours is evoked in a letter written from jail, when Nehru describes his sensations during his visits out of jail.²⁷³ In another extended scene of Nature as landscape glimpsed from within the confines of the jail, he refers to how the leaves of four 'magnificent' peepal trees 'glisten in the sunlight

and play about in the breeze', and the 'reddish-brown, russet-coloured' fresh mango leaves.²⁷⁴ This extended passage from prison life also displays an attention to the details of insect and animal life, with references to mosquitoes, bedbugs, flies, wasps, hornets, bats, flying-foxes, white ants, lizards, squirrels, pigeons, parrots, koels, brain-fever birds, eagles, kites, wild duck, monkeys, scorpions, snakes and centipedes.²⁷⁵ The minuteness of attention bears out Nehru's claim that 'prevented from indulging in normal activities we [the prisoners] became more observant of nature's ways'.²⁷⁶ This close observation also includes a sensitivity to the rhythms of the changing seasons.²⁷⁷

I have argued above that prison becomes a site for Nehru's autobiography, underpinned by the notion of travel as a mental activity.²⁷⁸ Nehru repeatedly stresses the rejuvenating possibilities of jail life, alongside his reflections on the enervating effects of jail life as a disciplinary regime.²⁷⁹ In part, this is because jail comes as a welcome respite from his demanding schedule in the world of politics outside. Nehru contrasts the 'harmonious and well-ordered life' in prison where he can think calmly and dispassionately 'from a larger perspective', with the upheavals of life outside.²⁸⁰ He even resents writing letters and receiving visitors in jail as 'serious incursions on a peaceful and unruffled existence'.²⁸¹ Not surprisingly, then, in *An Autobiography* Nehru expresses both unease and joy at the prospect of leaving prison. These mixed feelings stem from anxiety at readjusting to life outside prison and sorrow at leaving behind the rejuvenating possibilities which prison life affords him,²⁸² including the sensory acuity which is displayed in his representations of nature as landscape. Not only are existing sensations intensified, so that 'in prison one's ears grow sharper', but 'many other senses, which lie dormant during an active life outside, waken up and so open out a new world of sensation, just as a blind man becomes far more sensitive in other ways'.²⁸³ It is this enhancement of one's senses which Nehru argues explains the 'touch of hysteria in one's first reactions to the outer world' upon leaving prison. 'The fresh air and open expanses, the moving street scene, and the meeting with old friends, all go to the head and slightly intoxicate'.²⁸⁴ But this acute sensitivity is also evident in prison itself, with Nehru often becoming 'a bundle of nerves, very susceptible to various humours caused by gaol life', with an enhanced sense of his physical belongings and a susceptibility to intense and vacillating emotional reactions.²⁸⁵ The intensity of his being in prison again reflects how prison becomes the site for a vivid self-articulation.

I have argued above that the conflation of Nature with Gandhi and the Indian peasantry also represents the threat of a regressive anonymity for Nehru's advance into autobiographical selfhood. This helps to explain why nature as landscape is a recurring feature of Nehru's prison narrative, in which prison is a site for his autobiographical self-articulation. In these recurring scenes, 'Nature' as landscape is foregrounded, while the prison forms the background. Prison as a site for Nehru's self-articulation enables 'Nature'

as landscape to come into being as an object of conscious appreciation. This sense of a self-consciously created aesthetic object is also conveyed by the way in which the doorway or window frame of his cell surrounds these scenes, as if they were pictorial representations set apart and distinguished from the surrounding space by the act of framing them.²⁸⁶ This act of framing enables Nehru as an onlooker to focus on a particular scene, as when he is able to track the seasonal changes in the trees, whose tops he can see from his cell window.²⁸⁷ At times, too, pictures of mountains substitute for the sight of actual mountains.²⁸⁸ Framing 'Nature' as an aesthetic object from within the confines of prison becomes a distancing device, in which the scenes of 'Nature' can be understood in terms of artifice. In *An Autobiography*, Nehru writes of how the prison wall 'encroached on the sky and only allowed a glimpse of a narrow-bounded portion'. He goes on to describe how at night 'that part of the star-lit sky that I saw ceased to be real and seemed part of an artificial planetarium'.²⁸⁹ The framing of 'Nature' by prison even transforms the night sky into a human construct.

With this in mind, we can now focus on a striking image in Nehru's *An Autobiography* of a prison encircled by a forest, wild beasts and peasants, with a sleepless autobiographer inside: 'The nights were full of strange noises. The convict overseers, who guarded the main wall, frequently shouted to each other in varying keys, sometimes lengthening out their cries till they sounded like the moaning of a distant wind; the night-watchmen in the barracks were continually counting away in a loud voice the prisoners under their charge . . . and several times a night some gaol official, going his rounds, visited our enclosure and shouted an enquiry to the warder on duty . . . At times I felt *as if* I was on the verge of the forest, and the peasantry were shouting to keep the wild animals away from their fields; sometimes it seemed the forest itself and the beasts of the night were keeping up their nocturnal chorus.'²⁹⁰ Here we have Nehru's fears played out; the loss of his agency through his disappearance into 'Nature', and the overwhelming of his autobiographical and nationalist project by entropy-resistant groups, themselves associated with Nature, who threaten to undermine his legitimacy and represent the threat of a regressive anonymity. We have here the paradox of prison itself, not only a place of confinement but also a zone of safety which keeps the category of 'Nature' in its various guises at bay. In this way, prison secures the narrator's own agency as well as the notion of history as progress. We have seen how Nehru associates ancient India with the category of Nature, and how this is indicative of his ambivalence towards the ancient Indian past. Nehru also signals a distance between modernity and the ancient in this context by referring to how 'we may not see the sublime in nature as we used to'.²⁹¹ An inability to experience nature as sublime is attributed to the loss of 'the old pagan feeling' and 'the ancient ways',²⁹² so that the receptivity to nature as sublime characterised the ancient Indian society towards which Nehru is so ambivalent. But

Nehru refers to a possible alternative source of the sublime in human history itself.²⁹³ This remark on the sublime occurs in a chapter which discusses the differences between nationalists in India. In particular, it criticises the so-called Indian Liberals for their conservatism vis a vis the British Indian state.²⁹⁴ What characterises the Liberal outlook is its lack of any defining principle of difference from the British government in India.²⁹⁵ In defining the proper content of Indian nationalism, Nehru argues that not only have the Liberals lost 'the old pagan feeling', they have not gained any 'new insight' so they find nothing sublime about 'human convulsions like the great French Revolution or the Russian revolution'.²⁹⁶ What characterises an authentic Indian nationalism is an ability to experience human history as sublime and, by implication, to see the creation of the nation as part of this sublime historical process which keeps Nature at a distance.

Prison becomes a kind of home for Nehru because it is a site for his self-formation as an autobiographer. This homeliness is conveyed in various ways, as when he expresses disappointment at not being given his 'old cell' with its prison garden in Naini prison,²⁹⁷ or when he writes of his return to Almora jail as 'a feeling of returning to my normal abode'.²⁹⁸ The cumulative effect of the prison representations of Nature as landscape, with its flora and fauna, his gardening and the descriptions of birds, animals, insects and reptiles, is almost to suggest a jail transformed into a country retreat where he is at home in both the expansiveness and intensity of his self-focus. His express reluctance to return to his house after prison lies not just in the difficulty of continuing the autobiography outside prison,²⁹⁹ but also in 'living in my house as a stranger'.³⁰⁰ I shall discuss in more detail the Nehruvian notion of home, but here we can say that Nehru is most at home in prison because that is where his autobiographical project is conceived and developed as a travelling autobiography. In this sense, the return to jail is like a return to his roots, a return to introspection, as he elaborates his perspectives on modernity and technology through the notion of travel.

Iqbal and the instability of modernity's moment

In Iqbal's figuring of the journey his perspective on modernity is enacted through the relationships between the literary form and the content of his text, and the dialectical interplay and mutually defining interaction between a modern and a pre-modern aesthetic. The poem's form, and the interplay between its form and content, reflects a key feature of literary modernity in South Asia. I have argued elsewhere that modern South Asian literatures self-consciously enact their rupture from a pre-modern poetics. They exemplify in their form and content the break from pre-modern aesthetic systems, and so repeatedly enact the emergence of a modern poetics from a pre-modern poetics. But in doing so they also open up lines of continuity with

the aesthetics of tradition. Modern South Asian texts incorporate the very literary traditions which they break from.³⁰¹

This interplay between a continuity with and discontinuity from tradition is evident in Iqbal's *Jāvid Nāma*. We have seen how the nature of the poet's identity is central to this text and how his journey through the cosmos is the enactment of that identity as well as his quest for it. On one level, the text signals its continuity with the Persian literary tradition through the figure of the great Persian poet, Rumi, as the poet's guide through the cosmos. Some of the lines in the *Jāvid Nāma* also echo lines in Rumi's *Masnavī*. This includes the first couplet of Iqbal's poem, 'Man, in this world [jahān] of seven colours,/Lute-like [mānand-e chang] is always on fire with lamentation [garm-e faghān].' This recalls the opening couplet of Rumi's *Masnavī*, 'Harken to the reed, how it tells a tale [ḥikāyet]/Complaining [shikāyet] of separations [judhāyi-hā].'³⁰² At another point in the poem, Iqbal cites in full a *ghazal* by Rumi, into which he inserts a couplet of his own.³⁰³ This evokes Iqbal's strong sense of creative interdependence with Rumi. Schimmel has also pointed to the many allusions to and citations from Rumi's texts in Iqbal's *Asrār-e khudī* ('Secrets of the Self', 1915).³⁰⁴ Moreover, the *Jāvid Nāma* is written in the same metre as Rumi's *Masnavī*. But the two texts could not be more different in other ways. Rumi's *Masnavī* is a compendium of different stories, each with its own moral, which can be read on a multiplicity of levels, from the mundane to the esoteric.³⁰⁵ In contrast, the *Jāvid Nāma* is tied together through the linear progression of the poet's journey, with a starting point and a destination, in which each episode is linked to the other episodes in the poet's travel through the cosmos. The explicitly integrating plot of the poet's selfhood is entirely absent from Rumi's *Masnavī*, which is difficult to systematise in any way. There is also a sharp contrast between the two poems in their lengths, with Rumi's *Masnavī* consisting of some 26 000 couplets, and Iqbal's *Jāvid Nāma* 1823 couplets. The former is sprawling and excessive, an encyclopaedic compendium of anecdotes which represents almost every possible aspect of Sufi thought and practice in the thirteenth century, while the latter is highly condensed and abbreviated, with carefully worked allusions to key figures in Sufi thought and Islamic learning and literature, as well as some important European thinkers and poets.

Schimmel has pointed to the 'tension' in Iqbal's work between traditional Sufi thought and his 'fresh' interpretations of it, describing this as 'one of the most fascinating aspects of Iqbal's thought'.³⁰⁶ This tension is especially evident in Iqbal's conception of selfhood or *khudī*, with its inversion of Sufi notions of the self as being annihilated in union with God [fanā]. Schimmel has also stressed that the word 'khudī' at the time of Iqbal's work had highly negative connotations in Persian, implying selfishness and egotism,³⁰⁷ and, one might add, an objectionable self-centredness. However, the force of Iqbal's inversion also relies on reinscribing what is inverted in order for it to make sense. The tactic of inversion is grounded and secured by what is

inverted. This is also evident in Iqbal's re-writing of Shabestari's *Gulshan-e Rāz* ('The Secret Rose Garden', 1311)³⁰⁸ as *Gulshan-e Rāz-e Jadīd* ('The New Secret Rose Garden', 1927). Here Iqbal follows the pattern of the earlier poem, which consists of 18 questions to which the poet offers his own answers. Iqbal sometimes changes the order of Shabestari's questions or combines a number of its questions into one question, and in doing so, articulates his own notion of selfhood in contrast to Shabestari's mystical theories of monism. However, once again, he follows the same metre and pattern as Shabestari's poem, and thus his poem echoes Shabestari's work even as it breaks away from its philosophical and mystical content.³⁰⁹

The formal and intellectual complexity of the *Jāvid Nāma* also evokes the complex rendering and appropriation of modernity in Iqbal's work in relation to its problematic notion of time. In formal terms, what distinguishes an autobiographical text from other texts is the identity between the narrator relating the story and the protagonist enacting it. Even so, autobiographies can be divided between those which are fictional (in the English canon the example of Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847) comes to mind) and those which claim to be historically true (in the European canon, a leading example is Rousseau's *The Confessions* (1782)). However, the clarity of this distinction does not always withstand critical scrutiny. Sturrock, who only looks at autobiographies which purport to be historically true, has convincingly argued that the intimacy and truthfulness with which autobiographies seem to address us as records of the past is belied by their formal nature and their rhetorical complexity as works of literature.³¹⁰ Similarly, throughout his *Time and Narrative*, Ricoeur considers the ways in which historical and fictional narrative borrow from each other.³¹¹

As we have seen, the poem unfolds on an explicitly symbolic plane as the poet journeys through the cosmos. It does not constitute itself as a historical document. If anything, the rhetoric of the poem works to abstract the poet from history rather than to insert him in it. At the same time, though, the poem does refer to the large-scale historical process of European colonialism, and takes this process for granted as part of the background against which the poet's persona unfolds. Some of the poem's figures include historical figures, such as Afghani, Nietzsche and Tipu Sultan, alongside mythical or legendary ones, such as Iblis and Sarosh. The symbolic journey which the poet undertakes in the poem works to free the poet from temporal limitations while simultaneously reflecting upon them and large-scale historical processes. This reflects the way in which the empirical geography of the poem is enfolded within the imaginary geography of the *mirā'j*, which in Iqbal's handling of it is itself a geography of subjectivity.

The culminating vision of the poem consists of arriving in a world beyond the dimensions of time and space, into an 'undimensioned world' [*jahān-e be-jahāt*], a world beyond 'the bounds of quantity and quality' [*chand va chigūn*], which renders thought itself inadequate [*khvār va zabūn*].³¹²

This is in keeping with the poem's stress on inwardness, in which time and space are seen as 'a state of the soul' [aḥvāl-e jān].³¹³ To a certain extent, the poem's problematic temporality characterises an aesthetic of modernity itself. Habermas has argued that the defining feature of aesthetic modernity is a changed consciousness of time, in which the relation between the 'modern' and the 'classical' has lost fixed historical reference. The loss of this fixed historical reference is also evident in the exaltation of the present in the modern aesthetic.³¹⁴ The self-conscious modernity of the poem's aesthetic is articulated through the poet's freedom from specific historical ties, which enables him to appropriate selectively a variety of figures and sources in his work as a whole. At the same time, though, if there is an exaltation of the present in the *Jāvid Nāma*, it is a present that opens the way for the poet to transcend time. The aesthetic modernity of the poem also needs to be read against the attempt by Urdu writers in the late nineteenth century to break open the self-referential and symbolic universe of pre-modern Persian and Urdu poetry by orientating it towards the empirical world and its historical narratives.³¹⁵ The way the poem is poised on the brink of transcending time, with its combination of a self-referential symbolic universe and its references to historical processes, reflects its own location between the pre-modern world of South Asian poetry and the emergence of a self-conscious modern poetic whose subject matter is in part historical narrative and the nature of temporality itself.³¹⁶

Paul de Man has argued that 'assertions of literary modernity often end up by putting the possibility of being modern seriously into question'.³¹⁷ To a certain extent, this is true of Iqbal and literary modernity in South Asia as a whole. But there are ways in which Iqbal's work is not just involved in the instability of the modern moment but actively unveils this instability. This occurs in Iqbal's attempt to bring Islam and Europe together in a global narrative of intellectual endeavour. As he puts it in *Reconstruction*, 'European culture, on its intellectual side, is only a further development of some of the most important phases of the culture of Islam.'³¹⁸ Iqbal's aim in *Reconstruction* is to reconcile and validate earlier Islamic thought with and through modern European thought and science. The work moves fluently between intellectual traditions as it seeks to answer the question which forms the title of the last chapter, 'Is religion possible?' This cosmopolitan eclecticism of the text underpins the search for the grounds of religion as a whole, rather than of Islam alone, although there is often a slippage between the two.³¹⁹ Specifically, Iqbal tries to show how the intellectual revolt against Greek thought by Muslim thinkers, and especially against the speculative nature of Aristotelian logic, paved the way for the experimental and empirical attitudes which underlay the development of modern science.³²⁰ There are precedents to Iqbal's attempt to reintegrate Islamic thinkers into the narrative of a progressive modernity, and indeed to ground the inception of that narrative in their intellectual endeavours. In his *Musaddas*, Hali was at pains to spell

out the debt that modern Europe owed to the achievements of Islamic culture.³²¹ In the section on medicine, Hali lists the names of famous schools and physicians, and adds, using the image of travelling by boat, that it was 'through them that the boat [khevā] of the West got across'.³²² Similarly, he lists the disciplines of knowledge and technological practices on which Arabs have left 'their footprints' [nishān un ke qadmon ke].³²³ Hali's internalisation of the narrative of progress, and its imbrication with travel, is in part clear in one of the key images of the poem, already noted, of the ship at sea. The poignancy of the image of the boat of the West getting across is sharpened by the fact that the condition of the Muslim community at the commencement of the poem is represented in terms of a ship that is about to sink into a whirlpool.³²⁴ The use of a similar image to illustrate the contrasting fates of Islam and Europe highlights the historical irony that the Western ship got across with the help of the Arabs, but the Muslim ship itself sank.

The imbrication of travel with progress and decline is also reinforced by Hali's sense that the Arabs of early Islam were distinguished by their readiness to travel and explore. They are described as internalising their migrant mode of life, so that 'they reckoned their homeland and travel [watan aur safar] as the same'.³²⁵ For Hali one of the achievements of the early Islamic conquests was the construction of roads, so that not only were Arabs themselves intrepid travellers, they also made travel easy for others.³²⁶ It is precisely the ease and safety of travel in India which is counted as one of the benefits of British rule by Hali, while the eagerness to travel which distinguished the early Islamic world is contrasted to the present disinclination of Indian Muslims to do so.³²⁷ There is an implied link between the status of Muslims as a subject population and their indifference to travel. Hali also sees travel as one of the ways of verifying the existence of things mentioned in books and, more importantly, of learning how to distinguish between legendary place and geographical fact, so that there is also an implied connection between the Muslim community's disinclination to travel and its ineptitude in 'scientific' habits of observation and verification.³²⁸

Hali's general anxiety in the *Musaddas* to gather up traces and signs of past Islamic achievements might also be explained by his awareness of how the narrative of progress was being written as a European story with no mention of the significant Arab contributions to important branches of learning, a point stressed in our own time by Bryan Turner.³²⁹ Hali was also aware of how the word 'liberalism' had become a term loaded with a sense of cultural supremacy in a European lexicon. This is evident when he depicts the *ḥadīth*³³⁰ as exemplifying rules of substantiation and validation which prefigured the rules of researchers in his own day. For this reason, he argues that these volumes of verified reports and attested collections reawakened a sense of critical history, which prefigured 'liberalism'. In one of those sardonic remarks that occasionally puncture Hali's apparent infatuation with

European values of progress, the poet writes 'Let those who are pre-eminent in liberty today say when it was they started to become "liberal".'³³¹ In addition to trying to recover a repressed history of Islamic contributions to learning and science, Hali also re-fashions the figure of Muhammad himself in keeping with this re-worked narrative of progress. The Prophet of the *Musaddas* is a liberal figure embodying moral and economic virtues, which are necessary for an Islamic narrative of progress to get underway. He strikes the reader as somewhat similar to the stereotype of a Victorian social reformer. Much of the moral polemic of the *Musaddas* stresses those very virtues which Samuel Smiles emphasised in *Self-Help* (1859), a popular text in Victorian Britain which promulgated the contemporary spirit of self-help and personal initiative in an idiom of political and social reform.³³² That Hali was aware of the term 'self help' is indicated by the fact that he transcribes the term into Urdu when he discusses how Urdu poetry can progress in accordance with contemporary trends.³³³

The *Musaddas* also repackages through the model of classical Islam an ethic akin to the one Max Weber so famously described in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1904–1905). This is slightly ironic, given Weber's own views regarding the sensuality of Islamic culture.³³⁴ A major feature of the Protestant ethic is its ascetic attitude to the world and its pleasures, an attitude which plays a key role in fostering the virtues necessary for successful capitalist practice.³³⁵ An important characteristic of the *Musaddas* is its anti-hedonism. As Schimmel has put it, there is no place for eroticism in the new poetry.³³⁶ Cantwell Smith has discussed the virtues with which Indian Muslim biographers in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries invested the figure of the Prophet. In this context, he notes that these virtues are typical of 'early capitalist society' and that the 'entire axiology may be subsumed under the liberal conception of duty'. The Prophet of these biographies is a 'liberal Muhammad within a capitalist society'.³³⁷ So, too, the Prophet of the *Musaddas* is a liberal figure embodying the moral and economic virtues of capitalist modernity.

Thus, while Urdu and Persian travelogues internalised a narrative of progress and sought to emulate it, Hali's *Musaddas*, itself using dominant images of travel, prefigures Iqbal in its attempt to show how Islamic thought and practices contributed to that narrative. To a certain extent, then, Iqbal's re-fashioning of Islam vis a vis the narrative of progressive modernity had some nineteenth-century precedents. There are a number of ways, though, in which this re-fashioning takes a new turn in his thought and work. Iqbal is not just concerned with the recovery of a repressed narrative of Islam's contribution to a progressive modernity, now presented by Europe as uniquely European as well as unprecedented. Iqbal is concerned to trace influences on a historical level, but he moves beyond this, arguing that the 'independent individuality' of intellectual endeavour means that 'the mind' can 'gradually evolve out of itself, truths which may have been anticipated

by other minds ages ago'. He tries to consider how 'external influences' may 'wake it [an idea] up from its deep unconscious slumber' while stressing that these influences 'cannot create it [an idea] out of nothing'.³³⁸ In Iqbal's intellectual history of Islam and its relation to the West, there are no fully formed ideas but only anticipations of ideas which are in the continual process of being thought and re-thought. In the *Reconstruction* he refers to how the 'idea of degrees of Reality appears' in the writings of Shihabuddin Suhrawardi Maqtul, how this is found 'worked out on a much larger scale in Hegel' and then 'more recently' in Haldane's *Reign of Relativity*.³³⁹ So, too, al-Ghazali is seen as anticipating Descartes' philosophical method, while ibn Khaldun is seen as a forerunner of Bergson.³⁴⁰ Similarly, one of Zoroaster's insights is presented as anticipating the thought of the 'mystic shoemaker of Germany'.³⁴¹

Iqbal's history of thought, then, centres on these relationships of foresight, hindsight and anticipation. These by their very nature disrupt linear chronology. While Iqbal is keen to recover the story of Islam's contribution to a progressive modernity, he does so primarily by striving for a mutual illumination between ideas formulated in the different contexts of Islam and Europe. Sometimes earlier bodies of thought are deployed to illuminate and resolve aporias in the work of later thinkers, as when he suggests that Nietzsche's 'failure was mainly due to his intellectual progenitors such as Schopenhauer, Darwin and Lange whose influence completely blinded him to the real significance of his vision'. Iqbal suggests that Nietzsche's 'mental history is not without a parallel in the history of Eastern Sufism' and, by placing him in this history, tries to provide a new perspective on his 'failure' and the difficulties of his thinking.³⁴² Here, then, anticipation becomes a form of appropriation and re-fashioning which aims to release a thinker's work from the constraints of the context in which he is usually placed. This relocation of Nietzsche is especially apparent in the *Jāwīd Nāma*.³⁴³ Similarly, earlier bodies of thought are illuminated by hindsight, with Iqbal retrospectively deploying later thinkers to recontextualise the struggles and language of preceding thinkers. For example, he adopts the figures of Kant and Hegel, using the phrases 'As Kant would say' or 'As Hegel would say', to re-read earlier Muslim thinkers. He uses this strategy when he deals with some aspects of al-Jili's thought, translating these into Hegelian or Kantian terms.³⁴⁴

This strategy means that Iqbal often de-temporalises the history of thought in order to put thinkers in different traditions in dialogue with each other as though they were contemporaries discussing the same philosophical and metaphysical questions. In discussing al-Jili's conception of the attributes of God, he draws in Schleiermacher, not only stressing the differences between the two, but also adding that al-Jili 'recognises with Schleiermacher that in himself God is an unchangeable unity'.³⁴⁵ Similarly, he draws parallels between al-Jili, Hegel and Kant, and argues that al-Jili 'gives his hearty assent

to Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*; but, unlike him, he makes this very idea the essence of the Universe. Kant's *Dang an sich* to him is a pure nonentity; there is nothing behind the collection of attributes.³⁴⁶ The same strategy and style is used to consider parallels between Bahauallah and Schopenhauer, in terms of their grappling with concepts of Will,³⁴⁷ and al-Ghazali and Bradley in terms of their notions of the self and its reality.³⁴⁸ The drawing of parallels is also evident in the way Iqbal compares the intellectual situation of thinkers, as when he suggests the similarities between al-Ghazali and Kant in terms of their 'apostolic' missions,³⁴⁹ and the similarities between the Sufi reaction against Islamic rationalism and Jacobi's and Schleiermacher's responses to Kant.³⁵⁰

So while Iqbal internalises the narrative of modernity, in doing so he argues that there is nothing unprecedented about European modernity. On the contrary, he reveals that there is no stable moment of modernity, and that European self-conceptions about their own modernity rely on a deliberate forgetting of their Islamic predecessors in order to postulate a unique and unprecedented moment for 'their' modernity. Iqbal's location of European thinkers alongside Islam is evident, as we have seen, in the *Jāvid Nāma*, with its inverted framework of Sufism and a re-worked version of Islam, in which European writers and thinkers become episodes in a narrative of successive Islams. Here, far from enacting a sense of an inferior or lacking selfhood in relation to a European modernity, Iqbal dramatises a progressive sense of interiority through an assertive selfhood in the form of a self-empowering travel.³⁵¹

Iqbal's grappling with modernity is also evident in his approach to the Qur'ān. It is important to contextualise his approach in broad relation to traditions of exegesis of the Qur'ān in general, and preceding modernist interpretations of the Qur'ān in South Asia in particular. Needless to say, there have been and continue to be differing and conflicting interpretations of the Qur'ān within different communities of Muslims. These interpretations are, as one would expect, affected by the exegetes' time, location, cultural predispositions, sectarian affiliations and popular beliefs. Different exegetes have different concerns and goals. This is reflected in the relative weight they each give to the elements which are in play in the exegesis (*tafsīr*) of the Qur'ān, such as history, grammar, semantics, law, theology and folklore.³⁵² Traditionally, grammar, including elements of lexicography and orthography, had a crucial role to play in the interpretative process.³⁵³ In general, the aim of *tafsīr* was, and is, to relate the text to context, and to historicise it by grounding the text in the day-to-day life of a Muslim community. Such a historicisation is controlled by and productive of the meaning which it seeks to elucidate.³⁵⁴ The long historical development of traditions of *tafsīr* are of course ongoing, and contemporary commentators continue to produce commentaries in the classical form, while re-working it as a literary genre.³⁵⁵ However, the impetus behind *tafsīr* from the late

nineteenth century onwards has been the attempt to simplify the content of exegesis, making it more accessible to a wider reading public.³⁵⁶ This means evading or side-stepping the accumulation of exegetical material, thereby moving away from the twofold purpose of *tafsīr*, which was to elucidate the meaning the Qur'ān by producing a commentary which engages with a long line of previous commentaries. The other feature of modernist exegeses of the Qur'ān is the tendency to use the text to support religious and social ideas associated with contemporary reform movements, and to stress the 'scientific' elements of the Qur'ān, so introducing a new tool for interpretation, that of the modern discipline of science.³⁵⁷

In part, Iqbal's modernist approach to the Qur'ān emerges from late-nineteenth-century interpretations of the text. Here the exegesis by Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan was pre-eminent. Khan's essay 'Tabī'ion, yā necahrion ya fitration' ('Nature') can be read as a contradictory attempt to stake the claims of religion both against and on the basis of nineteenth-century natural science. On the one hand, the author tries to show that natural science and its discoveries are in fact compatible with Islamic faith by arguing that science and religion relate to completely different areas, and so they neither contradict nor conflict with each other.³⁵⁸ On the other hand, the author also states that the adoption of a natural scientific view entails the acceptance of God as the creator of the universe,³⁵⁹ although throughout the essay the author points to the other possible positions on this, namely agnosticism and atheism. Khan makes a more far-reaching attempt to establish a compatibility between the modern sciences [*'ulūm-e jadīda*]³⁶⁰ and the Qur'ān in the course of defining his 15 principles of exegesis. These principles were adumbrated in a series of letters written to Nawab Muhsin ul Mulk in 1892 and were collected under the title *Tahrīr fī usul al-tafsīr*.³⁶¹ To sum up here, there seem to be two main points, namely that the work of God or *qānūn-e fitrat* is in fact synonymous with the natural laws of modern science, and that the criterion employed to decide whether a given passage in the Qur'ān is to be interpreted metaphorically or not is truth as established by natural science.³⁶² This also seems to have been al-Afghani's view on exegesis of the Qur'ān, namely that reason should be used fully when interpreting the Qur'ān, and if the text seems to be in contradiction to what is known, it should be interpreted symbolically.³⁶³ There is some continuity between Sayyid Ahmad Khan's general position here and his general contention in one of his essays on magic that from the point of view of the Qur'ān, magic is unreal and false [*bātil*]. He argues that references to magic and sorcery in the text can be interpreted as allusions to the perceptions and beliefs of unbelievers. Moses' transformation of his staff into a serpent as related in *surat al-a'raf* in the Qur'ān is seen not as an instance of magic or sorcery [*sihr*], but rather as a manifestation of a natural human power [*quvvat-e nafs-e insāni*].³⁶⁴

Putting together the general contentions of his 15 principles of exegesis, and his essay on magic, Sayyid Ahmad Khan's view seems to be that miracles

are against both reason and the text of the Qur'ān.³⁶⁵ There are of course precedents for these rationalist views, and Troll has described Sayyid Ahmad Khan as a neo-Mu'tazilite,³⁶⁶ but he concludes that whilst Sayyid Ahmad Khan revived to a large extent the teachings of the *falāsifah* in his writings, he did so within the context of his own distinctive world-view. What made the adoption of a new world-view necessary was precisely the development of modern science.³⁶⁷ As one of Khan's interlocutors puts it, he (Khan) has considered the hypotheses of science correct [ṣaḥiḥ], certain [yaqīnī] and irrefutable [ghair qābil ul-i'tirāz] and has given them precedence over the Qur'ān itself.³⁶⁸ Furthermore, in his essay on 'Religious beliefs in olden and modern times', Sayyid Ahmad Khan emphasises the use of nature as a modern religious belief, as opposed to an older attitude of rejecting nature in order to concentrate on God's transcendental reality.³⁶⁹ As we have seen, the thrust of Sayyid Ahmad Khan's exegesis of the Bible and the Qur'ān is an anti-miraculous one, and there seems to be no place for the supernatural in his view.³⁷⁰ He tries to argue that the Qur'ān is free from any verses that reinforce a magical view of the world.³⁷¹ A number of scholars have pointed to the problems in Sayyid Ahmad Khan's notion of nature, such as the vacillation between a mechanical and a teleological view of it, the confusion between laws based on empirical, statistical and normative laws, the conflation of the God of Islamic faith with the God of natural law and so on.³⁷² Albert Hourani, writing of Afghani, Abduh and Wajdi, describes how Islam becomes identical with civilisation and the scientific norms of nineteenth-century Europe, and how in fact it almost dissolves into modern rationality.³⁷³ Aziz al-Azmeh has also extensively discussed 'Islamic liberalism' and its exegesis of scripture as a code 'open to the modernist interpreter, which yielded ideas in keeping with science, with evolutionism, and other ideas in currency'.³⁷⁴ Much the same could be said about Sayyid Ahmad Khan in the context of his Islamicising of the category of nature. But far from an easy incorporation of modernity into a liberal Islam, this Islamicisation of nature teases out the problematic character of some of the central categories of modernity itself. The pairing together of various notions from tradition with matters of contemporary relevance, to use Aziz al-Azmeh's phrase,³⁷⁵ is certainly part of a self-conscious polemic of modernisation; but this polemic is called into question by some powerfully eloquent ambivalences and tensions.

First, as mentioned above, Sayyid Ahmad Khan vacillates between the claim that Islamic faith can be reconciled with modern science, and the claim that their spheres are so different (since one deals with the spiritual and the other with the mundane), that there is no need to reconcile them. But these contradictory claims reflect the shifting nature of the terms of science and faith themselves. This shifting of key terms captures something of the protean nature of modern Enlightenment reason. Sayyid Ahmad Khan often remarks how modern science bears no resemblance to Greek science, as well as to new sciences which had no precedents in the Greek world. In his essay

'Ulūm-e jadīda' he categorises the modern sciences according to those which did not exist among the ancient Greeks, those which did exist among the Greeks but whose principles have been completely recast (such as chemistry and astronomy) and those whose principles have developed to such an extent that they no longer resemble what they were in the Greek world (for example, geometry, mechanics and algebra).³⁷⁶ In his introduction to *Tahrīr fī uṣūl al-tafsīr*, he argues that the main difference between the modern and the Greek sciences is that the former are based on experiment and practice [tajriba aur'amal], while the latter were based on analogical [qayāsī] and fanciful proofs.³⁷⁷ At the same time, he admits the possibility that just as the nineteenth-century sciences have supplanted the Greek sciences, so the latter too may one day be supplanted by new forms of science. This would necessitate a reinterpretation of the holy text once more.³⁷⁸

For Sayyid Ahmad Khan, then, there is a close connection between the shifting nature of scientific truth itself and the need to reinterpret the Qur'ān anew, but significantly, in spite of his valorisation of the natural sciences, he is aware of the changing nature of scientific truth. The shifting term 'science' in his work exemplifies Popper's remark that science rests on shifting sands. As Giddens argues, 'In science, *nothing* is certain, and nothing can be proved . . . In the heart of world of hard science, modernity floats free.'³⁷⁹ In other words, the shifting nature of the term 'science' in Sayyid Ahmad Khan's work is part of that crisis of science which Lyotard has noticed, signs of which have been accumulating since the end of the nineteenth century.³⁸⁰ Indeed, Sayyid Ahmad Khan's valorisation of science can be read in terms of the problems attendant upon legitimising science for religious world-views in late-nineteenth-century India.

There are also a number of circular definitions in Sayyid Ahmad Khan's work. In general terms it can be said that in *Tahrīr fī uṣūl al-tafsīr* Sayyid Ahmad Khan's argument is that the Qur'ān is 'true' because the natural sciences are consonant with it, and the natural sciences are true because they are consonant with the Qur'ān. This kind of circularity points to a feature of modernity itself, which Giddens has called 'reflexivity': 'What is characteristic of modernity is not an embracing of the new for its own sake, but the presumption of wholesale reflexivity – which of course includes reflection upon the nature of reflection itself.' He further argues that this reflexivity necessarily subverts reason itself, because we live in a world which is constituted through 'reflexively applied knowledge', but 'we can never be sure that any given element of that knowledge will not be revised'. It is in part because of this 'circularity of reason' that modernity is 'unsettling'.³⁸¹

Moreover, the terms of faith become fluid in Khan's work. W.C. Smith has argued that the term 'scripture' refers to a text being given special status by a community. The term is bilateral, since no text is a scripture in itself; rather, a given community makes a text into a scripture by treating it in a certain way.³⁸² This is made clear by the variety of interpretations a scripture

receives throughout its history. Sayyid Ahmad Khan, by taking the Qur'ān out of pre-existing relationships of exegesis, and reinserting it into a new set of relationships determined by the watchwords of European modernity, namely 'reason', 'nature' and 'progress', unwittingly lays bare the arbitrary nature of the relationship between scripture and the meanings imposed on it. This emerges from Sayyid Ahmad Khan's admission that should the sciences of his day be superseded by new forms of science, then the Qur'ān will need to be reinterpreted anew. Whilst he dismisses the objection that this would mean that the Qur'ān will become a 'plaything' [khilona] in people's hands,³⁸³ it does seem as though the text becomes a blank screen on to which the current intellectual and scientific trends of the age can be projected.

By substituting chains of authoritative commentaries with these Enlightenment categories, the result is also a naive view, namely that individuals can grasp the meaning of scripture without recourse to the constraints of preceding authorities. This is in keeping with Francis Robinson's argument about the impact of printing on Indian Islam; whereas before the reading of theological students was closely controlled by their teachers, with the issuing of *ijāza* [permission], with large-scale printing such constraints were no longer possible.³⁸⁴ This results in what Aziz Ahmad has called 'exegetical fundamentalism',³⁸⁵ namely the invoking of an original text to the exclusion of the traditions of commentary it is embedded in. The result in the case of Sayyid Ahmad Khan's hermeneutics is that scripture becomes almost infinitely interpretable and even malleable, and so comes close to losing its sacredness and ceasing to be scripture. Thus, whereas Smith has spoken of the 'human propensity to scripturalise',³⁸⁶ we also need to consider those possibilities of 'de-scripturalisation' opened up by thinkers attempting to recast some of the fundamental categories of Islamic faith. Smith has also discussed what he calls the 'de-transcendentalising of concept of scripture and the emergence of its plural'.³⁸⁷ This entailed recognising that scriptures are texts upon which readers impose meanings, and that there is not just one unique scripture (the Bible), but rather a collection of scriptures occurring in a variety of cultures. We see tentative elements of this view in Sayyid Ahmad Khan's *Muhammadan Commentary on the Bible*, and in his measurement of the Qur'ān by nineteenth-century views of rational nature. At times, his work can be seen as hovering between a singular view of the Qur'ān as unique and transcendental, and a post-scriptural view of a plurality of texts that were once scriptures but have now been rendered mundane by the secularising and historicising imperatives of modernity.

Such tensions characterise Iqbal's modernist approach to the Qur'ān. But the Qur'ān is also caught up in the instability of the modern in other ways in Iqbal's work. For Iqbal, the Qur'ān prefigures, and in some senses is 'modern', but this also makes the text vulnerable to the instability of modernity. By this I mean that, as in Sayyid Ahmad Khan's case, the text becomes malleable without any exegetical constraints. It supports a plurality of meanings,

between which no adjudication is possible, or at least such an adjudication remains unarticulated. It remains an open question whether this desacralises the text or re-sacralises it, but what is striking about Iqbal's approach to the Qur'ān is his eschewal of the kind of large-scale and totalising interpretation which Sayyid Ahmad Khan favours. Instead, Iqbal deals with bits and pieces of the Qur'ān, embedded in a variety of philosophical contexts which are defined by his own creative hermeneutic. So on the one hand, the Qur'ān is a revealed scripture, and yet on the other hand it is an open-ended text which is brought into play with a wide range of other texts, both European and Islamic, in addressing questions of universal import. So, in a typically dense paragraph, the Qur'ān is one point of reference in a discussion regarding the duality of mind and body, in which Iqbal draws in Descartes and Lange as well.³⁸⁸ In other dense passages, Iqbal draws the Qur'ān into an exchange on the question of the nature of selfhood between different philosophical positions, which include those of Bradley and Ghazali. He also reflects upon notions of space, using as points of reference the Qur'ān, Iraqi and Samuel Alexander's *Space, Time and Deity* (1920).³⁸⁹ Iqbal also considers how the Qur'ān transforms pre-existing legends, such as the Story of the Fall, in order to 'besoul them with new ideas, and thus to adapt them to the advancing spirit of the time'. This is compared to the way in which Goethe gives 'a wholly new meaning' to the legend of Faust.³⁹⁰ If there is a method in Iqbal's approach, it is one which consists of putting the Qur'ān into motion through a series of intellectual encounters, for which his own work is the catalyst.

In keeping with modernist approaches in *tafsīr*, Iqbal strives to create an immediacy of engagement with the Qur'ān which deliberately eschews the accumulation of exegetical material over the centuries. Nowhere in his work does he refer to traditions of *tafsīr*. Instead his *Reconstruction of Religious Thought* focuses on philosophy, mysticism, and politics. His one-to-one and face-to-face encounter with the text of the Qur'ān is evident when he cites various of its verses to support what he takes to be its perspective on 'the character of the universe which we inhabit'.³⁹¹ What is interesting is his use of these citations in a way which assumes that the content of the text can be paraphrased unproblematically.³⁹² However, there is a tension here because while Iqbal strives for an immediacy of reading, his discussion takes place in English and the verses of the Qur'ān which he cites are themselves translated into English. Iqbal did not have the requisite training in Arabic to undertake an exegesis in the classical style, in which grammar and lexicography played a key role.³⁹³ The translatability of the Qur'ān opens up yet another world of plural meanings, and calls attention to how the attempt at an immediacy of reading is in tension with the processes of translation which makes that immediacy possible. However, in the *Jāvid Nāma*, Iqbal's approach to the Qur'ān is different from that in the *Reconstruction*. Here fragments of verses and phrases from the Qur'ān are embedded, untranslated, in the Persian poem. These untranslated fragments highlight the linguistic specificity of the

Qur'ān against the Persian background of the poem. Moreover, the fragments are rarely explicated, instead they are alluded to by characters, or the question of their meaning is raised but is never expounded in a linear fashion.³⁹⁴ Here, then, Iqbal approaches the Qur'ān in terms of fragments, hints and allusions. The poem seems to preclude the possibility of any encounter with the entire text of the Qur'ān; it can only be approached circuitously.

I have argued that there is a dialectical interplay between, and mutual grounding of, tradition and modernity in Iqbal's work. Just such an interplay characterises his approach to the Qur'ān, and to a certain extent this is summed up in his own view that 'the source' of the revelation in the Qur'ān 'belongs to the ancient world' while 'the spirit' of that Revelation 'belongs to the modern world'.³⁹⁵ On the one hand, Iqbal's approach eschews the accumulation of exegetical material surrounding the Qur'ān and seeks to create a space for an unproblematic 'lifting' of its contents for his own philosophical views. He also seeks to suggest that the world-view expressed in the Qur'ān is compatible with conceptions of the world and the universe in modern scientific theories, such as the theory of Relativity.³⁹⁶ We have already seen how Iqbal tries to show how the intellectual revolt against Greek thought by Muslim thinkers, and especially against the speculative nature of Aristotelian logic, paved the way for the experimental and empirical attitudes which underlay the development of modern science. In accordance with this view, he argues that this intellectual revolt against Greek philosophy stems from the 'anti-classical spirit of the Qur'ān' which 'asserted itself in spite of those who began with a desire to interpret Islam in the light of Greek thought'.³⁹⁷ He also specifies verses in the Qur'ān which opened up 'a new vista to Muslim philosophers' for considering quasi-evolutionary perspectives.³⁹⁸ Iqbal's approach to the Qur'ān has another modernist feature, namely the focus on themes of the Qur'ān (its 'scientific' character, its view of the world and nature and so on) which breaks with the principle in classical *tafsīr* of following the order of the scriptural text itself. But despite the modern features of his interpretations, his approach to the Qur'ān is strangely reminiscent of the development of *tafsīr* in its formative period, when one finds works which cover only isolated segments of the text. There continues to be a scholarly debate over the question of the fragmentary nature of early *tafsīr*.³⁹⁹ While Iqbal sees the germs of scientific ideas in the Qur'ān,⁴⁰⁰ this approach is also reminiscent of mystical approaches to the Qur'ān, which privilege symbol and allegory as they use a particular verse for a 'jumping-off point' or 'keynote' for meditation on a topic not at first sight connected to the text.⁴⁰¹ A typical example of this is to be found in the 'parallel exegesis' of Ibn al-'Arabi and his followers, who focussed on speculative hints or allusions [*ishārat*] which revealed hidden or esoteric meanings in the text.⁴⁰² It is typical of the eclecticism of Iqbal's work, and the play between modernity and tradition, that his approach to the Qur'ān should be reminiscent of Sufi exegesis in its focus on speculative hints and

allusions, even while these allusions are deployed to interpret the Qur'ān as prefiguring modern science.

Ultimately, though, the Qur'ān is appropriated by Iqbal in accordance with his notion of selfhood. Not only does he read into the Qur'ān support for his view of the individuality and uniqueness of selfhood, as well as its persistence even in moments of ecstatic union with God,⁴⁰³ his search for fresh meanings in the Qur'ān, unmediated by traditions of exegesis, includes endorsing the view that the Qur'ān is revealed to each believer just as it was revealed to the Prophet.⁴⁰⁴ He argues that in 'Islam prophecy reaches its perfection in discovering the need of its own abolition'.⁴⁰⁵ Iqbal comes close to appropriating prophecy for himself, and this also has an impact on his notion of selfhood, which I deal with in more detail in Chapter 8. Here, though, we can note that the finality of the revelation in the Qur'ān for Iqbal lay in its very availability for a continual process of interpretation. It is the dynamism of this process which he enacts in his own creative hermeneutics, and which he sees reflected in the text of the Qur'ān itself, for example in its endorsement, according to him, of a 'dynamic conception of the universe'.⁴⁰⁶ This emphasis in his work rebuts notions of a fixed Islam with fixed views of the Qur'ān. It also thereby involves the Qur'ān in the instability of modernity's moment, while making the Qur'ān, in its very malleability, a central reference point for that instability.

Notes

1. Gregory, p. 196.
2. For example, see Mirza Abu Taleb, pp. 61–4, Yusuf Khan, p. 12 ff.
3. Pandian, pp. 2–3 who describes the Suez canal in terms of its powerful display of 'electric lighting'; Malabari, pp. 16–21 who comments on the 'admirable works of engineering' and the development of infrastructure in Aden by the British. He also describes the Suez canal as a 'splendid piece of work' (p. 18). See also Sayyid Ahmad Khan, pp. 87–107 on Aden. He notes developments in the engineering of infrastructure and in the technology of transport in the Middle East (pp. 87–9, pp. 110–11).
4. Sayyid Ahmad Khan, p. 92.
5. Mirza Abu Taleb, pp. 509–37 on the global wars between the French and the British which expose the weaknesses of the Ottoman army in the Middle East, and pp. 627–32 on the decline of the Ottoman state in Turkey itself. Yusuf Khan, pp. 145–6 also comments on the relative weakness of Ottoman power in Egypt vis à vis the British.
6. Mirza Abu Taleb, p. 533. See also pp. 786–9 for an incident regarding a British man's female companion, which for Abu Taleb shows that the British have as much power in Basra as they do in India.
7. Pandian, pp. 2–3, Malabari, p. 18.
8. Mirza Abu Taleb, pp. 24–7. See also pp. 92–3 on the dangerous waters between Europe and America because of the wars in Europe.

9. Mirza Abu Taleb, pp. 509–37, p. 526 ff. On Tipu Sultan, see Karim Khan, pp. 97–8, and Yusuf Khan, pp. 59–60.
10. Mirza I'tisam uddin, *Shigurf Nāma*, pp. 49 f.1–51 f.2 on the British museum; Mirza Abu Taleb, pp. 284–5 also on the British museum; Yusuf Khan, p. 18 on a museum in Cape Town, set up by the British, p. 40 on a museum in London (not specified but presumably the British museum), and p. 76 on an exhibition of Greek archaeological specimens in London; Karim Khan, p. 119 on the zoological gardens in Regent's park; Malabari, pp. 180–1 on the Natural History Museum and the British Museum; Sayyid Ahmad Khan, pp. 134–5 on the British Museum and zoological gardens.
11. Pandian, p. 30. This follows a depiction of Crystal Palace as 'a complete and comprehensive index to England's commercial wealth and greatness'.
12. Pillai, p. 2, Malabari, p. 2, pp. 29–30.
13. Pandian, p. 52, on the British press being as much an 'imperial power as is the British Empire itself' in terms of its global influence. The editorial office of a typical British paper is represented in similar terms to the British museum, in so far as it 'may be said to contain a concentrated epitome of all that is being thought, said and done on land and sea all the world over' (p. 53).
14. Burton, pp. 185–6.
15. Pratt, pp. 146–53.
16. Thomas, p. 5.
17. Grewal, pp. 14–15.
18. For some examples, on Westminster Abbey, see Mirza I'tisam uddin, *Shigurf Nāma*, 40 f.1–f.2; on St. Paul's, Yusuf Khan, pp. 35–6, and Karim Khan, p. 198; on the Tower of London, Karim Khan, pp. 145–7, Sayyid Ahmad Khan, p. 287, Pandian, p. 28; on the Houses of Parliament, Karim Khan, p. 120, Malabari, pp. 179–80, Pillai, pp. 96–8; and on royal palaces, Mirza I'tisam uddin, *Shigurf Nāma*, 41 f.2–42 f.1, Pandian, pp. 25–7.
19. These include extended descriptions of steam railways and boats, and steam power as used in manufacturing processes (Karim Khan, p. 125, p. 127, p. 129, pp. 246–8, Mirza Abu Taleb, pp. 372–6, Yusuf Khan, p. 31, Lal, *Travels*, pp. 492–3), the infrastructure of European cities and London in particular with respect to lighting, especially electric lighting later, and the water supply (Mirza Abu Taleb, pp. 115–48, pp. 378–9, Pandian, 21), and industrial processes of manufacturing (Mirza Abu Taleb, pp. 115–48, pp. 378–9, Pandian, pp. 42–3).
20. For example, see Pandian, p. 19, on the 'engineering wonders' and 'structures' of London, also Lal, *Travels*, p. 499, Yusuf Khan, p. 122.
21. For example, the Tower of London reminds Pandian of the 'past savagery' of Britons (p. 28), while he finds the royal palaces immorally extravagant (pp. 25–7). Both Malabari and Pillai found the Houses of Parliament disappointing (Malabari, pp. 179–80, Pillai, pp. 96–8).
22. Sayyid Ahmad Khan, p. 286, and Pandian, p. 21.
23. Malabari, p. 2.
24. Yusuf Khan, pp. 294–6, see also pp. 182–3.
25. Mohamed, pp. 71–3.
26. Karim Khan, pp. 271–2. See also his use of the term 'taraqqī', p. 114, p. 266.
27. Mirza Abu Taleb stresses that his aim is to make known to Muslims everything that he finds 'useful' [mufīdān], the customs [dastūrāt] of peoples, and the wonders of the seas and regions of the world [ʿajāʾib beḥr va gharāib dabār]; see Mirza Abu Taleb, pp. 3–6.

28. Sayyid Ahmad Khan, pp. 47–8, p. 51, p. 53, pp. 72–3, p. 95, p. 100, pp. 117–19, pp. 192–3.
29. Ibid., p. 239.
30. Ibid., pp. 290–1.
31. Pandian, p. 40 on the mechanisation of labour, pp. 48–51 on commercial practices, especially advertising, and p. 56 on the press.
32. Malabari, p. 2, p. 10, p. 176.
33. Mohamed, p. 10.
34. Fisher, *Mahomed*, p. 224.
35. Mirza Abu Taleb, p. 128.
36. See above, Ch. 1.
37. Yusuf Khan, p. 200, pp. 265–6.
38. Ibid., pp. 275–6.
39. Sayyid Ahmad Khan, pp. 48–9. See also p. 144 for his devaluation of the Red Fort at Delhi in relation to Versailles, pp. 131–2 for how diwali lights and the treasures of the richest Hindustanis cannot compare to the street lighting and shops in Marseilles, p. 152 on how chandni chowk cannot compare with the shops of Paris, and p. 167 on his hotel rooms in Bristol being superior to the rooms in a nawab's or rajah's palace.
40. Sayyid Ahmad Khan, p. 184.
41. Pandian, p. 15, pp. 44–7, p. 57. See also p. 52, where he compares the Indian press to 'unweaned weaklings dependent on the Press of the Mother Country'.
42. Malabari, p. 2.
43. Clifford, *Routes*, p. 23.
44. Sayyid Ahmad Khan, pp. 59–68.
45. Ibid., p. 46.
46. Ibid., pp. 53–7, pp. 113–14. In some ways, Sayyid Ahmad Khan was preceded in this by Mirza I'tisam uddin, *Shigurf Nāma*, who also has an extended description of different kinds of ships (p. 17, f.1 ff) and the infrastructure of transport in England (p. 101, f.1–f.2).
47. Malabari, Ch. 5, also pp. 29–30.
48. Ibid., pp. 8–9.
49. See above. See also Lal, *Travels*, p. 494, on the 'astonishment which first overpowered my senses' when he first travelled by train; Pandian, p. 4 on his first sight of Victoria station; Sayyid Ahmad Khan, pp. 35–7 where he uses the vocabulary of 'ajāi'bāt to describe modern railway technology; and Malabari, p. 29 on the danger of being 'stunned, or distracted' by the crowds and traffic at London's main railway stations.
50. Malabari, p. 29. See also Lal, *Travels*, p. 498 on London traffic.
51. Mirza Abu Taleb, pp. 122–3.
52. Pandian, p. 23 argues that the best way to see London is from the top of an omnibus. See also Malabari, p. 144 who recommends both walking and riding on top of an omnibus as ways of seeing London.
53. Gandhi, *An Autobiography*, p. 66. For his many references to the question of his diet, see *ibid.*, pp. 56–9, pp. 66–8, p. 70. For an insightful discussion of Gandhi's experiments with diet, see Alter, Ch. 2.
54. Ibid., Part 1, Chs 20–1.
55. Ibid., for dress see p. 55, pp. 60–1, p. 81, and for social etiquette, p. 56, and Part 1, Chs 15 and 19.
56. Yusuf Khan, p. 7, Karim Khan, pp. 115–6.

57. Sayyid Ahmad Khan, pp. 73–4, p. 161, pp. 164–6, Malabari, p. 5.
58. Mirza I'tisam uddin, *Shigurf Nāma*, p. 107, f.1–2.
59. Gandhi, *An Autobiography*, pp. 85–6. For the impact of Tolstoy on Gandhi, see *ibid.*, p. 136, p. 156. Gandhi also named one of his experimental communes in South Africa after Tolstoy, for which see *ibid.*, pp. 302–12. For a more extended discussion of Tolstoy farm, see Gandhi, *Satyagraha in South Africa*, Chs 33–5. Tolstoy makes a number of associations between bad food, addictive substances and poor art in *What is Art?* translated Richard Peaver and Larissa Volokhonsky (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1995), p. 80, p. 163.
60. M.K. Gandhi, in Anthony J. Parel (ed.), *Hind Swaraj and Other Writings* (1910; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 40. For some comments on eating and modernity, see p. 36, p. 63.
61. R.N. Iyer argued that 'Gandhi seems to stand almost alone among social and political thinkers in his firm rejection of the rigid dichotomy between ends and means and in his extreme moral preoccupation with the means to the extent that they, rather than the ends, provide the standard of reference'. See R.N. Iyer, *The Moral and Political Thought of Mahatma Gandhi* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), p. 361.
62. I discuss this below.
63. Gandhi, *An Autobiography*, p. 400.
64. For example, see Mirza I'tisam uddin, *Shigurf Nāma*, p. 101, f.1–2 on provisions in inns for travellers in England, and Sayyid Ahmad Khan, pp. 54–5 on the bathroom [ḥamām] in his cabin.
65. For his reflections on this, see Gandhi, *An Autobiography*, pp. 224–5, p. 341, pp. 343–4, p. 348, pp. 364–5.
66. For an indication of what Heidegger means by 'essence', see his 'The Question Concerning Technology', in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays* (New York: Harper Colophon Books, 1977), pp. 30–1, where he suggests that 'essence' has the closely related senses of holding sway, lasting or enduring, coming to presence; hence he uses the term 'essence' as a verb ('essencing', 'to essence' and so on). See also translator's footnote on p. 3 and p. 9 on the notion of 'presencing'.
67. *Ibid.*, p. 4.
68. This is a drastic simplification but see *ibid.*, p. 16, pp. 19–20, pp. 25–6 and footnote on p. 19.
69. Hubert Dreyfus, 'Heidegger on the connections between nihilism, art, technology and politics', in Charles B. Guignon (ed.), *Cambridge Companion to Heidegger* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 289–316; see pp. 302–3.
70. Heidegger, 'Question concerning technology', p. 17.
71. Dreyfus, 'Nihilism, art, technology, and politics', p. 306. See Heidegger, 'Question concerning technology', pp. 32–3, which outlines how man may be the one who is needed and used for the revealing of the truth of technology, such that it is in the end 'enframing' that lets man endure. See also Haraway, pp. 197–8 on the governing paradigm of 'resourcing'.
72. Heidegger, 'Question concerning technology', p. 32. As I understand it, this means that man can only come to presence (in Heidegger's sense of the word 'essence') within the framework and paradigm of technology; see p. 31.
73. Patricia F. Waller, 'Transportation and society', in Talib Rothnegatter and Enrique Carbonell Vage (eds) *Traffic and Transport Psychology. Theory and Application* (Amsterdam: Pergamon, 1997), p. 1.

74. Magda Draskoczy, 'Traffic safety and the new research paradigm in human sciences', in *Traffic and Transport Psychology*, p. 90.
75. See Ivan D. Brown who argues that psychologists can aid the understanding of unwanted human behaviour in transport systems, but regrets that 'their explanations may not always translate effectively into psychological types of countermeasure'; 'How traffic and transport systems can benefit from psychology', in Talib Rothnegatter and Enrique Carbonell Vage (eds), *Traffic and Transport Psychology*, pp. 9–19, p. 19.
76. Gandhi, *An Autobiography*, p. 225.
77. Patricia Waller, 'Transportation and society', p. 2.
78. See Ch. 1 for Gandhi's representation of his travelling first class in South Africa, the problems of buying tickets experienced by Indians in South Africa and third-class passengers in India (see *An Autobiography*, p. 343, p. 364), and the difficulties of securing hotel accommodation as one travels in South Africa as a 'coloured' person.
79. *Ibid.*, p. 343.
80. Gandhi, *An Autobiography*, p. 113, p. 127.
81. Mirza Abu Taleb, p. 41.
82. Sayyid Ahmad Khan, pp. 63–8, pp. 114–15.
83. Karim Khan, p. 92.
84. Gandhi, *An Autobiography*, p. 114.
85. *Ibid.*, pp. 274–5. See also *Hind Swaraj*, p. 120, where Gandhi lists two works by Ruskin, along with Tolstoy and others, as 'recommended for perusal to follow up the study of the foregoing'.
86. *Hind Swaraj*, p. 120.
87. Thomas F. Taylor, *The Fallacy of Speed* (London: A.C. Fifield, 1909), p. 9, p. 38, where he argues that railways create national markets, which means that people compete in the same market for 'the trade in such ordinary goods as otherwise would be made well enough in almost any community'.
88. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Confessions* (1781; London: Penguin Books, 1953), translated J.M. Cohen, p. 19.
89. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Words*, translated Irene Clephane (1964; London: Penguin Books, 1967), p. 103.
90. *Ibid.*, p. 104. Here Sartre is citing Chateaubriand.
91. I discuss this in more detail below.
92. For which, see CW 8 (1962), pp. 239–42, pp. 256–8, pp. 269–71, pp. 282–3, pp. 289–90, pp. 303–5, pp. 324–6, pp. 337–9, pp. 371–5.
93. Gandhi, *An Autobiography*, p. 415. See also *Hind Swaraj*, p. lviii.
94. *Ibid.*, p. 284.
95. Lal, *Travels*, p. 494, Malabari, p. 29.
96. Pandian, p. 4.
97. Heidegger, 'Question concerning technology', p. 4.
98. Dreyfus, 'Nihilism, art, technology, and politics', p. 306.
99. Heidegger, 'Question concerning technology', p. 3.
100. *Hind Swaraj*, p. 47; Gandhi, *An Autobiography*, pp. 350–3, for Gandhi's response to the Kumbha Mela, and pp. 354–6, for his reactions to Hrishikesh.
101. Lal, *Travels*, pp. 25–6, Burnes, *Travels*, pp. 50–1.
102. Lal, *Travels*, p. 33, p. 53, pp. 63–4.
103. *Ibid.*, p. 191, p. 202, p. 209, p. 285.
104. *Ibid.*, p. 61, p. 86, p. 190, p. 200–1, p. 263, pp. 365–6.

105. Ibid., p. 8, p. 109, p. 115, p. 366, p. 383.
106. Burnes, *Travels*, p. ix.
107. Ibid., especially pp. 6–8.
108. Sayyid Ahmad Khan, pp. 90–1, p. 100.
109. Pandian, p. 74.
110. Malabari, p. 2.
111. Gandhi, *An Autobiography*, p. 357.
112. Ibid., p. 357.
113. A key contention in *Hind Swaraj*; for example, see p. 41.
114. *Hind Swaraj*, pp. 68–9; and p. 165.
115. On these difficulties, see Mary Evans, *Missing Persons*, p. 1, p. 24, Louis Reiza, 'The Veto of the Imagination: A Theory of Autobiography', in James Olney (ed.), *Autobiography: Essays Theoretical and Critical* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), pp. 268–95, p. 276, John Sturrock, *The Language of Autobiography. Studies in the First Person Singular* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 3.
116. Heidegger, 'Question concerning technology', p. 16.
117. Ibid., p. 16.
118. Ibid., p. 35.
119. *Hind Swaraj*, p. 49.
120. I discuss this in more detail in Ch. 4.
121. Cornelia Sorabji, in Chandani Lokuge (ed.), *India Calling. The Memories of Cornelia Sorabji, India's First Woman Barrister* (1934; New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 114.
122. See Ch. 4.
123. Sayyid Ahmad Khan, pp. 171–5. The citation is from p. 174.
124. James S. Duncan, *The City as text: the politics of landscape interpretation in the Kandy kingdom* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 22.
125. I discuss this further below.
126. Duncan, *City as Text*, p. 19.
127. Mahomed, *Travels*, for example, see the references to John Milton and Oliver Goldsmith, p. 15, p. 74, p. 82.
128. Ibid., p. 31.
129. Fisher, *Dean Mahomed*, p. 222.
130. Mahomed, *Travels*, p. 35.
131. Ibid., p. 26.
132. Ibid., p. 36. For another example, see pp. 75–6.
133. Partha Mitter, *Much Maligned Monsters. History of European Reactions to Indian art* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), pp. 119–23.
134. Mahomed, *Travels*, p. 15.
135. Ibid., p. 101.
136. Ibid., pp. 61–2.
137. Ibid., p. 89, p. 91.
138. Ibid., p. 91.
139. Donna Haraway, 'Situated knowledges: The science question in feminism and the privilege of partial perspective', in her *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women. The Reinvention of Nature* (London: Free Association Books, 1992), pp. 188–9.
140. Gandhi, *Satyagraha in South Africa*, pp. 229–31, pp. 232–6, p. 238, p. 240, p. 243.
141. Gandhi, *An Autobiography*, pp. 128–30.

142. Gandhi, *Satyagraha in South Africa*, p. 51. For the background to this incident see pp. 47–50.
143. *Ibid.*, p. 250.
144. *Hind Swaraj*, p. 48, footnote pp. 48–9.
145. Gandhi, *An Autobiography*, pp. 289–91. Fox describes Gandhi's decision to take the vow of brahmacharya as a 'revolution in personhood' (Fox, p. 26).
146. *Ibid.*, p. 14.
147. *Ibid.*, p. 197.
148. *Ibid.*, pp. 26–9. Gandhi notes how the very discourse of sexual fidelity spawned tormenting fantasies about his wife's infidelity. I discuss this in more detail below, where I try to offer an alternative reading of brahmacharya.
149. Ronald Hyam, *Empire and Sexuality. The British Experience* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1990), *passim*.
150. Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather. Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial context* (New York and London: Routledge, 1995), p. 4.
151. The most illuminating discussions are in Parekh, Ch. 6, Vinay Lal, 'Nakedness, non-violence, and Brahmacharya: Gandhi's experiments in celibate sexuality', *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 9, pp. 1–2 (January–April 2000), pp. 105–36. For another useful discussion, see Alter, pp. 197–9, pp. 202–6, pp. 24–7.
152. Mirza Abu Taleb, pp. 68–9.
153. Stewart, 1: p. 234, for a translation of one of these odes.
154. Malabari, pp. 31–4.
155. Mirza Abu Taleb, pp. 229–30.
156. Pillai, p. 31.
157. Gandhi, *An Autobiography*, pp. 79–80, p. 107.
158. *Ibid.*, p. 198.
159. Taylor, *Fallacy of Speed*, p. 7.
160. *Ibid.*, p. 52, p. 56.
161. See Anthony Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994), p. 19, which argues that one of the consequences of modernity is that place becomes increasingly phantasmagoric, in so far as all locales are shaped in terms of social influences distant from them.
162. M.K. Gandhi, 'The Cinderella [sic] of the Empire', CW 3: pp. 383–4. Gandhi's contention in *Hind Swaraj* that the British have not conquered India, instead the Indians have given it to them (p. 41), is in agreement with Seeley's view that (in Gandhi's words) 'in the very real sense of the term India is not a conquered country . . . it is British because the vast majority of its people have, perhaps for selfish reasons, accepted British rule' ('Cinderella', p. 383).
163. J.R. Seeley, *The Expansion of England. Two Courses of Lectures* (1883; London: Macmillan, 1931), p. 85. See also p. 213, and p. 301, p. 302, on the shortening of distance between India and Britain with the opening of the Suez Canal and the invention of the telegraph.
164. Malabari, pp. 29–31, pp. 149–50.
165. *Ibid.*, p. 18, p. 24.
166. Pandian, pp. 35–7.
167. *Ibid.*, p. 35.
168. Zygmunt Bauman, *Liquid Modernity* (Oxford and Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000), p. 9.
169. Haraway, 'Situated knowledges', p. 188.
170. Gandhi, *An Autobiography*, pp. 314–5.

171. This is how Haraway describes the project for situated knowledges; see her 'Situated knowledges', p. 188.
172. Thomas Taylor, *Fallacy of Speed*, p. 7.
173. *Satyagraha in South Africa*, p. 121.
174. *Ibid.*, p. 181.
175. *Hind Swaraj*, p. 102.
176. Gandhi, *An Autobiography*, p. 205.
177. See Ch. 6.
178. Haraway, p. 189.
179. Nehru, 'A visit to Garhwal', SW 8: pp. 879–82.
180. Nehru, *Discovery*, p. 32.
181. *Ibid.*, p. 514.
182. *Ibid.*, p. 559.
183. Nehru, 'The progress of science', March 5, 1938, SW: pp. 808–12, p. 809.
184. *Ibid.*, p. 409.
185. *Ibid.*, p. 409.
186. *Ibid.*, p. 512.
187. Zachariah, p. 96, Gopal, 1: pp. 245–8. Gopal points out that the work of the National Planning Committee was more alarming to the right wing of the INC than to the Government of India itself. It was also a point of tension between Nehru and Gandhi, and Gandhi called on his followers to stay away from the Planning Committee (*ibid.*, 1: p. 247). For another important discussion of the concept of national planning, see Chatterjee, pp. 159–61.
188. Nehru, 'The Progress of science', March 5, 1938, SW: 8, pp. 808–12, p. 810, and 'The cultivation of a scientific outlook', January 3, 1939, SW: 9, pp. 613–17, p. 616, for a similar expression of the all-embracing applicability of scientific method.
189. Nehru, *Discovery*, p. 375.
190. *Ibid.*, pp. 395–402.
191. 'Planning – A continuous process', June 15, 1939, SW 9: pp. 380–3, p. 383.
192. 'Guidelines for planning', June 19, 1939, SW 9: pp. 385–90, p. 390.
193. Nehru, *Discovery*, p. 399. For a similar note on the self-proliferating nature of planning, see Nehru, *An Autobiography*, p. 607.
194. Nehru, 'The progress of planning', May 1, 1940, SW 11: pp. 289–97, pp. 290–1.
195. Nehru, *Discovery*, p. 512.
196. *Ibid.*, p. 513.
197. *Ibid.*, pp. 26–7, pp. 512–14.
198. *Ibid.*, p. 559, p. 35.
199. *Ibid.*, pp. 26–7.
200. *Ibid.*, p. 181.
201. *Ibid.*, p. 26, p. 511.
202. *Ibid.*, p. 557.
203. Nehru, 'To Indira Nehru', 25–26 April 1940, SW 11: pp. 459–62, p. 462.
204. Nehru, *Discovery*, p. 24.
205. Nehru, *An Autobiography*, p. 596.
206. Nehru, p. 599.
207. *Ibid.*, p. 559.
208. See above, Ch. 1.
209. Nehru, *An Autobiography*, p. 600.
210. Nehru, *Discovery*, p. 479.

211. I discuss this in more detail below, see Ch. 4.
212. Nehru, *Discovery*, pp. 395–6.
213. Nehru, 'To Lakshmibai Rajwade', March 30, 1940, SW 11: pp. 284–6, p. 285.
214. Clifford, *Routes*, p. 33.
215. Nehru, *Discovery*, p. 565.
216. I have taken the phrase 'epistemic superiority' from Thomas, p. 7.
217. Nehru, *Discovery*, p. 566.
218. *Ibid.*, p. 515, p. 83.
219. Nehru, 'The progress of science', March 5, 1938, SW 8: pp. 808–12, p. 809.
220. See Ch. 7.
221. Nehru, *Discovery*, p. 32.
222. *Ibid.*, p. 558.
223. Fraser, *Victorian Romance Quest*, pp. 14–15, p. 19.
224. Brantlinger, *Rule of Darkness*, p. 235 (citing H.G. Wells).
225. Nehru, *Discovery*, p. 512, see also p. 514, and 'Speech at Delhi University', February 14, 1939 in SW 9, p. 372.
226. Nehru, *Discovery*, p. 559.
227. Katherine Verdery, 'Whither "Nation" and "Nationalism"', in Gopal Balakrishnan (ed.), *Mapping the Nation* (London: Verso, 1996), pp. 226–34, pp. 226–7.
228. Verdery, p. 231.
229. Partha Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World — A Derivative Discourse?* (London: Zed Books, 1986), p. 81, pp. 146–50.
230. Sanjay Seth, 'Nationalism, national identity and "History": Nehru's search for India', *Thesis Eleven* (1992), 32: pp. 37–54, p. 44.
231. Nehru, *Discovery*, p. 358.
232. *Ibid.*, p. 357.
233. Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (1983; Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1984), pp. 64–71.
234. Sanjay Seth, pp. 44–5.
235. Nehru, *Discovery*, p. 341.
236. Nehru, *An Autobiography*, p. 406. Emphasis in the original.
237. *Ibid.*, p. 253.
238. Nehru, *Discovery*, p. 358.
239. This has been discussed by Sanjay Seth, pp. 50–2, and Partha Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought*, pp. 153–7.
240. See Nehru, *Discovery*, p. 407, where this is discussed.
241. Nehru, *An Autobiography*, p. 506.
242. *Ibid.*, p. 254.
243. *Ibid.*, p. 260.
244. *Ibid.*, pp. 507–8.
245. Nehru, *An Autobiography*, see especially Ch. 62, pp. 515–36.
246. Sturrock, *Language of Autobiography*, p. 12, p. 14.
247. Nehru, *Discovery*, p. 358, Nehru, *An Autobiography*, p. 253.
248. Nehru, *Discovery*, p. 50.
249. For an excellent account of this, see Benjamin Zachariah, Ch. 2. Zachariah notes that Gandhi's political patronage of Nehru continued up to January 1942 when Gandhi confirmed Nehru as his successor (p. 113). He also points to Nehru's repeated unwillingness to take any steps which would lead to open conflict with Gandhi (p. 83). Gopal also discusses the difficult political relationships

- between Nehru and Gandhi. He notes that when Nehru returned from his travels in Europe in 1927 he was no longer an uncritical disciple of Gandhi's, but was instead a 'self-conscious revolutionary radical' (Gopal, 1: p. 109). For key moments of political tension between Nehru and Gandhi, see *ibid.*, 1: pp. 110–12, pp. 120–2, p. 177, p. 178–81, p. 187, p. 209.
250. *Ibid.*, p. 555. See also p. 556, where Nehru discusses how modern civilisation is 'progressively going further away from the life-giving elements' of the soil.
251. *Ibid.*, p. 555.
252. *Ibid.*, p. 154. See also pp. 104–5 for Nehru's comparisons between Greek and Indian polytheism, and how they reflected a 'harmony with nature'.
253. *Ibid.*, p. 212.
254. *Ibid.*, p. 192.
255. *Ibid.*, p. 357.
256. Nehru, *An Autobiography*, p. 413.
257. Nehru, *Discovery*, p. 358.
258. Gopal mentions in passing that Nehru was 'aware of natural beauty and in love with mountains' (Gopal, 1: p. 198).
259. Kate Soper, *What is Nature?* (Oxford and Cambridge: Blackwell, 1995), p. 187.
260. Nehru, *An Autobiography*, p. 430.
261. Nehru, *Discovery*, p. 166.
262. *Ibid.*, p. 152.
263. *Ibid.*, p. 556; Nehru, *An Autobiography*, p. 511.
264. Gandhi is described variously as endorsing a return to 'primitiveness' (Gandhi, *An Autobiography*, p. 511) and a return to the ancient past (*ibid.*, p. 518, pp. 519–20).
265. I take these two terms from Kate Soper, *What is Nature?*, p. 3.
266. *Ibid.*, p. 155.
267. For a useful chronology of Nehru's time in prison, see Brecher p. 81 f.n.
268. Gopal, 1: pp. 74–80; see also 1: p. 142, pp. 172–92, p. 270, and p. 295.
269. See Ch. 1.
270. Nehru, *An Autobiography*, pp. 93–4, p. 95, pp. 217–8, pp. 353–7, pp. 495–6, pp. 553–4. In all of these cases, nature as landscape is figured from within the confines of the prison.
271. *Ibid.*, p. 94.
272. *Ibid.*, p. 554.
273. He refers to the rhododendrons as 'large groups of beautiful blood-red flowers hanging on to the branches of big green trees', the 'vivid patches of red [standing] out on the distant hill-sides', the 'whitish plum-blossoms and the mauve flowers of the peach', and daisies, buttercups and yellow mustard. See 'Letter to Indu', March 22, 1935, SW 6: pp. 332–5, pp. 332–3. See the references in his prison diary to 'patches of brilliant deep blue' in the gaps between the clouds, and the 'wonderful colours on the hillsides and the clouds'; see entry of December 12, 1940, SW 11: p. 509, and the evocation of 'fresh greenery', 'green fields and trees, bright with colour and glistening with drops of rain', entry of June 25, 1934, SW 6: p. 260.
274. Nehru, *An Autobiography*, p. 354.
275. *Ibid.*, pp. 355–8.
276. *Ibid.*, p. 355.
277. See the narrator's observations on the signs of the changing seasons, *ibid.*, pp. 354–5.

278. See Ch. 1.
279. Ibid., p. 219, pp. 348–50, *Discovery*, p. 442.
280. 'Letter to his sister', December 12, 1940, SW 11: pp. 513–4, p. 514. See also 'Whither India?' October 9–11, 1933, SW 6: pp. 1–16, p. 1, on the possibility of taking a more detached view of the 'rough and tumble of politics' when in prison; also see 'To Syed Mahmud', January 10, 1933, SW 5: pp. 453–4, p. 453, on the possibility of 'looking at the whole picture' while in jail.
281. Prison Diary entry for March 25, 1933, SW 5: pp. 468–9, p. 468.
282. Nehru, *An Autobiography*, p. 395, p. 399. See also Prison Diary, entry for December 6, 1934, SW 6: p. 306, 'To Horace Alexander', September 17, 1935, SW 7: p. 2, and 'To Indira Nehru', SW 11: pp. 589–90, p. 589.
283. 'To Indira Nehru', June 12, 1941, SW 11: pp. 611–14, p. 612.
284. Nehru, *An Autobiography*, p. 98.
285. Ibid., pp. 347–50. See also 'To Agatha Harrison', September 25, 1935, SW 7: pp. 25–30, p. 26 on how even the 'phantom and almost unreal figures' in the world outside prison 'produce emotional reactions which are stronger than they otherwise might be'. This is seen as the legacy of having just spent four years in prison. See also the remark in Prison Diary, entry for February 27, 1934, SW 6: pp. 240–1, 'How little things change one's mood in prison!' (p. 240).
286. See the examples above.
287. Prison Diary, entry for March 13, 1934, SW 6: p. 244.
288. Prison Diary, entry for April 20, 1930, SW 4: p. 324, where Nehru refers to two books on the Alps and Mont Blanc sent to him in jail by his father. 'It was a delight, not unminged with regret, to gaze at the wide expanses of the cold glaciers and the magnificent peaks in their solitary grandeur and the Alpine flowers in bloom'. See also Nehru, *An Autobiography*, p. 352 where the narrator describes how he welcomed pictures in books of 'mountains and glaciers and deserts, for in prison one hungers for wide spaces and seas and mountains. I had some beautiful picture books of Mont Blanc, the Alps, and the Himalayas, and I turned to them often and gazed at the glaciers when the temperature of my cell or barracks was 115'.
289. Nehru, *An Autobiography*, p. 218.
290. Ibid., p. 217; my emphases.
291. Ibid., p. 414.
292. Ibid., p. 413, p. 414.
293. 'But though we may not see the sublime in Nature as we used to, we have sought to find it in the glory and tragedy of humanity, in its mighty dreams and inner tempests, its pangs and failures, its conflicts and misery, and, over all this, its faith in a great destiny and a realisation of those dreams'. Ibid., p. 414.
294. The chapter is entitled 'The Liberal Outlook' and is a critique of this outlook which validates Nehru's own brand of Indian nationalism. See *ibid.*, pp. 409–15. In essence, the Indian Liberals represented a group of Indian nationalists who were concerned to work within the constitutional framework defined by the colonial state. The formation of the Liberal party was precipitated by the publication of the Montagu–Chelmsford Report in July 1918. This report was condemned by Annie Besant and other INC members who demanded responsible government in the provinces within five years, and one at the centre within ten years. A special session of Congress was held at Bombay, from August 29 to September 1, 1918, to determine policy towards the report. A number of moderates decided not to join the session, and held a separate session under

the presidency of Sir Surendranath Banerjee on November 1–2, 1918. This session established what came to be known as the Liberal party. Its manifesto stressed cooperation with the government under the terms of the reform scheme, and gradual progress towards full autonomy. See Abha Saxena, *Indian National Movement and the Liberals* (Allahabad: Chugh Publications, 1986), pp. 25–28, Hasi Banerjee, *Political Activity of the Liberal Party in India 1919–1937* (Calcutta: K.P. Bagchi, 1987), pp. 1–10, and B.D. Shukla, *A History of the Indian Liberal Party* (Allahabad: The Indian Press, 1960), Ch. 6.

295. Ibid., p. 411.
296. Ibid., p. 414.
297. Ibid., p. 566.
298. Prison Diary, entry for May 16, 1935, SW6: pp. 364–5, p. 364.
299. *An Autobiography*, p. 599.
300. Ibid., p. 184.
301. See my 'Literary modernity in South Asia', in Nandini Gooptu and Douglas Peers eds., *India and the British Empire. A Companion Volume to the Oxford History of the British Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, forthcoming 2007).
302. Reynold Nicholson ed., *Masnavi-ye ma'nāvi* (Teheran: Intishārat behzād, 1370 A.H). For other citations from Rumi in the poem, see Arberry's useful notes in *Iqbal. Javid Nameh*, pp. 142–50.
303. JN, p. 18; Arberry, pp. 28–9.
304. Schimmel, *Gabriel's Wing*, p. 42, p. 65, p. 130, p. 358.
305. The best commentary in English on this epic poem is by R.A. Nicholson, *The Mathnawi of Jalaluddin Rumi* (1937, 8 vols., Lahore: Islamic Book Service, 1989), 2 vols.
306. Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, p. 406.
307. Schimmel, *Gabriel's Wing*, p. 42.
308. Sa'd uddin Mahmud Shabestari, 1250–c.13120, was a Persian mystic whose poetic work *Gulshan-e Rāz*, written in 1311 or 1317, became a classic document of Sufi thought. It consists of questions and answers about mystical doctrines.
309. For some useful comments on the place of Shabestari's poem in the history of Sufi thought, see Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, pp. 280–1. For a translation of Iqbal's poem and a useful commentary, see Bashir Ahmad Dar, *Iqbal's Gulshan-i Raz-i Jadid* (Lahore: Institute of Islamic Culture, 1964).
310. John Sturrock, *The Language of Autobiography. Studies in the First Person Singular* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 3–4. For a more extreme view of the rhetorical nature of autobiography, see Paul de Man, 'Autobiography as de-facement', in *The Rhetoric of Romanticism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), pp. 67–81.
311. This is explored throughout the three volumes of his *Time and Narrative*, but for a succinct summary see 2: p. 82.
312. JN 154/1, 172/12.
313. JN 23/14.
314. Jurgen Habermas, 'Modernity – an incomplete project', in Hal Foster (ed.), *Post-modern Culture* (London: Pluto Press, 1993), pp. 3–15.
315. For a more detailed argument on the project to create a modern aesthetic consciousness in Urdu literature, see my 'Nature, hyperbole, and the colonial state: some Muslim appropriations of European modernity in late nineteenth century Urdu literature'. For an excellent exposition of the classical poetics of

- Urdu literature, see Frances Pritchett, *Nets of Awareness. Urdu Poetry and its Critics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994).
316. This break is signalled by the late-nineteenth-century epic poem by Altaf Hussein Hali; see Christopher Shackle and Javed Majeed, *Altaf Hussain Hali's 1879 Musaddas on the Flow and Ebb of Islam: Text, Translation, and Commentary* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997). I would argue that the central feature of modern Urdu poetry is its location on the brink of a self-referential symbolic universe which is always on the point of giving way to a historical and empirical world without actually succumbing to it.
 317. Paul de Man, 'Literary History and Literary Modernity', in *Blindness and Insight. Essays in the Rhetoric of Contemporary Criticism* (1971; London: Routledge, 1983), p. 152.
 318. Iqbal, *Reconstruction*, p. 6.
 319. *Ibid.*, pp. xxi-xxii, p. 2, p. 6, p. 78.
 320. *Ibid.*, pp. 102-3.
 321. The discussion on Hali which follows draws on my 'Nature, hyperbole and the colonial state: some Muslim appropriations of European modernity in late nineteenth century Urdu literature', and Christopher Shackle and myself, *Hali's Musaddas*.
 322. Shackle and Majeed, *Hali's Musaddas*, verse 102, pp. 140-1.
 323. *Ibid.*, verse 103, pp. 140-1.
 324. *Ibid.*, verse 3, pp. 102-3.
 325. *Ibid.*, verse 78, pp. 130-1.
 326. *Ibid.*, verse 77, pp. 130-1.
 327. *Ibid.*, verses 283, 285, 125-6, pp. 202-3, pp. 204-5, pp. 148-9.
 328. *Ibid.*, verse 126, pp. 148-9.
 329. Bryan Turner, *Orientalism, Postmodernism and Globalism* (London: Routledge, 1994), pp. 31-2.
 330. *Ḥadīth* (literally 'news', 'story') refers to the spoken traditions attributed to Prophet Muhammad, regarded in Islam as a major source of religious law and moral guidance. The development of *ḥadīth* was an important element in Islamic belief during the first three centuries of Islamic history. Every complete formulation of *ḥadīth* consists of two parts, a text proper and the *isnād*, or a chain of transmitters which precedes it.
 331. Shackle and Majeed, *Hali's Musaddas*, verses 92-4, verse 97, pp. 136-7, pp. 138-9.
 332. Barbara Dennis and David Skilton (ed.), *Reform and Intellectual Debate in Victorian England* (London: Croom Helm, 1987), pp. 50-7.
 333. Hali, *Muqadamma shi'r o shā'iri* (1893; Lahore: Maktaba-e jāded, 1953), p. 179.
 334. Turner, p. 98.
 335. Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, translated Talcott Parsons (London: Allen & Unwin, 1930), p. 54, p. 71.
 336. Annemarie Schimmel, *Classical Urdu Literature from the Beginning to Iqbal* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1975), p. 227.
 337. W.C. Smith, *Modern Islam in India: A Social Analysis* (New Delhi: Usha Publications, 1985), p. 76.
 338. Iqbal, *Metaphysics*, p. 76.
 339. Iqbal, *Reconstruction*, p. 57.
 340. Iqbal, *Metaphysics*, p. 59, Iqbal, *Reconstruction*, pp. 112-3.
 341. Iqbal, *Metaphysics*, p. 7.
 342. Iqbal, *Reconstruction*, pp. 154-5.

343. JN, pp. 151–2; Arberry, pp. 111–13.
344. Iqbal, *Metaphysics*, p. 118, pp. 128–9.
345. *Ibid.*, p. 123.
346. *Ibid.*, pp. 120–1.
347. *Ibid.*, p. 146.
348. Iqbal, *Reconstruction*, pp. 78–80.
349. *Ibid.*, p. 4.
350. Iqbal, *Metaphysics*, pp. 78–9.
351. For Iqbal's notion of *khudī*, see Ch. 8 below.
352. 'Tafsīr', *The Encyclopaedia of Islam* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1998), 10: fascicules 163–4: pp. 83–8, p. 84.
353. 'Tafsīr', p. 84.
354. 'Tafsīr', p. 85.
355. 'Tafsīr', p. 87.
356. 'Tafsīr', p. 87.
357. 'Tafsīr', p. 87. See also Helmut Gatje, *The Qur'an and its exegesis. Selected texts with classical and modern Muslim interpretations* (1976; Oxford: One World, 1996), pp. 42–4.
358. Sayyid Ahmad Khan, 'Tabī'ion, yā necahrīon ya fitration', in *Maqālāt-e Sir Sayyid*, 16 vols (Lahore: Majlis-e Taraqqī-e Adab, 1984), 3: pp. 281–2. For some general comments on Khan's exegetical project, see Schimmel, *Gabriel's Wing*, pp. 22–3.
359. *Ibid.*, p. 281.
360. For his elucidation of what he means by modern science, see his essay '‘Ulūm-e jadīda', in Khan, *Maqālāt*, 7: pp. 211–12.
361. The text I have used is Sayyid Ahmad Khan, *Tarḥūr fī uṣul al-tafsīr* (Lahore: Naval Kishore Press, 1913).
362. For a full discussion of Sayyid Ahmad Khan's method of exegesis, see C.W. Troll, *Sayyid Ahmad Khan: A Reinterpretation of Muslim Theology* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1978/9), pp. 160–70, and Aziz Ahmad, *Islamic Modernism in India and Pakistan 1857–1964* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), pp. 42–8.
363. Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 127–8.
364. Khan, *Maqālāt*, 4: pp. 306–39.
365. Troll, pp. 177–79. See also Sayyid Ahmad Khan, 'Madhabī khayāl zamān-e qadīm aur zamanā-e jadīd kā', *Maqālāt*, 3: p. 27, where Khan contrasts the older belief that prophets are confirmed by miracles with the new principle that they are confirmed by 'nature'.
366. Troll, pp. 173–4, Aziz Ahmad, pp. 44–5.
367. Troll, pp. 192–3, p. 171.
368. Muhsin al-Mulk to Khan, August 9 1892, in Khan, *Taḥrīr*, p. 3.
369. Khan, *Maqālāt*, 3: p. 26.
370. Troll, pp. 177–9.
371. See the essay 'Sīhr', in Khan, *Maqālāt*, 4, pp. 306–39.
372. Aziz Ahmad, pp. 44–5, Troll, pp. 174–6, pp. 217–8, p. 226.
373. Hourani, p. 144, p. 162.
374. Aziz al-Azmeh, pp. 39–59, pp. 77–88.
375. *Ibid.*, p. 80.
376. Khan, '‘Ulūm-e jadīda', *Maqālāt*, 7: pp. 211–12.
377. Khan, *Taḥrīr*, p. 2.
378. *Ibid.*, p. 35.

379. Giddens, *Consequences of Modernity*, p. 39.
380. Jean-Francois Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, translated Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986), pp. 38–9.
381. Giddens, p. 39, p. 49.
382. W.C. Smith, *What is Scripture? A Comparative Approach* (London: SCM Press, 1993), p. 11, pp. 17–18.
383. Sayyid Ahmad Khan, 'Taḥrīr', p. 35.
384. Francis Robinson, 'Technology and religious change: Islam and the impact of printing', *Modern Asian Studies* 27, 1 (1993), pp. 229–51.
385. Aziz Ahmad, p. x, Aziz al-Azmeh, pp. 136–7.
386. Smith, p. ix.
387. Smith, p. 11.
388. Iqbal, *Reconstruction*, pp. 83–4.
389. Ibid., p. 76ff, p. 110ff.
390. Ibid., p. 65.
391. Ibid., p. 8.
392. Ibid., pp. 8–10.
393. Schimmel refers to the question of Iqbal's training in Arabic, see *Gabriel's Wing*, p. 37.
394. Iqbal's allusions to the Qur'ān in the poem are listed in Arberry, *Javid Nameh*, pp. 142–51.
395. Iqbal, *Reconstruction*, pp. 100–1.
396. Ibid., p. 31, p. 45, p. 64.
397. Ibid., p. 113, 102.
398. Ibid., pp. 96–7.
399. 'Tafsīr', p. 84, p. 86.
400. Iqbal uses the word 'germ' when he suggests that the Qur'ān contains a 'germ' of the idea of history, which inspired ibn Khaldun.
401. 'Tafsīr', p. 85.
402. Gatje, pp. 40–1.
403. Iqbal, *Reconstruction*, pp. 76–80, p. 93.
404. Ibid., p. 143.
405. Ibid., p. 101.
406. *Reconstruction*, p. 110, pp. 112–13.

4

A Strange and Uncharted Land

I have shown how Indian travelogues of the nineteenth century tended to view London in particular and Europe in general as a showpiece of modernity, and how they framed themselves within a globalising narrative of progressive modernity. I have also argued that it was through travel that Gandhi, Nehru and Iqbal defined their relationships with modernity and modern technology.

However, there are ways in which Indian travellers of the nineteenth century show an awareness of India's place in a global geography, which are sometimes in tension with the Eurocentric global geography of a modern metropolis and a declining periphery. Many of the travellers in the earlier part of the nineteenth century, and also some of those in the later part of that century, had to travel outside their localities of origin through regions of the subcontinent they had not seen before. Hence their travelogues are not just accounts of travelling through Europe and Britain, but evince a multilayered imaginary geography that is at once local, transregional and global. Moreover, the boundaries of India are fluid and flexible in this imaginary geography, so that localities and cities in the subcontinent are treated as equally foreign as Europe and Britain.

Karim Khan's text is just such a multilayered travelogue, with his travels to and in Britain framing his travels through the subcontinent from Delhi to Calcutta. He gives the reader detailed descriptions of the sights and scenes he travels through in the subcontinent. These include accounts of the buildings and monuments of cities, and the customs, dress and manners of their inhabitants, so that he focuses on similar details as in his account of the British in London.¹ This is also the case with Mirza Abu Taleb, whose travelogue contains a long description of Bombay, which amounts to an ethnography of the city and its inhabitants.² Nearly seventy years later, there is a similar ethnography of Bombay in Sayyid Ahmad Khan's travelogue.³ This is preceded by a detailed account of his journey from Benares to Bombay, in which he remarks that he had never travelled south of Allahabad before, so that from then onwards he saw a new kind of country

[na'ī qism kā mulk] and a new landscape and environment [na'ī sar zamīn].⁴ His sense of the different ethnographic landscapes is also indicated by the way in which he contrasts Bombay with Hindustan, referring to the latter variously as his 'mulk' or 'watan', as though the two are foreign to each other. Moreover, this vocabulary and sense of difference is shared by others, since he is quizzed in Bombay as to his place of origin [watan].⁵ This sense of difference is summed up by his comment that there is nothing in the city of Bombay which is like a city of Hindustan.⁶

Mohan Lal's *Travels* is a particularly detailed example of this ethnography. On his journey from Delhi to Peshawar, and particularly through the Punjab, he gives his readers important accounts of the customs, manners, livelihoods and ethnicities of the population in each locality.⁷ This includes recounting local legends about specific sites and their origins, which is extended to Afghanistan and other parts of Central Asia, so that his *Travels* becomes in part a compendium of local folklore.⁸ This is not actuated simply by a sense of difference in relation to an area of India which is not under British rule, since he also comments on Calcutta as 'appearing strange to my eyes'.⁹ This fluidity of the boundaries between what constitutes India and what is outside it is also evident in contrast to Burnes' travelogue, if we compare the two texts for the same dates of travel. Thus, in his entry for 7–8 March 1832, Burnes refers to the 'marks of quitting India'.¹⁰ No such explicit awareness about leaving India is found in Lal's travelogue for that date. Burnes' sense of clearer boundaries between India and what lies outside it is also evident in his opening remarks about the necessity to obtain permission from Ranajit Singh before travelling through his territories after crossing 'the boundaries of India', which suggests that for Burnes 'India' and the territories under British sovereignty are identical.¹¹ In contrast, Lal's perspective tends to be a Delhi-centric one, which is summed up in his view that Delhi is 'an incomparable city'.¹² It is in relation to Delhi specifically, rather than the more abstract 'India', that he tends to measure the sights and scenes he depicts.¹³ The conceptual place of India is unclear even in the later travelogues by Malabari and Pandian, who alongside referring to themselves as Indians also refer to themselves through the specificities of religion or by placing themselves in the binaries of East–West/Asia–Europe.¹⁴ For Malabari, moreover, any collapse of this binary is seen as threatening, as when he describes Port Said as being an 'undesirable place' because of its mixture 'of European and Asiatic vices'.¹⁵

Metcalf has argued that the defining theme of British ideologies of the Raj was the search for similarities between the British and the Indians alongside a construction of differences.¹⁶ In the Indian travelogues of the nineteenth century, what becomes clear is not just the negotiation by Indian travelling subjects of the differences between themselves and the British and/or Europeans, but also between themselves and other Indians within the subcontinent. While other scholars have pointed to how these travelogues

construct their own ethnographies of Britain and Europe,¹⁷ it is important to stress how some of them also contain ethnographic accounts of other parts of India. This reflects the multilayered nature of these travelogues, as accounts of travel in Europe which are also accounts of journeying through the Indian subcontinent. There tends to be a tension in these travelogues between the European planetary geography with its core of the 'West' and its peripheral colonies, in which London becomes a contact zone between the coloniser and the colonised,¹⁸ and these other parts of the globe which are more powerfully fluid as contact zones, precisely because they are not located in the metropolis. While both Burton and Lahiri are correct to argue that it is important to see Britain, and especially London, as contact zones in the age of empire,¹⁹ it is crucial to call attention to these other sites of self-differentiation for Indian travelling subjects. While Mirza Abu Taleb's self-formation in Britain tends to focus on his generalised status in the eyes of the British public as a 'Persian prince', [shāhzāda-ye īrān],²⁰ it is only in his travels through the Ottoman territories of the Middle East that he foregrounds his cosmopolitan identity as a member of the Persianate gentry of India, with committed Shi'i affiliations.²¹ The strong terms in which he expresses his self-differentiation from Ottoman officials and Turks suggests that the latter, rather than the groups falling under the rubric of 'firangī' [European], are the 'Other' against which he defined himself. Abu Taleb's hauteur is succinctly expressed when, apparently desperate for civilised company in Baghdad, he hopes for polished conversation with three merchants from Isfahan, but is disappointed to find that they have lost their Persian manners [auzā' īrānī dast rafteh] and not acquired any Ottoman distinguishing marks [khaṣuṣīyāt-e osmānī].²² However, given that he describes the British envoy's house in Baghdad as being in a poor state, because his temperament [tabīyat] was close [nazdīk] to that of Turks and Arabs [atrāk va 'arab],²³ it seems unlikely that he believed there was much Ottoman polish that one could acquire. It is for reasons such as these that he refuses to change his dress, disliked by the Turks, and is also disinclined to call on Ottoman officials and gentry, expecting them instead to visit him first on account of his status as a descendant of Muhammad.²⁴ Instead he fraternises with Iranians, Indians [hindī], Afghanis from Peshawar and Qandahar, as well as some Punjabis.²⁵

There are multiple sites of self-differentiation in Mirza Abu Taleb Khan's travelogue, which is in part reflected in his ethnographic accounts of Europe and also of the Ottoman territories of the Middle East and parts of India. Similarly, although Mohan Lal travels to Britain and Europe, the most important sites of self-differentiation tend to be located in the Punjab, Afghanistan and Central Asia, rather than Britain itself. This is reflected in the cartography of the text. Following the preface there is a 'Map to illustrate the route of Mohan Lal Between Agra and Qochan', which contains in the bottom left-hand corner on the same page a smaller 'Sketch map to show

the author's route in Europe'. This framing of his travels to Europe by a larger map of his travels in Punjab and Central Asia is indicative of how it is through the latter that he chiefly enacts his identity. Here we can note that one of his recurring experiences is of being seen by the local inhabitants as equally 'foreign' as his European travelling companions, and indeed as sometimes being indistinct from them. For example, when passing through a bazaar in Peshawar he describes how 'a multitude of shopkeepers and other people looked at me and at my dress... They cried out with loud voices that I was an Englishman, not a Kashmerian, though my clothes were not like an European's.'²⁶ In experiences such as these, Mohan Lal stresses his cosmopolitan identity as a resident of Delhi, with a Kashmiri genealogy, and a bilingual expertise as a Persian Munshi and a graduate of the first English class of Delhi College.²⁷ Such passages of intense self-differentiation are virtually absent from his chapters relating his travels in Europe.

Multiple sites of self-differentiation, embedded in a global imaginary geography, are evident in other Indian travelogues. It is in the Cape, in conversation with a Malay, that Yusuf Khan is obliged to define his religious beliefs.²⁸ In Sayyid Ahmad Khan's *Musāfirān-e landan*, the most important sites of self-differentiation are ships themselves rather than any geographical territory. It is on board the ship between Aden and Europe that he is forced to identify and define his views as a 'Muslim' in response to the intense questioning of a European passenger.²⁹ It is also in conversation with the pilot of the ship as it leaves Alexandria that his own genealogy is foregrounded.³⁰ Similarly, while he differentiates 'Hindustan' from Bombay, as already noted above, he also defines its differences from Egypt.³¹ While other later travelogues by Indians tend to be more London-centric than either Sayyid Ahmad Khan's or the travelogues of the earlier part of the nineteenth century, there remain fragments of other sites of self-definition. Malabari's implicit ethnic self-definition is clear during his sojourn in Aden,³² and, on another level, throughout the text he places a social distance between himself and his Indian servant, whom he gives the nickname of 'Crocodile'. This animalist representation is reinforced when he describes his servant and an Italian railway guard as 'chattering like a pair of monkeys'.³³ These multiple axes of self-differentiation, from other 'Oriental' groups and Indians of lower status, are encapsulated in a revealing episode in which racial designations subvert the differentiations of social class. This occurs when both 'Crocodile' and Malabari are stared and jeered at by the 'street arabs' of London on successive days. For Malabari, what is threatening about this episode is precisely the levelling effect of the ethnographic gaze, which makes no distinction between himself and 'crocodile'.³⁴ It is perhaps this fear which motivates Malabari's treatment of 'Crocodile' as the butt of his cruel humour.³⁵ While Pandian's travelogue operates with an uncritical binary of Europe and Asia, even his travelogue is disturbed by episodes of self-definition which do not fit this model, as with the Turks, against whom

Pandian implicitly defines himself as a loyal citizen of the British empire when he refers to the 'squalor and filth' of Port Said, and discreditable 'specimens of Turkish men and Turkish manners'.³⁶

So there are multiple locations and axes of self-differentiation in Indian travelogues of the nineteenth century, both within the Indian subcontinent and outside it. Some of these travelogues also contain ethnographic accounts of other parts of the globe through which their authors have travelled.³⁷ While later travelogues, as we have seen, tend to be more London-centric, they nonetheless contain fragments of these earlier travelling discourses, if only in passing reference to the 'manners' of other groups. However, the earlier travelogues in particular have a composite imaginary geography, on the one hand enacting a European planetary consciousness and on the other hand evincing fragments of other geographies which are in tension with this core-periphery arrangement. They enact the provincialising of India in relation to the imperial metropolis, and yet they also reveal a counter-vailing tendency to provincialise Europe itself by seeking out sites of self-differentiation which are not centred on the metropolis. Their geographies are rooted in both the awareness of an imperial global order centred on Europe and a sense of empire as a multicentred 'web'.³⁸ This sense of a multicentred geography is also demonstrated in Yusuf Khan's use of the term of power, *beit ul saltanat* ['seat of government'] for both Lucknow and London.³⁹ However, the composite geography of his travelogue is typified by the way in which this vocabulary of multiple centres of power is in tension with its closing passages, which valorise London and downgrade the cities of South Asia.⁴⁰

The travelling autobiographies of Nehru, Gandhi and Iqbal also enact an imaginary geography that is simultaneously local, transregional and global. In doing so, though, they tend to move away from the more rigidly London-centric accounts of the later travelogues of the nineteenth century, and have more in common with the fluid geographies of the earlier travelogues, with their more experimental sense of boundaries. This fluid geography also affords them more flexible sites for self-differentiation in a variety of contact zones. By no longer focussing on the imperial metropolis alone, they open up other spaces for self-definition. These spaces undermine the sense of London and Britain as the exclusive centre of power and suggest possibilities for other kinds of power. Although both Lahiri and Burton have observed how important London was as a location for Gandhi's self-development,⁴¹ it was in South Africa as a contact zone that Gandhi defined the powerful combination of spirituality and politics which came to be known as *satyagraha*, and which was a key to his definition of 'Indian'. The importance of South Africa as a site of self-definition for Gandhi is evident in his reference to how his 'experiments' in England were a prelude to the more 'strenuous experiments' in South Africa later. The former were conducted 'from the point of view of economy and hygiene' while in the latter the 'religious

aspect of the question' was central.⁴² It is for this reason that Gandhi also wrote a book-length account of his time in South Africa, *Satyagraha in South Africa* (1925–1926). Gandhi makes it clear in his chapter on 'The birth of Satyagraha' in *An Autobiography* that the reader who 'wishes to consider these experiments in their strict chronological order will now do well to keep the history of Satyagraha in South Africa before him', before going on to read about the experiments conducted by Gandhi on his return to India. He also refers the reader to *Satyagraha in South Africa* for a fuller description of the 'conditions of Indians in the Transvaal and the Orange Free State'.⁴³ Moreover, South Africa as a site of self-definition is formed through his multiple travels between and within South Africa and India, sometimes via Britain.⁴⁴ Thus, the geography of Gandhi's travelling autobiography is similar to the preceding earlier Indian travelogues, with their imaginary global, transregional and local geographies, although it is clearly distinct from the later London-centric travelogues of Pillai, Pandian and Malabari, whose texts are dominated by London as a centre of power and a contact zone. By treating different parts of the British Empire, Gandhi's autobiographical texts portray strategically situated locations for self-reflexive processes of identity formation and global implicating forces. These forces are not externally impinging on his creation of locality through travel but are integral to it.⁴⁵

In keeping with this imaginary geography, colonialism as a whole is unfolded in his travelling autobiography not as a unitary totality centred on the imperial metropolis but as a diverse and polycentric entity, or what Ballantyne has called a 'web' with horizontal linkages between colonies.⁴⁶ The British empire as a whole is shown to be a congerie of different states that are not always working together in harmony.⁴⁷ Equally important, though, is how Gandhi builds up a working knowledge of colonialism in its various forms and at its different levels through a confrontation and negotiation with a variety of its texts and its officials, in different locations through his travels around the world. Instead of a sedentary metaphysic, from whose perspective colonialism is a unitary and monolithic apparatus, we have the beginnings of a kind of nomadology⁴⁸ in Gandhi's autobiography, in which the traveller builds up an intimate knowledge of the contours, fissures and inner workings of colonialism as a global phenomenon by grappling with what Thomas has called its variable localised expressions.⁴⁹ The travelling knowledge of colonialism in Gandhi's travelling autobiography is not a totalising knowledge, nor does it aspire to the grand sweep of abstract theory. Instead it is a localised, ground level knowledge built on the pragmatics of interacting and communicating with colonialism in a variety of forms and locations. This reflects Gandhi's autobiographical project as a whole. 'The Story of My Experiments with Truth' is necessarily incomplete; first because like all autobiographies it cannot be written up to the very point of the author's death; and secondly because the motif of travel as the quest for

'Truth' assumes that the quest can never be completed. 'Truth' appears in its various guises at different points in Gandhi's travels (as he says at one point his 'service of Indians in South Africa ever revealed to me new implications of truth at every stage')⁵⁰ but it can never be exhaustively grasped nor can a praxis rooted in the 'Truth' ever be fully implemented. A claim to have grasped 'Truth' fully or to have implemented it completely would automatically discount itself. This is exemplified in the final chapter to *An Autobiography*, where Gandhi draws upon the motif of travelling to note that he still has a 'difficult path to traverse' before him, and that he has embarked upon a set of current experiments whose conclusions are as yet not 'decisive'.⁵¹ This sense of the autobiography as a open-ended series of experiments with 'Truth'⁵² reflects the inexhaustible nature of 'Truth' for Gandhi, who describes it as 'a vast tree, which yields more and more fruit, the more you nurture it'.⁵³ It is therefore in keeping with the Gandhi's practice of autobiography that the travelling knowledge of colonialism, which is accumulated, is also necessarily incomplete and does not aim for the conclusiveness of a global theory.

A self in global disarray

Gandhi's quest for selfhood in his autobiography is enacted through a geography that is simultaneously local, regional and global. The inter-leaving of personal, transregionally 'national', and global levels of identity is also evident in Nehru's autobiographical project. I have mentioned how Nehru's autobiographies contain accounts of travels within and outside India, including Europe and the USSR.⁵⁴ In a letter of 17 December 1940 to Madame Chiang Kai-Shek, Nehru speculates on the possibility of continuing 'the story' of his earlier *Autobiography*, but adds 'If I make the attempt, it is likely to lead to another book for so much has happened during these five years in the world, in India, and to me personally'.⁵⁵ The continuation of his *Autobiography* as *The Discovery of India* dealt with this interplay between a global arena, India and himself. Both Gopal and Zachariah have discussed Nehru's career as an internationalist.⁵⁶ My concern here, however, is how his autobiographies explore the relationships between his personal identity, national identity and international relations. The entanglement of these different levels of interaction is evident in Nehru's conception of his autobiography as both an Indian and a global text, which is published in England, in order to gain what he called 'a world audience'.⁵⁷ Nehru's self-definition becomes part of his location of India on the global map of modernity. His open avowal of his mixed self and his internal divisions ground his narrative of locating modern India. This is clear when he writes of having to 'weave together' the 'numerous strains' of his identity into one pattern 'for my country and for the world'. This pattern is explicitly related to the 'emergence of a world order'.⁵⁸

In the interleaving of region, country and globe in his autobiography, Nehru's cosmopolitan self constructs his regional identity as a point of departure rather than a point of return in a circular journey, in contrast to preceding Indian travelogues. This is also in contrast to some other Indian nationalist autobiographies which deploy their regional origins differently. In *The Story of My Life* (1958–1959), M.R. Jayakar signals his regional identity by stressing in the Preface that the story of his life exemplifies the 'heroic' political struggle in Maharashtra.⁵⁹ He continually draws attention to himself as a Maharashtrian, so that his autobiographical persona becomes the assertion of a specifically regional identity against the pan-Indian construction of the INC. His account of the non-cooperation movement focuses on what he calls the 'essential incompatibility between the Maratha mind as moulded by Tilak's doctrines and Gandhi's teachings'.⁶⁰ He regrets the eventual 'submission' of the Marathas to Gandhi's influence, which he argues led to their position in public life being lower than it would otherwise have been,⁶¹ and he presents Gandhi's eventual success as the 'conquest of Maharashtra', which made his task 'infinitely easier'.⁶² The self-elaboration in Jayakar's autobiography is the inward counterpart to the assertion of a regional identity on the political, cultural and linguistic plane. In his role as President of the Poona District Conference, held at his country residence, he celebrates the conference in specific terms as 'an exquisite assertion of the political tenets of Maharashtra' and the 'Maharashtrian school of politicians'.⁶³ In the relationship between his persona and a regional identity, he also refers to his role in a number of conferences.⁶⁴

The specifically regional inflection of Jayakar's persona counters what he sees as the hegemonic narrative of the INC. His autobiography is presented as an 'addition' and a 'timely and appropriate corrective to Congress narratives'.⁶⁵ While it is clear that Jayakar is as ambivalent to Gandhi as Nehru, the sources of this ambivalence are quite different. The key difference is that Jayakar attempts to contain Gandhi by unmasking him as the representative of a specifically regional culture, rather than the representative of India itself, hence his comment that Gandhi helped 'Gujarati egotism' by his observation that 'Gujarat would win freedom for India'.⁶⁶ The story of Indian nationalism which is presented here is that of a regional identity foisting itself on other regional identities, and then masquerading as a pan-Indian nationalism.

Nehru deploys his sense of regional identity differently from Jayakar. To begin with, his self-articulation intertwines Kashmir with the category of Nature and reduces it to a figure of Nature as landscape.⁶⁷ As a place of origin and a symbol of Nature, Kashmir is a point of departure for the narrator's life history. This is evident in Chapter 6 of *An Autobiography*. Here Nehru relates a mountaineering expedition in Kashmir. The conflation of Kashmir with Nature as landscape shares the equivalence Nehru strives to establish between Nature and ancient India. Nehru describes how he decided to climb

to the cave of Amaranath (a pilgrimage site), but the tough climb to the cave is abandoned when he falls through a 'huge and yawning crevasse'. This was a 'tremendous fissure and anything that went right down it could be assured of safe keeping and preservation for some geological ages'.⁶⁸ Like all Nehruvian journeys, this one also remains unfinished, and in trying to visit this place of pilgrimage Nehru is treading a landscape which is reminiscent of ancient India, where, as mentioned above, the integration of man with nature is evident in the way ancient Indians chose their places of pilgrimage 'in beautiful surroundings', of which one is the 'icy cave of Amaranath'.⁶⁹ This sense of treading carefully over a difficult landscape is deepened by his facing the prospect of being entombed in the crevasse like a geological deposit or a fossil. As we shall see in Chapter 5, Nehru also uses images of geological deposits and fossils to further articulate his ambivalence about the legacy of ancient India. The conflation of Kashmir as natural landscape with ancient India is reinforced in *The Discovery of India*, when Nehru says that while 'we cannot go back to that old pantheistic outlook' of ancient India, there are 'chosen spots' where one might almost re-create this. 'Among these favoured spots is Kashmir where loveliness dwells and an enchantment steals over the senses.'⁷⁰ This sense of antiquity is given an inward turn when Nehru describes how the sight of the Himalayas 'rouse in me ancient memories of the long ago when perhaps my ancestors wandered about the mountains of Kashmir and played in their snow and glaciers'.⁷¹ The combination of antiquity with childlike playfulness evokes a powerful sense of a possible return to his own origins.

However, such a return would cancel the distance which Nehru's autobiographical self has travelled. It would also be an escape from the world of politics, and is represented as such by Nehru.⁷² He underlines this when he writes of how he felt towards the end of the Haripura Congress, 'while I answered questions and spoke as amiably as I could to comrades and friends, my mind was elsewhere. It was wandering over the mountains of the north with their deep valleys and snowy peaks, and precipices and gentle slopes covered by pine-trees and deodars.'⁷³ Kashmir becomes an emblem of self-forgetfulness that undercuts the self-focus which is necessary for the autobiographical task of engaging with political struggle. This self-forgetfulness is made clear when in an account of one of his journeys to Kashmir Nehru mentions how he 'tried to give my mind to the activity of the moment, and perhaps, in a measure, succeeded. But my mind was largely elsewhere. . . . The loveliness of the land enthralled me and cast an enchantment all about me. I wandered about like one possessed and drunk with beauty, and the intoxication of it filled my mind.'⁷⁴ In keeping with the general framing of Nature by the narrative of technological progress, this overwhelming experience is disciplined by the traveller's reflections on how Kashmir's mineral and other resources might be utilised, and how even the landscape can become the focus of 'tourist traffic' so that, to use a phrase from Heidegger, the traveller

converts the landscape itself into a resource for the 'vacation industry'.⁷⁵ From a source of 'the mighty rivers of India',⁷⁶ Kashmir is converted into a resource, a standing reserve, which would overcome its 'static condition'.⁷⁷ This stasis of condition serves to highlight how far Nehru has travelled from his origins.

On the very first page of *An Autobiography* Nehru stresses his Kashmiri ancestry but he does so in relation to his family's migration to Delhi,⁷⁸ a precursor to the journeys which he exemplifies in his own persona, and also an indication that his regional origins are in the place of departure, and not in a place of return, as in Jayakar's autobiography. Moreover, Nehru's grandfather represents a hybrid confluence of identities which prefigures his own self-mixture. He refers to a portrait of his grandfather in the dress typical of the Mughal court, so that he 'might well be taken for a Moghal [sic] nobleman, although his features are distinctly Kashmiri'.⁷⁹ His family mediate between the Emperor of Delhi and the East India Company, as his great grandfather was the first Vakil of the Company at the Delhi Court. Nehru also relates that his aunt as a young girl, because of her fair complexion, was mistaken for an English girl by English soldiers during the Rebellion of 1857 as the family fled from Delhi to Agra. They suspected her brothers of having kidnapped her, but the narrator's uncle knew some English and this 'delayed matters a little' until the danger passed. It was this knowledge of English which saved his uncles from 'a sudden and ignominious end'.⁸⁰

In the very first two pages of *An Autobiography*, then, we have an inter-leaving of subject positions and the building of a composite identity which is played out in the Nehruvian autobiography as a whole. Kashmiri features are not fixed signifiers of identity, since his aunt's fair Kashmiri features lead to her being mistaken for English. This is in sharp contrast to Jayakar's autobiography which aims to stabilise a fixed 'Maratha' identity. Whereas the device of genealogy is generally used by autobiographers to root their identities in fixed origins for their readers,⁸¹ Nehru's genealogy is a device which effects the opposite: it announces the fused composition of Persianate, British and Kashmiri strands as the family continually shifts location. For Nehru, regional roots exist in order to measure how far he has travelled, and the very writing of his autobiography as a voyage of discovery enacts this journey away from Kashmir.

Nehru's ancestry, then, unlike the general run of autobiographies, does not anchor him in locality or root him in a specific identity. Instead, it de-localises him so that the voyage to represent India is made possible. Furthermore, the mediating role of his ancestors as court officials, who as a group of Kashmiri pandits negotiate relationships between the Mughals and the British, is enacted inwardly as the mediation between different aspects of himself, so that the way 'the Englishman and the Indian are always posing to each other' in British India⁸² becomes the scene of a dialogue between

different parts of himself. So while Nehru expresses a painful longing and nostalgia for what might have been home at one point, this is mastered by the construction of the composite figure of the travelling and cosmopolitan Indian for whom attachment to one's regional origins becomes an impediment. Home, like the 'Nature' with which it is conflated, is a starting point for travel, not a place of return. Kashmir becomes a haunting presence which has to be exorcised, so that as an autobiographer Nehru can enact and expand his conspicuous selfhood.⁸³

I have argued above that Nehru's autobiographies articulate a doubting and confused self. His anti-colonialism is rooted in the evocation of a fragile self and not a heroically integrated individuality. We have also seen how Nehru constructs Gandhi as an insider to India, in contrast to his own sense of alienation from India, and how, in his own view, this qualifies him to represent India. This sense of alienation is invoked by Nehru as part of his cosmopolitan self. As a 'mixture of the East and West, out of place everywhere, at home nowhere', which 'create[s] in me a feeling of spiritual loneliness. I am a stranger and alien in the West. I cannot be of it. But in my own country also, sometimes, I have an exile's feeling.'⁸⁴ The sentiment of perpetual exile is in keeping with Nehru's persona as a traveller on an open-ended journey. But Nehru develops this further by evoking a travelling self which is in perpetual disarray. This is captured in his striking metaphor of how 'we are always journeying, trying to approach something that is ever receding. And in each one of us are many different human beings with their inconsistencies and contradictions, each pulling in a different direction.'⁸⁵ Nehru even foregrounds the self-divisions which opposition to British rule in India engenders in him: 'Personally I owe too much to England in my mental make-up ever to feel wholly alien to her . . . All my predilections (apart from the political plane) are in favour of England and the English people, and if I have become what is called an uncompromising opponent of British rule in India, it is almost in spite of myself.'⁸⁶ This open avowal of self-division in opposition to British rule forestalls any sense of a homogenous self, pitted ready-made against a monolithically conceived colonialism, and is reinforced by his refusal to simplify the category 'England' to refer to an imperial oppressor alone.⁸⁷

Nehru's open avowal of self-division forms a striking contrast to the poignant autobiography of Lajpat Rai. Rai tries to refashion his autobiographical self so as to preclude any conflict with the homogenising imperatives of a specifically Hindu nationalism. As we shall see, the devices which Rai uses, and the paradoxical effects of this attempted re-fashioning, have similarities with Iqbal's self-defeating articulation of a Muslim separatist nationalism. Rai's narrative becomes the story of a moving kind of self-denial which enables an integration between his persona and the nation. His life story reveals how an internal, syncretistic self is disciplined by the imperatives of a levelling nationalism. This is evident in the first chapter,

entitled 'Earliest Recollections'. Here Rai presents a careful portrait of the profound syncretism of his father's identity,⁸⁸ but before the chapter ends he has already signalled his disavowal of this syncretism. He declares that his father was antagonistic to the Arya Samaj and Hinduism, but then when Rai joined the Arya Samaj his father underwent a 'radical change'.⁸⁹ 'The story of my life' is arranged around these episodes. His father as teacher of Arabic is rejected,⁹⁰ while Rai relates how he clashed with Muhammad Azad when taking the latter's Persian and Arabic classes, and as a result took up Sanskrit instead. Although he learnt little of it, he describes himself as becoming a 'staunch Hindu'.⁹¹

For Rai, then, his family becomes a site for the reclaiming of a Hindu identity in opposition to the culturally hybrid identity of his own father. While Nehru stresses the cultural hybridity of his ancestry in order to make possible the representation of India as a pan-Indian entity which is not exclusively Hindu,⁹² Rai rejects his culturally mixed ancestry in order to become 'wedded to the idea of Hindu nationality'.⁹³ He uses the term 'conversion' to describe his turning to the Arya Samaj and the notion of a Hindu nationality,⁹⁴ and more complicatedly, he sees his father not formally converting to Islam as 'nothing short of a miracle'.⁹⁵ In this sense, turning his father to the Arya Samaj is a kind of re-conversion, and Rai aligns himself with Lekh Ram, who was assassinated in March 1897, and who rendered a unique service to Hinduism by 'saving Hindus from being converted to Islam or by re-converting to Hinduism those newly turned to Islam'.⁹⁶ This language of successive conversions is mapped on to a series of successive selves, of which the apogee is a Hindu nationalistic self. In relating how his outlook took on a 'nationalistic colour' after meeting Pandit Guru Dutt and Lala Hans Raj in 1882, he writes of how 'the soul nurtured on Islam in infancy, and beginning adolescence by seeking shelter in the Brahmo Samaj, began to develop a love for the ancient Hindu culture. . . .'⁹⁷ He unravels his cultural hybridity by plotting it as successive selves in a linear chronology.

However, Rai's staging of an interiority in the process of disowning and excluding it has the paradoxical effect of making it more vivid and reinforces its centrality to his autobiographical narrative. The achieved self of Hindu nationality cannot emerge except through invoking the syncretism it seeks to displace. His text is caught in the continual contradiction of trying to erase the syncretism which it requires for it to succeed. This also means that the process of displacement is incomplete, and so the pattern of disavowal is repeated throughout the text. Thus, his relation in Chapter 7 of arriving at Hindu nationality by his self-purgation of syncretism is repeated in greater depth in Chapter 17. Furthermore, the disavowal destabilises Rai's opening justification of his autobiography as offering 'the succeeding generations of my countrymen' knowledge of the different stages of nationalism,⁹⁸ because in relating his story his father is a foil for the self Rai wishes to achieve, and it is the son who instructs the father by persuading him to turn towards the

Arya Samaj. The relationship between the generations in 'The story of my life' is in fact the reverse of that envisaged in the opening image.

There is another level on which Lajpat Rai's story of his life is in continual self-contradiction. He singles out the Hindi movement as making 'the deepest impression on my character' and thereby generating 'within me true national feeling'.⁹⁹ Hindi was not only to be the national language of India, but also to be 'the foundation for the edifice of Indian nationality',¹⁰⁰ and the Hindi movement 'taught me my first lesson in Hindu nationalism'.¹⁰¹ He represents his involvement in this movement as marking the beginning of 'public life' for him.¹⁰² This leads to his propagating Hindi for the purposes of 'political solidarity' while not being able to read the devanagari script,¹⁰³ and while continuing to write in Urdu.¹⁰⁴ This includes 'The story of my life' itself which was originally written in Urdu in 1914, and translated into English in 1929.¹⁰⁵ His political life is therefore taken up propagating against the very language of his own autobiography. This self-contradictory move is underlined in the account he gives in Chapter 17 of his 'conversion' to the Arya Samaj, where he arrives at a Hindu nationalist perspective by simultaneously reading through and against key works in Urdu and Persian.¹⁰⁶

Yet in 'The Story of My Deportation' Rai's account of himself as a prisoner in Chapter 4 is a deeply syncretistic one which mirrors the syncretism of his father in the first chapter of 'The Story of My Life'. 'The Story of My Deportation' uses the language of filial obedience and respect, and is dedicated 'To My Father as a Mark of Love', but this language is conspicuous by its absence in 'The Story of My Life', in which the author charts his political progress in terms of his disavowal of his father and a rejection of his own upbringing. Rai movingly portrays his syncretistic self when he ends his prison narrative with a 'tribute to the two Masters, whose constant company was a source of great strength and consolation to me. Lord Sri Krishna, one of the greatest Indian masters, conversed with me in words of practical wisdom, pitched in immortal strain; and the celebrated poet of Shiraz [Hafez] spoke to me of love and of the troubles that inevitably followed the course of the latter.'¹⁰⁷ He goes so far as to declare that he 'enjoyed Hafiz in my imprisonment much more than I had ever done in my childhood, when I read it with my father'.¹⁰⁸ Rather like Nehru's discovery of himself in prison, 'The Story of My Deportation' reads like a rediscovery of Rai's self, in which his childhood is not rejected but instead becomes the basis for a rejuvenated syncretism. This new-found syncretism is reflected in his sense of an India which is not exclusively Hindu. He presents his persona as being tied to a geographical image of India, as the whole country, 'from the Himalayas to the Cape and from Diamond Harbour to Karachi', protests against his deportation, 'speaking like one man [sic] irrespective of caste or creed'.¹⁰⁹ This sense of India is one which involves the reintegration of the figure of the Muslim into its polity,¹¹⁰ so that it reflects the 'Hindu' and 'Muslim' parts of his own identity coming to terms, rather than falling apart.

So Rai plots his political development in terms of the move from Hindu nationalism towards an all-embracing Indian nationalism; or in reverse order, in terms of the move from a composite Indian nationalism towards Hindu nationalism.¹¹¹ But, rather than the two moments of nationalism succeeding each other in a serial narrative, the vacillation between them is symptomatic of the difficult relationship between the two inflections of nationalism within Rai's texts and within his own identity. Cornelia Sorabji's *India Calling* (1934) evinces another strategy of negotiating personal syncretism, which also results in a form of self-nullification, even though she and Rai seemingly occupied different political positions.¹¹² While Sorabji is keen to stress her hybrid and cosmopolitan identity, she represents this as antithetical to the category of India. She and Lajpat Rai, in his moment of representing Hindu nationalism, are in agreement with each other, since both try to secure India against syncretism, rather than through it.

In *India Calling* Sorabji consistently tries to identify her subject position as British, which for her signifies being physically present in India and yet conceptually and culturally outside it. While Nehru gives equal play to the 'Indian' and 'British' senses of himself, for Sorabji these two senses are antithetical to each other. She is at pains to stress how Zoroastrians are 'like the British', and how they have 'no social customs to which the West would take exception'.¹¹³ She attempts to conflate the categories 'English' and cosmopolitan, so that while stressing how 'we were as cosmopolitan in our diet as in our general upbringing', the reader is also told how 'we ate in the English manner off English plates, and with English adjuncts, and our diet included meat'.¹¹⁴ Similarly, she insists that she and her sister spent their time 'in much the same way as those of children in England', and here she contrasts herself with 'Hindu and Moslem children', who were 'terribly spoilt'. In contrast, Sorabji and her sister exemplified the British virtues of 'education and discipline'.¹¹⁵ These virtues extend to the 'well-ordered servants' in their household, unlike the 'bullying' and 'untrained' servants in Muslim and Hindu households.¹¹⁶ The litany of supposedly British virtues, marking off their household from the Indian household, is summed up in the abstract virtues in her mother's 'Gospel as she knew it', of 'Christianity, of Health, of Education, of Sanitation', and 'the gospel of Work'.¹¹⁷ Sorabji also represents her household as having been 'built upon a [cultural] unity which did not at the time exist in India'. This 'unity', however, is not equated with any nationalist conception. Instead she points to how this 'unity' did not exist at that time in India, and how it 'was also (until fifty years later) outside even the conception of the body which came, in the fullness of time, to represent Political India'.¹¹⁸ Given the conflation of her household with 'British' virtues, her 'unity' presages the way 'the British Administration of India had made us one as a political and geographical unity from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin'.¹¹⁹

From the outset, then, Sorabji's household is marked by a plenitude of cosmopolitanism and other virtues, which other Indian households lack.

There is also slippage between the cosmopolitan syncretism of her cultural identity and the terms 'English' and the category 'British'. The complexities of Sorabji's position are reflected in the intertwining of her language of legal representation with a picturesque India. Sorabji seeks to represent the legal rights of Indian women in *purdah*, within the colonialist structures of the law, structures which Sinha has eloquently argued were themselves complicit with both Indian and British patriarchal norms.¹²⁰ Sorabji's own difficult relationship with the British legal establishment and, in particular, the lack of recognition she received are detailed in her autobiography. She was using the law as an instrument of 'progress', while being denied her professional place as a woman within that profession, and so she continued to be, in her own words, 'a "rover", working from a need to be met, not from an equal title with men to the reward of legal work'.¹²¹ She sought to deal with gender inequalities within an Indian domestic sphere, exposing that sphere to the colonialist gaze while simulating the position of a British male official.¹²² As Grewal has argued, for the colonial imagination the *zenāna* represented both a space where the 'eastern' woman, embodying a submissive sexuality, was incarcerated, as well as an inaccessibility that the colonial power hoped to penetrate.¹²³ Alongside the language of law, though, Sorabji calls upon an image of a picturesque India, referring to 'ancient' customs as admirably picturesque, and describing how she worked on cases dealing with 'Inheritance, Succession, Maintenance-allowances and Stridhan (the Hindu Women's peculium) in an itinerary and setting which were like an adaptation of the Arabian Nights'.¹²⁴ As a narrator, she brings together the languages of law with a picturesque India of 'fairy-tale dreams'¹²⁵ in a mutually defining relationship. She represents herself as intervening to ensure the performance of 'a picturesque and desirable ceremony' against the wishes of the Collector, a 'Hindu by race, but an "England-returned" . . . progressive'.¹²⁶ So Sorabji shores up a picturesque India against a 'progressive' Indian in order, in part, to define her own sense of her self as a cosmopolitan and progressive figure who is physically inside India but culturally outside it. In her contradictory discursive framework, then, progressive intervention in the sphere of the *zenāna* necessarily reinforces the backward picturesque of an India to which 'progress', if it is to be efficacious as a concept, is alien. There is also another level at which Sorabji's framework is contradictory, since the figure of an India as contemporarily ancient undermines the linear chronology on which the narrative of progress itself depends.¹²⁷

The tragic pathos of Sorabji's attempt to occupy simultaneously incommensurable subject positions is evident in her antinationalist autobiography in other ways. Sturrock has stressed the tension in autobiography between 'the will to apartness and the will to association'.¹²⁸ In *India Calling*, however, Sorabji's will to apartness is emphasised in her intimate association with the *purdah nashin* women she sought to represent. Sorabji legitimises herself as representing a collective group, who come to represent the 'real India'

which is hidden from colonial eyes. This 'real' India enables her to observe the 1907 Partition of Bengal from 'an angle ignored or despised by the Administrators of later years'.¹²⁹ Similarly, echoing the title of her autobiography, she represents herself responding to the 'call of my *Purdahnashins*'.¹³⁰ However, she represents this group, and by extension India, on the basis of her difference and distance from that group, rather than on any sense of shared identity. The result is a solipsistic insistence on her uniqueness which threatens to collapse under the strain of a lack of commonality with other selves. Instead of ever-widening circles of association, her text enacts decreasing and 'invisible'¹³¹ circles of unique isolation, so that 'in my immediate Family, to the isolation of our community was added the very real isolation of ourselves'.¹³²

Like Lajpat Rai, then, Sorabji points to her syncretistic identity only to disavow it by placing it firmly under the rubric of being English or British, and so as outside India. Both, however, agree in constructing cultural hybridity and syncretism as somehow 'unIndian'. While Rai's disavowal leads to an autobiographical impasse, Nehru, by openly avowing his self-division, escapes continual self-contradiction. His radical honesty of self precludes any flight to the ready-made nation as an artificially integrated identity. He rejects the fiction of a homogenous culture.¹³³ In the case of Lajpat Rai, this homogenous nation is used in an attempt to stabilise a self which is in disarray, but Nehru openly keeps the disarray of his self in play in order to resist any totalitarian closure of identity formation through a levelling nationalism.¹³⁴

In addition to the necessarily unfinished nature of any autobiography, the governing image in Nehru's autobiography is the voyage of discovery which by its very nature cannot be completed. This articulates identity formation as a necessarily unfinished task, and an open identity built around translations between India as a play of unity and difference and his own persona as the interweaving of differences. Just as Nehru keeps in play the different components of his heterogeneous self, so India becomes a space for an open-ended play between unity and diversity. India is variously formulated as 'outwardly . . . diversity and infinite variety' alongside a 'tremendous impress of oneness', 'holding together a variegated society', 'unity in complexity' and 'a cultural unity amidst diversity'.¹³⁵ Nehru combines this with his travel narrative when he writes of how 'for many months I wandered about India' and in the process saw 'the rich diversity' of the country but always with the 'unifying impress of India' on its many facets.¹³⁶ Elsewhere, he writes of his 'wanderings' in terms of feeling the 'tremendous' diversity of India as well as an 'equally tremendous unity'.¹³⁷ In part, then, Nehru's travel narrative serves to enact this unfolding of India as a conceptual space in which the terms 'unity' and 'diversity' are kept in play with each other. This resonates with the mentalistic and emotive language of Nehru's autobiographies, because this sense of unity and diversity is something which is both thought

through and felt. The unity of India is not just 'an intellectual conception' but also an 'emotional experience which overpowered me'.¹³⁸ Elsewhere, Nehru refers first to his own 'intense' consciousness of the unity of India as a 'certain subjective state', and then only states that 'I think that this had an objective foundation also'.¹³⁹

In some ways, India emerges less as a territorial entity in Nehru's autobiographical project, and more as a conceptual space and a cosmopolitan capacity for the processes which keep in play unity and diversity alongside each other. This counters Cornelia Sorabji's construction of cosmopolitanism and India as antithetical spaces. The terms Nehru uses to describe these processes are 'assimilation', 'fusion', 'absorbing', 'synthesis', 'amalgamation', 'coalescence', 'flexibility', 'adaptation', 'borrowing' and 'mixing'.¹⁴⁰ Moreover, this bundle of processes is given a stylistic inflection by Nehru. Previous commentators have tended to be negative in their criticisms of Nehru's style in his autobiographies. Chatterjee, for example, describes the *Discovery* as 'rambling, contradictory, grossly overwritten',¹⁴¹ while Gopal has been equally critical.¹⁴² However, if we shift perspective here and consider Nehru's style in terms of the techniques of collage, then this style becomes an appropriate index of his project as a whole. Nehru characterises the text of *The Discovery* as an amalgam, as 'inadequate, disjointed and lacking in unity, a mixture of many things with the personal element dominant'.¹⁴³ The characterisation of *Glimpses of World History* (a text which he wrote in prison as a series of letters to his daughter¹⁴⁴) as treating 'history in a sort of jumpy way' with 'many personal and intimate touches in them'¹⁴⁵ could be applied to both *An Autobiography* and *The Discovery*. The latter especially is an amalgamation of genres and stylistic registers, including autobiography, political pamphlet, committee document, travelogue and historiography. It includes long citations from the proceedings and reports of Congress committees,¹⁴⁶ and occasionally has the polemic of a political pamphlet, as indicated by titles of sections such as 'The plunder of Bengal helps the industrial revolution in England'. At the same time it bears the imprint of an academic work, reflected in the footnotes of its scholarly apparatus. This mixture of styles is especially evident in the parts of the book which contain historical essays on epochs of Indian history. These combine a studious register, with the accessible style of a pamphleteer aiming to address and popularise a particular version of history to a wider audience.¹⁴⁷

Sturrock has rightly stressed that a writer's style is 'an autobiographical statement par excellence', his or her 'attractive signature'.¹⁴⁸ As we have seen, Nehru called attention to the mixed forms and styles of his autobiographical texts. Clifford Geertz has remarked new states are like apprentice poets or painters who are seeking their own proper styles.¹⁴⁹ In keeping with the Nehruvian travelling autobiography as an open-ended text, the collage of the book might be called an experiment in a process of stylisation rather than the actual achievement of a style, so that it enacts the processes of amalgamation,

fusion and coalescence referred to above. Timothy Brennan has suggested that, as a text, the novel objectifies the nation's composite nature, the one yet many of national life. The idea of nationhood constitutes not only a political plea, but also a formal binding together of disparate elements.¹⁵⁰ The mixed formal elements and styles of Nehru's autobiographical texts evoke his own self-conception and his conception of India as amalgams, and the two together as a form of flexible coalescence, rather than ongoing integration. The style of the collage serves well to capture what Nehru calls the 'thousand hand-written pages with this jumble of ideas',¹⁵¹ and especially his category of the individual, in whose mind 'thoughts overlap and the new and the old run side by side, irreconcilable and often contradicting each other'. His use of collage evokes not just his own specific inwardness but also his general category of 'an individual's mind [as] a bundle of contradictions' with the consequence that it 'is difficult to reconcile his action one with another'.¹⁵²

Moreover, the language of mixing in Nehru's narrative is often conjoined with adjectives which express surprise or eccentricity. India is described as 'a curious mixture of the good and the bad', an 'odd mixture of many races' and a 'patchwork and a curious mixture',¹⁵³ the United Provinces are a 'curious amalgam', and so in some ways 'an epitome of India',¹⁵⁴ and India's present moment is described as 'an odd mixture'.¹⁵⁵ His own cosmopolitan eclecticism leads to what he calls a 'strange medley'.¹⁵⁶ A number of individuals who are representative of India in different ways are described in similar terms. Azad is 'a strange mixture' and Mohammad Ali is an 'odd mixture'.¹⁵⁷ India's present moment is also an 'odd mixture'.¹⁵⁸ This language extends to different kinds of Indian groups and not just individuals, so that as an ethnic group Bengalis are depicted as 'a curious mixture',¹⁵⁹ while the composition of the National Planning Committee is a 'strange assortment' and 'an odd mixture', and the Congress Socialist party is called a 'curious and mixed assemblage'.¹⁶⁰ Nationalism in general is referred to as 'a confusing medley'.¹⁶¹ Paralleling this, Nehru describes himself as a 'queer mixture of the East and West', who has had a 'mongrel, or at least mixed, education'.¹⁶² His own cosmopolitan eclecticism can sometimes lead to what he calls a 'strange medley' of 'Buddha-Marx-Gandhi'.¹⁶³ He refers to 'an odd mixture in my mind which I could not rationally explain or resolve',¹⁶⁴ and he generalises about the individual's life cycle as an 'odd mixture of joy and sorrow'.¹⁶⁵ He also refers to the 'mixed and sometimes conflicting desires [which] led to a medley in my mind'.¹⁶⁶ Nehru as a curious mongrel, a strange medley and a queer mixture becomes the appropriate representative and unifying figure for the strange heterogeneity that is India. This language of curious mixtures is extended to include his own precursors, so that Shankara is described as a 'curious mixture' as well.¹⁶⁷

The use of these adjectives signifying surprise might suggest a normative judgement against which the heterogeneity of India and Nehru's own self

are being measured. His attempt to validate India and himself as a mixture might conceal a nostalgia for a unity against which this mixture appears as distinctively curious and strange. But the language of oddity combined with the assertion of mixing is necessary for the Nehruvian project because in the final analysis it evokes the paradoxical normalisation of heterogeneity. India becomes both the rule and the exception that proves the rule. Indian and self-heterogeneity are simultaneously exceptional, and instantiated as a norm in the very person of Nehru, whose autobiographical selfhood is both conspicuous (and hence deserving of an autobiography) and yet representative of Indian cosmopolitanism as a whole. This normalisation of an exceptional heterogeneity requires the languages of both surprising exception and instantiated norm.

Nehru's Autoethnography

Nehru's strategy of normalising heterogeneity by reinforcing its surprising nature is also in contrast to Santha Rama Rau's attempt to cope with her deracination. Whereas Nehru openly avows his self-divisions, and even celebrates them, in Rau's text the governing logic is an either-or position. This is represented by her sister's argument that 'You've got to give up one or the other [India or Europe], and since, as far as I can see, we are going to have to live in India, I, for one, am going to give up Europe.'¹⁶⁸ Even when other possibilities to this governing logic are admitted, they are premised on the erasure of differences between Indians, rather than keeping them in play by recognising what Julia Kristeva has called the strangers in ourselves, in order to better understand the way in which we construct the 'foreigners' outside ourselves.¹⁶⁹ While at one point Rau considers the possibility that her alienation from India might be shared by other Indians ('were we perhaps in the same position as other Indians, and not isolated at all?'),¹⁷⁰ this insight is negated by her hope that the 'Nationalist movement help erase the difference among all Indians and secure for them the common ground on which to build'.¹⁷¹ Rau's disavowal of her own syncretistic identity manifests itself in her focussing on instances of syncretism in others as incongruous, whether this is in the style, dress and accent of an 'Anglo-Indian' girl, or the 'incongruous contrast' between the 'Indian' and the 'European' commodities in her aunt's kitchen.¹⁷² As a result, too, Rau's text often contains ethnographic tableaux of other Indians as though they are 'foreign' to her. This style of distant ethnography is clear in set-piece scenes: 'The Brahmin cook was sitting in the shade, wearing only a loin-cloth, twisting his hair on the top of his head and reading his prayer-book', and 'One of the women was crouching by the earthen fireplace blowing the hot embers into flame, while her daughter ground spices in a stone bowl next to her.'¹⁷³ Rau's creation of an ethnographic distance from India is also clear in another passage referring to Bombay: 'Seen from a car window,

the Indian bazaar sections of the city were surprisingly like the glamorous Orient of Hollywood movies, with beggars rapping at the car window, half-naked people asleep on the pavements, and fly-infested selling-booths. The English parts of the city, with their expensive shops and stiff uneasy houses, looked familiarly provincial.¹⁷⁴ The moving car through whose windows the changing scene is likened to a film on a screen secures her self-depiction as a distant spectator. Moreover, the tension between the details of poverty and a 'glamorous' image are erased, and these details instead contribute to a sense of voyeurism in which poverty becomes part of the spectacle of a distant scene. In this reversal, the stiff unease of the English parts of the city becomes a familiar landmark through which an Indian landscape becomes foreign in India itself. There is a similar scene of voyeurism involving Rau and her sister touring the slums of Srinagar, during which she notes that 'these people seem to feel no resentment at the contrast between their way of life and the life which Shalimar-an emperor's whim-represented'. The reference here is to the Shalimar garden built by a Mughal emperor, but what is elided in this passage is the possibility that the poor, distanced as 'these people', might resent Rau and her sister, even though she notes that their 'new clothes brought the beggars crowding to us'.¹⁷⁵ Other instances of ethnographic tableaux include her visit to 'our first *pardah* luncheon', where there is also an overt temporal distancing at work, as she describes these parties as 'brief, exciting journeys into the lives of Indian women of a century or so ago'.¹⁷⁶

In Rau's case, then, her disavowal of her hybridity grounds her ethnographic distance from other groups of Indians. This ethnographic distance from Indians is also apparent in Cornelia Sorabji's *India Calling*, as when she describes initiation ceremonies undergone by Zoroastrian children, and in her descriptions of Hindu rituals and ceremonies.¹⁷⁷ Like Rau's, Sorabji's ethnography is also reinforced by the strategy of temporal distancing, as when she describes herself as 'living in the pages of a coloured picture-book of Ancient India'.¹⁷⁸ In keeping with the mutually reinforcing categories of ancient India and the progressive West, she endorses a return to India's antiquity, as when she avers that 'the ancients understood the Oriental temperament as modern educationists cannot do, and that India will not enter upon her inheritance till she returns to her Second-Century ways'.¹⁷⁹ In their creation of ethnographic distance, Rau's and Sorabji's narratives are also continuous with some Indian travelogues of the nineteenth century in which, as we have seen, there are ethnographic accounts of other regions and communities in India as though 'foreign' to the author. Dean Mahomed's travelogue presents an interesting variation of this tendency in these travelogues. During his stay in Cork, Mirza Abu Taleb met Dean Mahomed, and mentioned how Mahomed had written a book on the events of his life [*vaqe'āt khud*] and the customs [*rasūm*] of India.¹⁸⁰ The relationship between these two subjects in Mahomed's travelogue is also rooted in a

denial of an earlier part of himself. As Fisher stresses, Dean Mahomed never mentioned his religious conversion to Christianity, presenting himself as the same man throughout.¹⁸¹ I have already discussed the alienated first-person voice in his autobiography, and in part this self-alienation is evident in the de facto third-person position he takes in his travelogue, presenting himself as equidistant from both the Muslims and the Hindus whose beliefs, rituals and customs he depicts. He projects his post-conversion identity back on to his earlier self. This is especially apparent in his use of an alienated vocabulary, with the creation of an ethnographic distance between himself and 'Mohametans' [sic],¹⁸² and the use of such distancing phrases as 'the rites of this religion',¹⁸³ 'Moors',¹⁸⁴ and descriptions of specific festivals as though he had never participated in them, even though he refers to his attendance at one as a relative of those involved.¹⁸⁵ Fisher has noted that for Dean Mahomed the 'essence' of Indian society revealed itself through its holy men and ascetics, whom he did not identify by religious community even though he provided other details about them.¹⁸⁶ We might add here that Dean Mahomed might be identifying with these figures whose apparent transcendence of religious boundaries reflects his own attempted transcendence of conflicting positions of identity. Like Rai after him, Mahomed disentangles these positions from each other by plotting them in a narrative of linear succession.

In different ways, then, Rau and Dean Mahomed deny their syncretism and in doing so create an ethnographic distance between themselves and other Indians who are treated as distantly alien from them. Nehru, on the other hand, internalises the heterogeneity of India, and instantiates these differences in his own identity, running the risk of jeopardising his self, not least because by revealing himself in this way he shows, to adopt a phrase from Kristeva, 'facets of that private depth on the basis of which [we] understand others'.¹⁸⁷ But it is precisely in such a jeopardised self that his nationalism is rooted; for Nehru Indian nationalism cannot be an escape from, or a compensation for, this fragile self.

In Rau's text, as we have seen, India becomes a series of carefully crafted ethnographic scenes, which she cannot inhabit. This is also stylistically inflected in her prose, with a preponderance of a polished and static descriptive mode, grounded in a disavowal of the possible depths of subjectivity. Her mode of writing is also clear in her stilted handling of dialogue.¹⁸⁸ The deliberate blandness of her prose is in sharp contrast to Nehru's own stylistic inflection of his autobiographical 'calling'. Clifford has reflected upon the method of collage as juxtaposing rather than blurring distinct forms of evocation and analysis, and also suggests how collage asserts relationships among heterogeneous elements in meaningful ensembles, bringing the parts of these ensembles together while sustaining the tensions between them.¹⁸⁹ It is through collage that Nehru evokes both himself and India as meaningful ensembles of heterogeneous elements which complement each other, evoking 'the jumble of thoughts and emotions . . . within

me',¹⁹⁰ as well as the 'mental rhythm' of his thoughts,¹⁹¹ alongside the category of India itself. It captures the way Nehru mixes in himself the 'numerous strands' of English thought, literature, history, men of science and sociologists, the inspiration he draws from the American, French and Russian Revolutions, as well as the 'magnificent record of Chinese thought and culture', and finally his debt to the already 'many-sided' culture and thought of India itself.¹⁹²

I have argued that Nehru's technique of collage evokes his sense of being at home and alienated in India, and articulates the language of curious mixtures which runs through his autobiographical texts as a whole. However, it also underpins the autoethnographic position which is enacted in his work. In a thought-provoking article, Kirin Narayan observes how the paradigm of cognitive distance underpinned the dichotomy between insider and outsider in classic ethnological accounts. Just such a cognitive distance characterises, as we have seen, Risley's *The People of India*. Narayan also argues that the genre of 'native' anthropology might suggest ways in which this distance could be replaced by affective and experiential modes of knowing.¹⁹³ In the case of Nehru's autobiographies, an alienated ethnographic distance is combined with an experiential and affective mode of self-knowledge in which his emotions, doubts and confusions are foregrounded as he tries to get to know India alongside himself. Moreover, in his autobiographies Nehru refuses to be reduced to either the position of an unselfconscious insider in India or that of a self-conscious outsider to India. He thus doubly subverts the paradigm of insider and outsider, first by conjoining the figure of the 'native' with that of the anthropologist, and secondly by his identity as a mixed and cosmopolitan traveller. Here, then, autoethnography becomes a fragile first-person voice which is secured through travel. Moreover, in the autobiographical appropriation of the adventure romance, Nehru's sense of surprise at the mixed nature of India and his own self serves to underpin the language of discovery in his narrative of adventurous exploration. In keeping with the autoethnographic aspects of this project, this is not a narrative of discovery in which the survivor returns home to validate the discovery of a site elsewhere.¹⁹⁴ The site here is his own self and his own location. The discovery is itself a self-reflexive return to a new-found and reconstructed sense of home, but one in which the notion of 'home' is knowingly destabilised by the subversion of the dichotomy between the inside and the outside.

This subversion is evident in the interplay in Nehru's texts between Nehru's self-representation, India, and the global arena of modernity. Katherine Verdery has described how the category of the nation is part of both a symbolic and a territorial order.¹⁹⁵ The aim of Nehru's autobiographical texts is to locate the nation not just symbolically but also in territorial terms by pinpointing its boundaries on the map of the world. This is also in keeping with the narrative of discovery and travel in *The Discovery*, which

is evoked through recurring images of charted and uncharted territory, so that India becomes an uncharted territory explored by Nehru. Nehru refers to India as 'the country ahead of us [which] was an almost strange and uncharted land'.¹⁹⁶ Derek Gregory has suggested that conventional cartographic discourse can be turned against itself so that we might envisage more open forms.¹⁹⁷ An open form of cartography is envisaged by Nehru's project. The boundaries of India as a spatial entity are continually shifting in *The Discovery*. Nehru points out that in the past the 'borderland areas of Kabul, Kandahar, and Seistan . . . were often politically parts of India', and he reiterates that 'for long stretches of time Afghanistan had been, and was destined to be, a part of India'.¹⁹⁸ He also makes much of colonies of Indian settlers in Southeast Asia during the period of antiquity,¹⁹⁹ and, on the basis of this, traces the outline of a 'Greater India' in the past.²⁰⁰ To some extent, the shrinking of India, of which the separation of Burma from India is the most recent example for him,²⁰¹ is part of the rhetoric of Indian decline in *The Discovery* as a whole. His uncovering of the larger India of the past also counters the geographical image of an isolated India in the works of British ethnography. The articulation of an alternative and shifting map of India dismantles the cartographic frame that colonial commentators have placed around it. This reflects his general attempt to recover for Indians the possibilities of travelling to and from India, because, as someone who himself is both at home and estranged from India, travelling abroad is always configured with returning to India to discover 'the fascinating thing that is India'.²⁰² This attempt to constitute a more open form of cartographic discourse is also a response to the changing map of Europe during the course of the Second World War, as nation states disappeared or reappeared depending on the course of military campaigns. The shifting nature of this map is referred to a number of times, as when, for example, Nehru writes of how 'Europe rushes ahead in a fantastic fashion and Czechoslovakia is no more', and how as a result, 'inevitably, I tend to view Indian problems with this European background'.²⁰³ As Nehru reflects on the changing map of Europe, he is also led into imagining future maps, so that cartographic discourse involves an imaginative geography, which is both retrospective and prospective, in keeping with the dual temporal nature of autobiography itself.²⁰⁴

Nehru also represents India not only as terra firma, but as an ocean. Referring to his 'voyage of the discovery of India', he relates how for 'many years now I have been travelling in these oceans of space and time'.²⁰⁵ While grappling with India's heterogeneous and elusive nature he writes, 'There are myriad ideas that float about like flotsam and jetsam on the surface of India, and many of them are mutually antagonistic . . . This is, to some extent, possible everywhere; in an old and big country like India, with so much of the dead clinging on to the living, it is peculiarly easy.'²⁰⁶ Similarly, in the context of reflecting upon India's historical decline, he combines the metaphor of the biological life cycle of individuals with an image drawn from

the ocean: 'Was this due to age alone, that seems to attack civilisations as it does individuals, or to a kind of tidal wave with its forward and backward motion?'²⁰⁷ He makes this association of India with the force of the ocean, too, when he approvingly cites Dodwell to the effect that India was 'infinitely absorbent like the ocean'.²⁰⁸ The association between the ocean and India is underscored by Nehru's reflection upon the impact of Buddhism on the 'Aryan faith' in India in terms of a 'new spring' in 'the ocean of Indian life'.²⁰⁹

Whereas Iqbal uses the ocean as an image of his own expansive interiority, Nehru uses the image to understand the relationship between India and other parts of the world, describing India as 'like the ocean [receiving] the tribute of a thousand rivers'.²¹⁰ Recently Zygmunt Bauman has explored 'fluidity' and 'liquidity' as fitting metaphors for what he calls the 'melting powers' of modernity.²¹¹ For Nehru, it is clear that the fluid and liquid substance of India is in keeping with the general nature of 'the world [which] is fluid and seeks new levels before it solidifies afresh'.²¹² The liquefaction of India is in keeping with the fluid nature of modernity itself. Nehru's cartographic narrative tries to capture this fluidity by reflecting upon the nature of India's boundaries on the world map, which like all boundaries on this fluid map become porous, so that the distinction between inside and outside India is continually shifting. This works on a number of levels. His cartographic narrative evokes an India of the future which would be part of a federation of states. He cites G.D. Cole's view that India would eventually become part of a supra-national state covering the Middle East and South Asia. Nehru predicts that 'vast supra-national regions, each functioning as one huge state but with local autonomy, are very likely to take shape'.²¹³ He is anxious to justify Indian nationalism in terms of global developments and as harmonious with, and not antipathetic to, what he calls 'internationalism', which includes 'to some extent the subordination, of the independent nation state to a world organisation'.²¹⁴ It is for this reason that the partition of India would be in conflict with the 'whole current of modern historical and economic development',²¹⁵ which is the growing economic interdependence of nation states and the absorption of nation states into larger multinational entities or federations.²¹⁶ He avers that even if Pakistan were to come into existence, it would be part of such a federation, and one which might include India.²¹⁷ Global developments mean that the domestic and the international necessarily intermesh,²¹⁸ and that the 'interests and activities of states overflow their boundaries and are world-wide', so that it is simply impossible for any one nation to isolate itself.²¹⁹ Nehru goes so far as to suggest that no nation is really independent²²⁰ and that the word 'independent' is 'not a happy one' since it signifies isolation and there can be 'no such isolation or independence' in the modern world.²²¹ In keeping with the language of his autobiography, the term 'isolation' is also given an inward turn, when in the context of referring to the 'psychological aspect'

of the question of nationalism he argues that nationalism is a 'dangerous doctrine' which can lead to isolation.²²²

Thus, in Nehru's autobiographies, his personal identity, India and a modern world order coalesce. This is made explicit when Nehru writes of having to 'weave together' the 'numerous strains' of his identity into one pattern 'for my country and for the world'. This pattern is explicitly related to the 'emergence of a world order'.²²³ For Nehru the global order in the age of modernity means that the questions of India's polity are bound up with the 'tangled web' of a world polity,²²⁴ and that the problems defining the nationalist struggle in India are necessarily global ones.²²⁵ Becoming an Indian national, then, is necessarily imbricated with becoming a world citizen. Moreover, he envisages a defining feature of a postcolonial India as being a 'multinational' state, which would be a development of its past history as a multinational state.²²⁶ This is in keeping with a modern tendency in which the 'idea of the national state itself [is] giving way to the multinational state'.²²⁷ In this sense, then, the quasi-national differences between the different regions of India which Nehru points to²²⁸ make India a microcosm of the modern world. This is reinforced by the ways in which the already mixed culture of India is combining with that of the West. This process within India is in fact a 'world-wide one', as manifested in the development of a global culture which will connect a variety of cultures with 'common links' while retaining their 'infinite variety'.²²⁹ A new world civilisation combining 'East' and 'West'²³⁰ is being prefigured in India itself. It is this which makes India eminently suited to take its place in the modern world. The difference between India as a federation of free units²³¹ and multinational federations of which India would be a part is a difference of degree and not of kind. Nehru is in agreement with Franz Fanon that 'it is at the heart of national consciousness that international consciousness lives and grows',²³² or, as Nehru himself puts it, he seeks to 'make of my intense nationalism an internationalism'.²³³

Nehru denies the validity of one ideal of nationalism, for which the nation is a unit where political and ethnic boundaries are congruent.²³⁴ In contrast to this, Nehru argues that 'whether India is properly to be described as one nation or two or more does not really matter, for the modern idea of nationality has been almost divorced from statehood'.²³⁵ While undermining arguments for the creation of Pakistan, this also counters colonialist constructions of India's heterogeneity. The perception of India's heterogeneity became central to British official thinking in the later part of the nineteenth century, when it was used as a justification for schemes of political representation supposedly tailor-made for the peculiar conditions and nature of Indian society.²³⁶ India, it was argued, was not one nation, but many nations, and as a result it was unable to sustain European style democratic institutions, let alone a single nationality.²³⁷ Such a view was evident in the deliberations of the Committee appointed by Lord Dufferin in September

1888 to consider the issue of Indian representation. This Committee saw its task as defining a system of representation which would reflect as accurately as possible the diversity of interests in Indian society, but it perceived these interests as flowing from caste and religious groups which were intrinsic and unalterable parts of Indian society.²³⁸ It is clear, too, that this view of Indian society's heterogeneity in terms of a series of competing and culturally distinct communities, or what David Washbrook has called a 'sociology of multiple ethnicity', formed the basis for justifying British rule.²³⁹

For Nehru, it is precisely the fact that India is many nations, which makes it eminently suitable to take its place in the global processes of modernity. Far from being isolated from the modern world as an emblem of the contemporary ancient as it is in colonial ethnographic accounts, India becomes an instructive emblem of the global play of unity and difference in the modern era. Moreover, a deft reversal of terms takes place here. Nehru constructs India as emerging from a long history of cosmopolitan interaction, while the British in turn are depicted as insular in their resistance to the cosmopolitanism which India represents. This is in contrast to previous groups which 'had merged into one another', or 'at least fitted into an organically interdependent structure'.²⁴⁰ As Nehru puts it, 'India, the land of tradition, thus offered a strange picture of reversal of roles. The British, who had come here as representatives of a dynamic society, were now the chief upholders of a static, unchanging tradition; among the Indians there were many who represented the new dynamic order and were eager for change, change not only political but also social and economic... This reversal of roles was a demonstration of the fact that whatever creative or progressive role the British might have played in the past in India, they had long ceased to play it, and were now a hindrance and an obstruction to all progress.'²⁴¹ In Nehruvian autobiography the term 'India' is transformed from being antithetical to modernity into becoming synonymous with it, while the term 'Britain' is transmuted from being synonymous with progress and modern civilisation into being antithetical to the modern narrative of progress.²⁴² This extends to considering the British Empire itself as a kind of parody of the federation of states which the conditions of modernity demand.²⁴³

India as, in Risley's words, 'a fantastic medley' in which 'mighty opposites are mixed and jumbled up together'²⁴⁴ becomes for Nehru an enabling condition for collective and individual self-empowerment. He represents himself as a product of such a fantastic medley, and it is his open avowal of this which shapes him into a representative figure. In this Nehru also counters other forms of Indian nationalism. For Nehru there can be no flight from the self into a homogenising nationalism. On the contrary, Indian nationalism can only be secured by being rooted in a necessarily fragile, mixed self, and it is only thus that it can take its place in the modern world. In the end, for Nehru the sociopolitical life of the nation in the making is rooted in the category of the individual as an exemplar of open unity in difference.

In his own culturally mixed self, traditions are decentred in relation to each other. His nationalism is grounded in a specific vision of a selfhood which is a corrective to the attempt to sacralise the nation through the unconditioned elevation of one tradition alone.²⁴⁵ As a result, for Nehru there can be no simple homecoming in his *Discovery of India*. The notion of 'home' is destabilised as the narrative of travelling becomes a mode of existing in the world itself. In the epilogue to *An Autobiography*, Nehru writes of how he has become 'out of place everywhere, at home nowhere', of how he is 'a stranger and alien in the West' and yet also experiences 'an exile's feeling' in 'my own country'.²⁴⁶ The nation cannot be a site for belonging alone; instead it is formed through a finely calibrated tension between alienation and belonging in which the sources of identity are kept open. If there is a homecoming for Nehru, it can only be in what Matustik has called an 'exilic mode'.²⁴⁷ It is through an exile's journey that Nehru counters both the dehumanising effects of colonialism and the oppression of a homogenising nationalism.

For these reasons, there is a tendency in *The Discovery* as a whole to unveil large-scale abstractions of identity as occluding and denying the reality of heterogeneous mixtures. This is the case with the terms 'Muslim', 'Hindu' and 'English',²⁴⁸ where the language of mixing is deployed to subvert these homogenising abstractions of identity so beloved of both imperialist and nationalist ideologies. Nehru's mixed self refuses any easy self-categorisation using such terms as 'Hindu', 'Muslim' and 'English'. This signifies not just a refusal to flee from the self into a homogenising category of identity, but also an autobiographical project which begins to demystify these categories. It does this by suggesting first that he himself is a mixture of all three categories, and secondly that by being a mixture of all three, these categories can be treated as repertoires of mixtures that we can self-reflexively choose from, rather than fates which befall us. In this way, Nehru's autobiography exemplifies what Matustik terms 'self-choice',²⁴⁹ which I take to mean a paradoxical act of accepting and constructing one's self for what one is. It is precisely this paradoxical acceptance of his own self-construction which marks Nehru's narrative.

In general terms, then, for an Indian to be what Nehru calls a 'narrow' nationalist,²⁵⁰ whether a 'Muslim' or a 'Hindu' nationalist, is not just to fly in the face of an inescapable modernity, it is to be in denial of one's self as an Indian. This 'narrow nationalism' is even depicted as something India might be a 'victim' of,²⁵¹ and, as an almost involuntary reaction against foreign rule, it must be guarded against.²⁵² Instead, his project aims to 'help us grow out of our narrow national selves'.²⁵³ 'Narrow' nationalism is the antithesis of his own cosmopolitan self and nationalism. Nehru's project as a whole outlines possible ways of overcoming the dangers of narcissistic solipsism and narrow nationalism. The attempt to bring together himself and others in the autobiographical act of becoming Indian through the

method of collage is perhaps best captured in his views on the nature of a letter: 'What indeed are letters? Not surely just budgets of news, although they contain news . . . They are something far more; they are, or ought to be, bits of the personality of the writer, quivering shadows of the real self. They are also, or they at least endeavour to represent and to mirror, something of the personality of the person written to, for the writer is full of the person he is writing to. Thus a real letter is a strange and revealing amalgam of the two – the one who writes and the one receives. If it is such a letter, it has considerable value for both the persons concerned.'²⁵⁴ Far from articulating the full self of the writer, his autobiography evokes just such 'quivering' bits of himself in an amalgamation of his own and readers' selves in the act of creating the amalgamation which is India itself.

For Nehru all Indians are, whether they like it or not, cosmopolitan individuals and the products of a profoundly cosmopolitan space. The category of the Indian 'native' and that of the cosmopolitan traveller have been fused in Nehruvian discourse. The open avowal of a mixed self, or a self in disarray, is the necessarily shifting ground on which Indian nationalism is based. For Nehru Indian nationalism has to be grounded in a crisis identity; it cannot be a resolution of, or compensation for, that crisis. It is the enactment of this open avowal in Nehru's autobiographies which ensures that his project does not become, like Lajpat Rai's or Cornelia Sorabji's, a self-denying text. Far from being written in 'an astonishingly narrow nationalist tradition',²⁵⁵ *The Discovery of India* counters that tradition by invoking through the style of collage a cosmopolitan self in disarray. It is this self in disarray which grounds Nehru's nationalism.

Notes

1. See his accounts of Allahabad, Benares and Calcutta in Karim Khan, pp. 32–3, pp. 37–9, pp. 56–9.
2. Mirza Abu Taleb, pp. 798–9.
3. Sayyid Ahmad Khan, pp. 48–51.
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 27–34, p. 31.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 38, p. 43, p. 49.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 49.
7. Lal, *Travels*, pp. 4–41.
8. For some examples, *ibid.*, p. 18, p. 76, pp. 84–8, pp. 109–10, p. 119, pp. 190–1, p. 202, p. 283.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 372.
10. Burnes, *Travels*, pp. 68–9.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 2.
12. Lal, *Travels*, p. 17.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 41, p. 70, p. 399, p. 443, where he recollects with 'a sigh the civilized people of Delhi'.

14. Malabari, pp. 5–6, on being a Parsi. See also his *An Appeal from the Daughters of India* (London: Farmer & Sons, 1890), pp. 2–3, where he distinguishes himself from ‘the Hindu’ in terms of both closeness and difference (‘if not a brother, at any rate a first cousin to the Hindu’). Pandian clearly writes as an Indian Christian, but one whose non-conformist affiliations come to the fore in his critical remarks on the Church of England (p. 63, p. 65). For Malabari’s references to ‘Asiatics’ see p. 27, p. 207, and for a Europe–Asia binary see p. 21. For Pandian’s reference to himself as ‘an Oriental stranger’, see Pandian, p. 4, and for an East–West binary, see p. 15, p. 57.
15. Malabari, p. 18.
16. Thomas R. Metcalf, *Ideologies of the Raj* (1995; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), *passim*.
17. Burton, pp. 47–8, p. 49.
18. The concept of a ‘contact zone’ is Pratt’s. She defines it as ‘social spaces where disparate cultures meet, clash and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination’ (Pratt, p. 4, see also p. 6, p. 7, p. 137).
19. Burton, p. 1, Lahiri, p. xii.
20. Taleb mentions how at the Lord mayor’s dinner people bowed as they filed past him (pp. 448–51). See also pp. 351–2 on how newspapers would announce his presence as Persian prince at various occasions, in this case at Vauxhall gardens. Charles Stewart refers to the problems of translating the term ‘mirza’ and hence Abu Taleb’s status, into English and the British social lexicon; see Stewart., 1: p. 295 f.n. Mirza Abu Taleb provides a detailed account of his social engagements, which makes it clear that he was entertained by the higher echelons of British society (see p. 163, pp. 182–8, pp. 203–4, where he describes being presented at the British court).
21. Mirza Abu Taleb, pp. 657–70 on the mutual antipathy between Turks and Persians, pp. 710–11 where he claims the Turks only refrain from defacing Shī’a shrines because of the threat of retaliation by the Persian monarch, pp. 711–13 on examples of Turkish oppression, as perceived by Abu Taleb, pp. 727–30 for attacks on Shī’a pilgrims by Wahhabis and his claim that the governor colludes with these attacks, pp. 751–2 claiming that the Turks had defiled [gandagi pur kardeh] some Shī’a mausoleums.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 759.
23. *Ibid.*, pp. 759–60.
24. *Ibid.*, pp. 657–8.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 658.
26. Lal, *Travels*, p. 46; see also p. 36 and p. 301, where he describes being taken for a European.
27. *Ibid.*, pp. 225–8, p. 294.
28. Yusuf Khan, pp. 18–21.
29. Sayyid Ahmad Khan, pp. 63–8.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 113.
31. *Ibid.*, p. 111.
32. Malabari, pp. 16–17.
33. *Ibid.*, p. 24.
34. *Ibid.*, pp. 187–8.
35. For one example of this humour, see *ibid.*, pp. 23–4.
36. Pandian, pp. 2–3.

37. For example, for Cape Town and the Cape, see Mirza Abu Taleb, pp. 61–4, p. 76, Yusuf Khan, p. 12, pp. 18–21; on the Nicobar islands, Mirza Abu Taleb, pp. 29–31; on the Mauritius, Mirza I'tisam uddin, *Shiguruf Nāma*, p. 20 f. 2ff.; on Malacca, Mirza I'tisam uddin, *Shiguruf Nāma*, p. 25 f.1 ff.; on Turkey, Mirza Abu Taleb, p. 616 ff.; and on Aden and its ethnic groups, Sayyid Ahmad Khan, p. 90.
38. Ballantyne, pp. 14–15.
39. Yusuf Khan, pp. 3–4.
40. Ibid., pp. 258–9, discussed above.
41. Burton, p. 2, Lahiri, pp. 208–9; see also James D. Hunt, *Gandhi in London* (New Delhi: Promilla, 1978).
42. Gandhi, *An Autobiography*, p. 69.
43. Ibid., p. 292, p. 128. He also refers the reader to *Satyagraha in South Africa* for a fuller description of the 'conditions of Indians in the Transvaal and the Orange Free State'.
44. See above, Ch. 1.
45. These questions are raised by James Clifford, 'Introduction: Partial truths', p. 22, and George E. Marcus, 'Ethnography in the Modern World System', pp. 165–6, in James Clifford and George E. Marcus (eds), *Writing Culture. The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), pp. 1–26, pp. 165–93.
46. Thomas, p. ix, has rightly stressed that it is misplaced to see colonialism as a unitary totality. For the notion of the empire as a web, see Ballantyne, pp. 14–15.
47. *Satyagraha in South Africa*, p. 21 on how even after the Union of South Africa the state is far from monolithic; pp. 26–7 on the relationship between the Government of Natal, the Imperial Government and the Government of India, sometimes contesting each other and at other times colluding with each other; p. 28 on the Secretary of the State for Colonies disallowing a bill in the Natal Legislative Assembly disenfranchising 'Asiatics'; p. 30 for a deputation of Indians waiting upon the Secretary of State for India regarding the position of Indians in the Transvaal; p. 32 on the dispute between the 'Boer' and the British governments regarding the position of Indians in the Transvaal republic as British subjects; and p. 74 on the list of anti-Indian acts published in book form by a committee appointed to inquire into the laws of the Transvaal and the Free State which 'placed restrictions on the liberty of the subject or were opposed to the spirit of the British Constitution'. In a clear example of how different official bodies can work against each other, this book was used as a 'handy manual by the Asiatic Department'. Gandhi, *An Autobiography*, pp. 252–3 describes how Gandhi pressurised the Police Commissioner in Johannesburg to move against some officers in the Asiatic Department. Once again, the history of the case reveals how different official bodies worked against each other.
48. I have taken these terms from Lisa Malkki, 'National Geographic: the rooting of peoples and the territorialization of national identity among scholars and refugees', in Geoff Eley and Ronald Grigor Suny (eds), *Becoming National* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. 434–53, p. 441, where she discusses the work of Deleuze and Guattari.
49. Thomas, p. 67.
50. Gandhi, *An Autobiography*, p. 206.
51. Ibid., p. 454, p. 452.

52. This is reinforced in *An Autobiography* when Gandhi suggests that readers should acquaint themselves with his experiments in South Africa by perusing Satyagraha in South Africa before moving on to 'my experiments in India' (p. 292).
53. Gandhi, *An Autobiography*, p. 206.
54. See Ch. 1.
55. Nehru, 'To Madame Chiang Kai-Shek', SW 11: pp. 516–18, p. 517.
56. They discuss Nehru's participation as a representative of the INC at the International Congress against Colonial Oppression in Brussels in February 1927 as a turning point both in his career and in his understanding of the global dimensions of imperialism. See Gopal, 1: pp. 100–104, Zachariah, pp. 58–9.
57. 'To Shyam Sunder Lal', September 6, 1937, in SW 8: p. 856.
58. 'To Eleanor F. Rathbone', June 22, 1941, SW 11: pp. 619–36, p. 621.
59. M.R. Jayakar, *The Story of My Life* (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1958–1959), 2 vols, 1: p. viii. M.R. Jayakar (1873–1959) was an eminent barrister and judge, who was a leader of the Indian Liberal Party. As an Indian Liberal, Jayakar was critical of Nehru's autobiographical project, describing *An Autobiography* as 'an insufferable book, full of self-laudation . . . There is nothing in the book which is illuminating or exalting . . . the vapourings of a half-baked politician.' Cited by Gopal, 1: p. 198.
60. Jayakar 1: p. 378. For Jayakar's account of Tilak's criticisms of Gandhi's ideas, see 1: pp. 383–8.
61. *Ibid.*, 1: p. 378.
62. *Ibid.*, 1: p. 379.
63. *Ibid.*, 1: p. 183.
64. In the relationship between his persona and a regional identity, Jayakar also refers to his role in a Literary conference in 1909 at Baroda on Marathi language and literature, which put forward its claims to be a language and literature in its own right, a conference aiming to rejuvenate the dramatic tradition of Maharashtra in 1918, and a conference in March 1918 on Hindustani music which is preceded by an account of the role of the Marathi-speaking districts' role in the knowledge and practice of this tradition of music. *Ibid.*, 1: pp. 133–7, pp. 188–90, pp. 184–8.
65. *Ibid.*, 1: p. ix.
66. *Ibid.*, 1: p. 362.
67. For example, see Nehru, *An Autobiography*, pp. 37–8.
68. *Ibid.*, p. 38.
69. Nehru, *Discovery*, p. 192.
70. *Ibid.*, p. 555.
71. 'Letter to Gandhi', January 5, 1933, SW 5: pp. 449–51, p. 51.
72. This is how Nehru represents a 12-day trip to Kashmir when his 'days were filled with beauty, and I drank in the loveliness of that land of enchantment', as 'an escape' from the 'world of war and politics, and fascism and imperialism'. See Nehru, *An Autobiography*, p. 611.
73. 'Escape', April 7, 1938, SW 8: pp. 873–6, p. 873.
74. 'Kashmir', July 24–31, 1934, SW 11: pp. 401–16, p. 403.
75. 'Kashmir', July 24–31, 1934, SW 11: pp. 401–16, pp. 404–5. Heidegger, *Question Concerning Technology*, p. 16.
76. Nehru, *Discovery*, p. 51.
77. In the account of his travels in Kashmir, Nehru repeatedly uses the word 'static' to describe Kashmir. See 'Kashmir', July 24–31, 1934, SW 11: pp. 401–16, p. 405,

- where Kashmir is described as 'singularly static'; p. 406, where it is described as 'so static and unchanging', and also as having a 'static appearance'.
78. Nehru, *An Autobiography*, p. 1.
 79. He also refers to a portrait of his grandfather in the dress typical of the Mughal court, so that he 'might well be taken for a Moghal [sic] nobleman, although his features are distinctly Kashmiri'. Nehru, *An Autobiography*, p. 2.
 80. *Ibid.*, p. 8.
 81. For example, see Benjamin Franklin, *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin* (1868; Mineola, New York: Dover Publications, 1996), pp. 2–6.
 82. Nehru, *An Autobiography*, p. 28.
 83. See 'Kashmir', SW 11: pp. 401–20, p. 40,1 where Nehru writes how 'in prison or outside, Kashmir haunts me'.
 84. Nehru, *An Autobiography*, p. 596. See also Prison Diary, entry for January 12, 1934, SW 6: pp. 309–10, p. 310, where Nehru refers to how 'I feel like an exile who cannot even look forward to a home anywhere'.
 85. Nehru, *Discovery*, p. 560.
 86. Nehru, *An Autobiography*, p. 419.
 87. See his discussion of the 'two Englands' in *Discovery*, pp. 287–8.
 88. To present the elements of this syncretism is unfortunately to disentangle it into a set of unitary entities, and thereby to erase it. I refer the reader instead to Chapter 1 of Rai's 'The story of my life', in V.C. Joshi (ed.), *Lajpat Rai. Autobiographical Writings* (New Delhi and Jullundur: University Publishers, 1965). Lala Lajpat Rai (1865–1928) was a congressman of Punjab who sided with the so-called extremists. In 1907 he was imprisoned in Mandalay for six months. He was the president of Congress in 1920 and a member of the Swaraj Party but later broke away to found the Nationalist Party. He was also involved in the Hindu Mahasabha and the Arya Samaj at various points in his life.
 89. *Ibid.*, p. 13.
 90. *Ibid.*, p. 19.
 91. *Ibid.*, pp. 79–80.
 92. This is evident in the first two pages of *An Autobiography*, where Nehru refers to his Kashmiri ancestry and its Mughal culture.
 93. Lajpat Rai, 'The story of my life', p. 28.
 94. *Ibid.*, p. 28, p. 76.
 95. *Ibid.*, pp. 14–15.
 96. *Ibid.*, p. 74.
 97. *Ibid.*, p. 26.
 98. *Ibid.*, p. 4, p. 10.
 99. *Ibid.*, p. 26.
 100. *Ibid.*, p. 26.
 101. *Ibid.*, p. 79.
 102. *Ibid.*, p. 26.
 103. *Ibid.*, p. 79. For the almost defiant admission of his inability to read Hindi, see also p. 78.
 104. *Ibid.*, pp. 81–3, p. 93, where he lists his Urdu publications. See also 'The story of my deportation', in *Lajpat Rai. Autobiographical Writings*, p. 171.
 105. Editor's introduction, p. ix, in *Lajpat Rai. Autobiographical Writings*.
 106. Lajpat Rai, 'The story of my life', pp. 76–8.
 107. Lajpat Rai, 'The story of my deportation', p. 173.
 108. *Ibid.*, p. 173.

109. *Ibid.*, p. 138.
110. *Ibid.*, p. 161.
111. This also corresponds to almost antithetical portrayals of his relationship to his father; 'The Story of My Deportation' uses the language of filial obedience and respect, and it is dedicated 'To my father as a mark of love'. This language is conspicuous by its absence in the earlier/later 'The Story of My Life' where the author charts his political progress in terms of his disavowal of his father and a rejection of his own upbringing.
112. For Lajpat Rai's criticism of Sorabji's anti-nationalist stance, see Cornelia Sorabji, *India Calling. The Memories of Cornelia Sorabji, India's First Woman Barrister*, ed. Chandani Lokuge (1934; New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. xxxiii–iv f.n.
113. Sorabji, p. 13.
114. *Ibid.*, p. 16.
115. *Ibid.*, pp. 16–17.
116. *Ibid.*, p. 18.
117. *Ibid.*, p. 19.
118. *Ibid.*, p. 15.
119. *Ibid.*, p. 185.
120. Mrinalini Sinha, *Colonial Masculinity. The 'Manly Englishman' and the 'Effeminate Bengali' in the Late Nineteenth Century* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), esp. Ch. 4.
121. Sorabji, p. 79.
122. Chandani Lokuge, 'Introduction', in Sorabji, pp. xxi–ii.
123. Inderpal Grewal, *Home and Harem. Nation, Gender, Empire, and Cultures of Travel* (London: Leicester University Press, 1996), p. 5.
124. Sorabji, p. 134, p. 53.
125. *Ibid.*, p. 59, p. 75.
126. *Ibid.*, p. 144.
127. I discuss this in more detail in my 'Comparativism and references to Rome in British imperial attitudes to India', in Catharine Edwards (ed.), *Roman Presences. Perceptions of Rome in European Culture 1789–1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 88–109.
128. Sturrock, p. 18.
129. Sorabji, p. 176.
130. *Ibid.*, p. 203.
131. 'There was an invisible circle drawn round it [our family]'; *ibid.*, p. 15.
132. *Ibid.*, p. 14.
133. I have drawn on Matustik for these formulations; see Martin J. Matustik, *Postnational Identity. Critical Theory and Existential Philosophy in Habermas, Kierkegaard, and Havel* (New York and London: The Guildford Press, 1993), p. 4, p. 21.
134. Again, I have drawn on Matustik for this formulation of a levelling nationalism.
135. Nehru, *Discovery*, p. 59, p. 100, p. 107, p. 562.
136. 'Where are we?' February 28–March 6, 1939, SW 9: pp. 488–520, p. 499.
137. 'Dissensions will weaken the Congress', July 25, 1939, SW 9: pp. 586–94, p. 587.
138. Nehru, *Discovery*, p. 59.
139. 'Impressions of his visit to the Frontier', November 6, 1937, SW 8: pp. 468–72, p. 468.
140. Nehru, *Discovery*, p. 73, p. 76, pp. 119–20, pp. 136–8, p. 142, p. 145, p. 179, p. 195, p. 222, pp. 237–8, p. 244, p. 250, p. 260, p. 270, p. 509. See also 'The

- Unity of India', October 8, 1937, SW 8: pp. 620–31, pp. 622–5, and 'Keshab Candra Sen', January 2, 1939, SW 9: pp. 634–7, p. 635.
141. Partha Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World – A Derivative Discourse?* (London: Zed Books, 1986), p. 132.
142. Gopal, 1: pp. 298–9, on *The Discovery* as repetitive, 'a great jumble of a book', bearing the 'marks of haste and tension', 'lacking in analysis, elegance and clear thinking' and containing 'woolly writing'.
143. Nehru, *Discovery*, p. 479.
144. Jawaharlal Nehru, *Glimpses of World History. Being Further Letters to His Daughter, Written in Prison, and Containing a Rambling Account of History for Young People* (1934–1935; New Delhi: Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund, 1982).
145. Nehru, 'To Horace Alexander', November 20, 1933, SW 6: pp. 208–9, p. 209.
146. For example, see *Discovery*, Ch. 8 which cites excerpts from the National Planning Committee.
147. 'Letter to Indira Nehru', August 11, 1940, SW 11: pp. 476–7, p. 476.
148. Sturrock, p. 224.
149. Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures. Selected Essays* (London: Hutchinson, 1975), p. 278.
150. Timothy Brennan, 'The national longing for form', in Homi K. Bhabha (ed.), *Nations and Narration* (London and New York: Routledge, 1990), pp. 44–70, p. 62.
151. Nehru, *Discovery*, p. 562.
152. *Ibid.*, p. 181.
153. Nehru, *An Autobiography*, p. 448, *Discovery*, p. 55, p. 382.
154. Nehru, *Discovery*, p. 334.
155. *Ibid.*, p. 57.
156. Prison Diary, entry for June 3, 1935, SW 6: pp. 366–7, p. 367.
157. Nehru, *Discovery*, p. 348, p. 349.
158. *Ibid.*, p. 57.
159. *Ibid.*, p. 314.
160. *Ibid.*, p. 395, Nehru, *An Autobiography*, p. 564. The language of strange mixtures extends to other institutions within India; for example, the constituent assemblies in the Princely states are described as a 'curious mixture of elected and non-elected members', *Discovery*, p. 455.
161. Nehru, *An Autobiography*, p. 157.
162. *Ibid.*, p. 596, p. 28.
163. Prison Diary, entry for June 3, 1935, SW 6: pp. 366–7, p. 367.
164. Nehru, *Discovery*, p. 30.
165. *Ibid.*, p. 514.
166. Nehru, *An Autobiography*, p. 20.
167. Nehru, *Discovery*, p. 190.
168. Santha Rama Rau, *Home to India* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1945), p. 62.
169. Kristeva, *Nations Without Nationalism*, p. 29.
170. Rau, p. 100.
171. *Ibid.*, p. 101.
172. *Ibid.*, p. 65, p. 33.
173. *Ibid.*, p. 10.
174. *Ibid.*, p. 9.
175. *Ibid.*, pp. 78–9.
176. *Ibid.*, p. 70.
177. Sorabji, pp. 13–14, pp. 139–49.

178. *Ibid.*, p. 47.
179. *Ibid.*, p. 143.
180. Mirza Abu Taleb, p. 108.
181. Fisher, *First Indian Author*, p. 225.
182. *Ibid.*, for example, p. 41, and *passim*.
183. Dean Mahomed, *Travels*, p. 42.
184. *Ibid.*, p. 50, p. 79.
185. *Ibid.*, pp. 41–4, pp. 103–4.
186. Fisher, *First Indian Author*, p. 219.
187. Julia Kristeva, *Nations Without Nationalism*, p. 92.
188. For examples, see Rau, pp. 52–6.
189. Clifford, *Routes*, p. 12.
190. 'To Bharati Sarabhai', November 21, 1935, SW 7: pp. 6–8, p. 7.
191. 'Letter to Indira Nehru', June 12, 1941, SW 11: pp. 611–14, p. 612.
192. 'Letter to Eleanor F. Rathbone', June 22, 1941, SW 11: pp. 619–36, p. 621.
193. Kirin Narayan, 'How native is a "Native" anthropologist?' *American Anthropologist*, 95, 3 (Sept 1993), pp. 671–86, p. 671, p. 679.
194. McClintock, p. 30 citing Pratt.
195. Verdery, p. 226.
196. Nehru, *An Autobiography*, p. 202.
197. Gregory, p. 7.
198. Nehru, *Discovery*, p. 148, p. 238.
199. *Ibid.*, pp. 204–6, p. 240.
200. *Ibid.*, p. 201.
201. *Ibid.*, p. 440.
202. 'To Indira Nehru', July 9, 1941, SW 11: p. 644.
203. 'To V.K. Krishna Menon', March 16, 1939, SW 9: pp. 524–5, p. 525.
204. For example, see 'A crumbling world', July 17, 1940, SW 11: pp. 73–5, which details how the 'map of Europe has changed utterly and many nations have ceased to be', and then speculates as to what a world map would look like should Nazi Germany triumph. See also other speculative references to the changing map of the world in the future in 'Speech at Lucknow', May 24, 1938, SW 9: pp. 4–5, p. 5, and 'Where are we?' February 28–March 6, 1939, SW 9: pp. 488–520, p. 492 on how 'we live in the post-Munich age and the map changes from day to day'.
205. 'To Indira Nehru', June 29, 1941, SW 11: pp. 638–40, p. 639.
206. Nehru, *Discovery*, pp. 143–4.
207. *Ibid.*, p. 224.
208. *Ibid.*, p. 73.
209. *Ibid.*, p. 176.
210. 'The unity of India', 8: pp. 620–31, p. 622.
211. Zygmunt Bauman, *Liquid Modernity* (Oxford and Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000), p. 6.
212. 'India in travail', August 9, 1940, SW 11: pp. 99–101, p. 100.
213. Nehru, *Discovery*, p. 536. See also p. 547, where Nehru ponders the links that hold together the Arab world and parts of Asia, including China and India. For other reflections on the kind of federations which a postcolonial India might be part of in the future, see 'To H.N. Spalding', May 22, 1940, SW 11: pp. 41–4, pp. 42–3, 'On the ban of volunteer organisations', August 12, 1940, SW 11: pp. 118–19, where Nehru envisages a federation which would include India, Afghanistan

- and China, also 'Eastern nations unite!', October 25, 1940, SW 11: pp. 188-9, on the idea of an Asian federation to counter the three likely postwar groupings of north America with Britain and Australia, Europe and the USSR. For the idea of an Asian federation, see also Nehru, *An Autobiography*, p. 608.
214. Nehru, *Discovery*, p. 53.
 215. *Ibid.*, p. 456. See also p. 392 and p. 539, where Nehru describes the demand for a separate state as a 'reversion to some medieval theory' and a 'medieval conception which cannot be fitted into the modern world'.
 216. *Ibid.*, p. 531. For this argument that the partition of India would be antithetical to the growing global interdependence of nations in federations, see also 'The significance of a Constituent Assembly', April 18, 1940, SW 11: pp. 18-21, pp. 20-1, 'What of us?' July 17, 1940, SW 11: pp. 77-9, p. 78, 'Settlement with Britain unlikely', September 29, 1940, SW 11: pp. 145-7, p. 147, and Nehru, *An Autobiography*, p. 606.
 217. 'On the ban on volunteer organizations', August 12, 1940, SW 11: pp. 118-19, p. 119, where he argues that the question of Pakistan cannot be separated from global problems regarding the future status of nation states.
 218. Nehru, *Discovery*, p. 542. Here Nehru points to the absurdity of the term 'isolationist' as applied to any nation state in the contemporary world, in this case the US.
 219. *Ibid.*, p. 540.
 220. 'Presidential address at Punjab Provincial Conference', Amritsar, April 11, 1928, SW 3: pp. 219-30, p. 220; see also 'Indian States and British India', October 13, 1928, p. 254.
 221. 'Exploitation of India', October 2, 1933, SW 6: pp. 35-40, p. 38.
 222. 'To H.N. Spalding', May 22, 1940, SW 11: pp. 41-4, p. 43.
 223. 'To Eleanor F. Rathbone', June 22, 1941, SW 11: pp. 619-36, p. 621.
 224. 'A foreign policy for India', September 13, 1927, SW 2: pp. 348-64, p. 353.
 225. 'To Rajendra Prasad', November 20, 1935, SW 7: pp. 38-44, p. 39. See also 'To Mahatma Gandhi', September 13, 1933, SW 5: pp. 526-30, p. 528, and 'India and Britain', SW 9: pp. 34-55, p. 35.
 226. Nehru, *Discovery*, p. 392.
 227. *Ibid.*, p. 456.
 228. See 'Presidential address at the All-Bengal students conference', September 22, 1928, SW 3: pp. 188-96, where Nehru explicitly discusses differences and similarities between Indians in terms of differences and similarities 'across the artificial frontiers that separate country from country' (p. 189). For another invocation of provincial differences as national differences, see 'On the selection of the new working committee', April 15, 1936, SW 7: pp. 197-9, p. 198, 'Each province in India is a nation by itself, and has its own problems and questions to deal with...'
 229. 'To Syed Mahmud', September 24, 1936, SW 7: pp. 385-93, p. 392.
 230. 'The Eastern federation', October 28, 1940, SW 11: pp. 191-2, p. 192.
 231. Nehru, *Discovery*, p. 535.
 232. Cited by Brennan, p. 63. Nehru argues that the 'hundreds of millions of Asia and Africa... have become increasingly conscious of themselves... and are at the same time world conscious' (*Discovery*, p. 546).
 233. 'To Will Durant', August 20, 1931, SW 5: pp. 319-21, p. 320.
 234. Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, p. 1.
 235. Nehru, *Discovery*, p. 531.

236. For a detailed discussion of this part of official thinking, and its relationships to the development of Muslim separatism, see Farzana Sheikh, *Community and Consensus in Islam. Muslim Representation in Colonial India, 1860–1947* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 49–75, on political systems of representation which British officials in India evolved for what they perceived to be the peculiar conditions of India's heterogeneous society.
237. *Ibid.*, p. 49, p. 52.
238. *Ibid.*, pp. 70–1.
239. David Washbrook, 'Ethnicity and Racism in Colonial Indian Society', in Robert Ross (ed.), *Racism and Colonialism* (The Hague: Leiden University Press, 1982), pp. 143–81, pp. 156–7.
240. Nehru, *Discovery*, p. 303. See also pp. 312–3.
241. *Ibid.*, p. 378.
242. For this contention that British rule is inhibiting the 'progress' of India, see *Discovery*, pp. 291–2, pp. 298–303, p. 330, p. 336, p. 353, p. 379, pp. 410–11, p. 504. See also 'Before India is reborn', June 1936, SW 7: pp. 631–42, pp. 634–6, pp. 638–40, 'The Unity of India', October 8, 1937, SW 8: pp. 620–31, p. 621, p. 626, 'India and Britain', July 6, 1938, SW 9: pp. 34–55, p. 39, 'To Eleanor Rathbone', SW 11: pp. 619–36, pp. 629–33. David Washbrook has argued that the British Indian state's ambiguous attitude to 'progress' is revealed in its agrarian policies during the period from the 1850s to the 1920s, when it established the context for the capitalist development of Indian agrarian society. At the same time it felt threatened by the possible social transformations which such a development would bring about. These transformations would have undermined the Raj's reliance on existing agrarian structures for its authority and legitimisation. It therefore had to obstruct the unfolding of the logic which it had set in motion in the first place; see David Washbrook, 'Law, state and agrarian society in colonial India', *Modern Asian Studies* (1981), 15, 3: pp. 649–721.
243. 'To H.N. Spalding', May 22, 1940, SW 11: pp. 41–4, p. 42.
244. Risley, p. 270.
245. This characterisation of the nation state is Matustik's, p. 216.
246. Nehru, *An Autobiography*, p. 596.
247. Matustik, p. 141, p. 142.
248. Nehru, *Discovery*, p. 241, p. 75, pp. 287–8.
249. Matustik, p. 12, p. 20, pp. 91–2.
250. *Ibid.*, p. 472, where his own cosmopolitan nationalism is contrasted with Gandhi's 'narrow' nationalism. See also Nehru, *An Autobiography*, p. 182, on the 'narrowest nationalism', p. 383, on suffering from 'the disease of nationalism', pp. 419–20, where he stresses that his nationalism and 'internationalism' go hand in hand, and is not a form of 'narrow nationalism', and p. 601, where he speaks of how an interest in 'international affairs helped to raise our own national struggle to a higher level, and to lessen somewhat the narrowness which is always a feature of nationalism'. See also 'The Imperialist Danger', SW 3: pp. 152–5, pp. 152–3, on nationalism as 'necessarily limited in outlook'; 'Whither India?' October 9–11, 1933, SW 6: pp. 1–32, p. 15, on the need to discard 'narrow nationalism'; 'The need for a larger perspective', November 9, 1936, SW 7: pp. 548–52, p. 551, on the dangers of nationalism; 'India and Britain', July 6, 1938, SW 9: pp. 34–55, p. 47, on his nationalism as opposed to a 'narrow nationalistic ideal'; and 'To Eleanor Rathbone', June 22, 1941, SW 11:

- pp. 619–36, p. 634, where he emphasises that ‘we have never believed in a narrow nationalism’.
251. ‘On the Indian situation’, March 2, 1927, pp. 297–8, p. 297, ‘I do not want our country to be a victim of . . . narrow nationalism’.
252. ‘Presidential address at the all-Bengal Students Conference’, September 22, 1928, SW 3: pp. 188–96, p. 194 on how the ‘reaction against foreign rule is apt to make us narrowly national’.
253. ‘Letter to Indira Nehru’, July 5, 1935, SW 6: pp. 385–92, p. 390.
254. ‘Letter to Indira Nehru’, July 19, 1935, SW 6: pp. 393–8, p. 393.
255. Gopal, 1: p. 299.

5

The Aporia of Muslim Nationalism

Iqbal's *Jāvid Nāma* and his work in general articulate their own distinctive notions of space and an alternative sense of global geography to that centred on Europe. It is in relationship to this alternative imaginary geography that he envisages distinctive relationships between self, locality and a global geography. As in preceding Indian travelogues in Urdu and Persian, there are multiple sites of self-differentiation in his work, but these sites are created through his distinctive notion of travel as an internal process. Moreover, these sites are imbricated with multiple axes of identity formation, in which there is a play-off between race as a European concept, and terms of identity drawn and reworked from an Islamic lexicon. In this interaction between these two sets of terms, the concept of nationality becomes highly problematic. One might go further and suggest that Iqbal's work confronts the impossibility, and perhaps even the undesirability, of becoming national.

The unreality of time and nationality as a problem of return in Nehru and Iqbal

This aporia of nationalism is uncovered in the *Jāvid Nāma*, and is in part related to his handling of time in the poem. Both Nehru's and Iqbal's autobiographical narratives are what might be called 'tales about time', rather than 'tales of time'. That is, over and above the transformations that affect situations and characters within time, the very experience and nature of time is at stake in these texts.¹ Before considering the unreality of time in Iqbal's *Jāvid Nāma*, and how it unveils the aporia of Muslim separatism, I shall consider Nehru's handling of time in his autobiographical project, and how it grounds his sense of history as a scene of authorial acts of selective appropriation.

The Preface to *The Discovery* points to 'The strange sensation' which the author has when 'I read something that I had written some time previously. . . . I recognize it of course, but not wholly; it seems almost that I was reading some familiar piece written by another, who was near to me and yet who was different.'² Given Nehru's eschewal of the notion of an integrated, unified self, and of a full self-knowledge which goes with that

notion, it is not surprising that he questions this identity of the narrator and the protagonist which is the key formal feature of the autobiographical mode of writing. While seeking to keep the disarray of his self in play, Nehru reflects upon the diachronic axis along which his identity might be plotted, but in doing so he sees *The Discovery* as representing 'some past self of mine which has already joined that long succession of other selves that existed for a while and faded away'.³

The reference to the long succession of selves in the past which deepens the sense of a non-totalising selfhood reflects a general feature of Nehru's autobiographical project, which is its self-reflexive engagement with temporality. In many ways, to use Ricoeur's distinction, Nehru's autobiographies are 'tales about time' rather than 'tales of time'. Whereas all narratives are 'tales of time' insofar as the structural transformations that affect the situations and characters take time, only a few are 'tales about time', where the very experience of time is at stake.⁴ The experience and motif of travel which bind together Nehru's autobiography are presented in time and space. Thus, Nehru contends that to 'know and understand India one has to travel far in time and space',⁵ so that the journey or voyage becomes a metaphor for his project to know India as both a spatial and a temporal entity. This is made clear by one of the chapter headings, 'The Quest: the panorama of India's past'.⁶ Nehru uses the diction of the quest romance when he describes his writing of *Glimpses of World History* as a 'quest and voyage of discovery',⁷ and in the *Glimpses* itself he writes of his peripatetic approach to the past: 'I have rambled on, skipping centuries and many important happenings, and then pitching my tent for quite a long time on some event which interested me'.⁸ He also conceives of the historiographical task of his *Discovery* as 'voyages of discovery into the past, ever seeking a clue in it, if any such existed, to the understanding of the present'.⁹ His redefinition of Indians as travellers is extended to include travelling through time, so that those 'who are of India . . . have undertaken many a voyage in time and space, as well as geographically in the present, for the discovery of India',¹⁰ almost as though there is an intrinsic relationship between being Indian and voyaging in time and space.

It is this self-conscious sense of exploring time and space which is articulated in his ruminations on the instabilities of chronological time. For Nehru the relationships between different points in time are continually changing, so that the past, present and future necessarily blur into each other, and cannot be fixed as points. He describes how, in his historiographical musings, 'the past had a tendency to become the present, the present sometimes receded into the distant past and assumed its immobile, statuesque appearance'.¹¹ He reflects on how the 'present slips into the past before we are hardly aware of it; to-day, child of yesterday, yields place to its own offspring, to-morrow'.¹² This often leads to a strong sense of 'unreality in the present'.¹³ At a general level, these temporal instabilities are exemplified in

the relationship between *The Discovery* and *An Autobiography*. *The Discovery of India* is conceived of as a continuation of the earlier *Autobiography*, and yet the latter is also a complete text in its own right which, according to Nehru, ends where it ought to end, so that in a sense it cannot be continued. *The Discovery* is both sequel to a text, and yet a text which stands on its own; and by the same token, as it is being written the *Autobiography* becomes a preface to *The Discovery* rather than the main body of a text followed by its sequel. Nehru's autobiographical quest is marked by textual instabilities that exemplify his own frequent ruminations on the status of time.

Nehru's ruminations on temporality also reflect his self-conscious deployment of the resources of autobiography for his own purposes. As commentators have pointed out, the retrospective glance of the autobiographical gaze constantly changes the status and significance of past events and deeds. Events are lent a retrospective significance, which they cannot have had at the time of their actual occurrence. They are plotted in a sequence which links them to other selected events, so that they also become prefigurations of events which at the time had yet to occur. In Nehru's autobiography, the dominance of retrospection is such that even 'in the midst of an intensity of action itself, there would suddenly come a feeling as if it was some past event and one was looking at it, as it were, in retrospect'.¹⁴ The relationship between *An Autobiography* and *Discovery*, each simultaneously preface, autonomous text and sequel, thus captures Nehru's autobiographical reflections on the instabilities of time.

Whereas many autobiographies attempt to follow a chronological sequence in their plotting of events, but inevitably fail to do so, Nehru's autobiographies deliberately disrupt the conventions of chronology. This is clear in the structure of *The Discovery*, which begins with a sentence in the present tense: 'It is more than twenty months since we were brought here . . .'.¹⁵ He begins at the moment that is present at the time of writing and then explores different kinds of past, both the immediate past and the more distant past, but he also returns back to the present tense: 'The twenty-first month of my imprisonment is well on its way . . .'.¹⁶ The book itself has no clear linear sequence, with Nehru switching from the present to the recent and the more distant past at intervals. Overall, it has a circular structure beginning with the narrator's present state of imprisonment in Chapter 1 in Ahmadnagar fort, and ending with this state of imprisonment in the same fort in the final chapter. This circular movement, of beginning in the present moment of writing and ending in the present moment of writing, enfolds a historical narrative which in broad terms appears to be linear, starting as it does with the Indus valley civilisation in Chapter 4 and working through to the Quit India resolution in Chapter 9. But not only is this linear narrative enclosed within a circular one which begins and ends in the present moment of writing, sometimes the narrative of the ancient past is interrupted by Nehru's own musings which use the present tense: 'It is difficult for me, as

for most others, to visualise the period of the Upanishads and to analyse the various forces that were at play. I imagine, however, that . . .¹⁷ The intrusion of the narrative voice not only calls attention to the deliberately personalised nature of historiography in the autobiography, it also calls attention to the interplay between past and present in Nehru's autobiographical texts as a whole.

Nehru's eschewal of chronology is in contrast to the chronological underpinnings of other autobiographies. Rousseau's *The Confessions* (1781), for example, is divided into books according to a clear chronological sequence, each book bearing the title of a date, so that book one is entitled 1712–1719, and the final book brings the reader up to 1765, the present in the author's life.¹⁸ This chronological structure is indicative of the organising premise of many instances of autobiography, namely, the view that the subject's life can be lived and represented according to a narrative model organised chronologically.¹⁹ It is this premise which has led one commentator to argue that autobiography is a mythical construct, behind which lies the compelling need to experience life as an organised and coherent process,²⁰ and this premise is also evident in other examples, from Saint Augustine's *Confessions* to Benjamin Franklin's *Autobiography* (1868), and a number of Indian nationalist autobiographies, such as M.R. Jayakar's *The Story of My Life* (2 vols, 1958–1859) and Surendranath Banerjea's *A Nation in the Making. Being the Reminiscences of Fifty Years of Public Life* (1925).

However, although these autobiographies subscribe to linear chronology, they inevitably find it difficult to maintain their chronological frameworks in the structure of their narratives, and often stumble across what Paul Ricoeur has called the aporias of time.²¹ Lajpat Rai's *The Story of My Life* is organised chronologically beginning with his earliest recollections, and then moves through succeeding stages of his life from his schooldays and adolescence up to his political activities as an adult, ending with his deportation to Burma in May 1907. In practice, like all autobiographers, he finds it impossible to maintain a stable linear chronology. The depiction of his father and their relationship in the first chapter entitled 'Earliest Recollections' is cast in the light of the author's own later commitment to the Arya Samaj and Hindu nationalism²² in his adulthood. As a result, the first chapter on his early childhood ends by jumping forward to these later events, enabling Rai to recast the father-son relationship in this very first chapter. Time as it is written in the autobiography does not just move in one direction, from the past to the present and future; it also moves in the reverse direction from the future and the present to the past.²³

The difficulty of keeping to a linear chronology is even more apparent in the relationship between the texts in Lajpat Rai's *Autobiographical Writings*. 'The Story of My Deportation', which deals with the period from May 1907 to November 1907, was written and published *before* 'The Story of My Life',²⁴ which deals with the period from his early childhood up to the point of

his deportation. The latter text ends with these words: 'The story of this deportation I have already published.'²⁵ The forward and backward motion of time is thus clear in the very chronology in which his texts appear and in this sense, 'The Story of My Life' is both before and after 'The Story of My Deportation'. The reader can choose to read these texts in either order,²⁶ and each reading throws up a political narrative which reverses the order of the other narrative. Put simply, in broad terms the reader either plots Lajpat Rai's political development in terms of the move from Hindu nationalism towards an all-embracing Indian nationalism; or in reverse order, in terms of the move from a composite Indian nationalism towards Hindu nationalism.²⁷ The relationship between these two moments remains unresolved in terms of its chronologies. Rather than reading these texts as serial narratives, we need to read them as simultaneous narratives which articulate problems of selfhood. There is a further tension between this attempt at chronology and the twofold movement of time in the autobiographical narrative, when Rai alludes to his grandmother's trances during which she uttered prophecies: 'If I may depend on my memory, events often corroborated her prophesying.'²⁸ Here the autobiographical act of remembering the past is conflated with the act of seeing into the future so that the future is known as though it is already the past.²⁹ This combination of analepsis and prolepsis encapsulates the act of autobiography itself.

Nehru's succession of selves in linear time deepens the sense of a selfhood in playful disarray. Moreover, while other autobiographers use a linear chronology as the premise of their texts, which they then find impossible to maintain, Nehru eschews a linear chronology of time in his image of India as a temporal entity. In his ruminations on time, Nehru sometimes finds a 'picture before me [which] is strangely mixed up between the past and the present and the future that is to come'.³⁰ The language of curious mixtures which is the characteristic diction of the Nehruvian autobiography extends to the basic image of time as 'strangely mixed up' in the text. The depiction of India in the language of mixtures also extends to India as a figure of a temporality which is equally strangely mixed up: 'It is this strange and powerful mixing of the past, the present and the future to be that is India today.'³¹ As a temporal entity India defies a linear chronology, and in his attempt to represent India Nehru dramatises this mixed temporality in his own eschewal of linear chronology as an organising sequence. The biological life history of the individual as a linear sequence is reversed so that India's life cycle is represented as old age supplanted by renewed youth: 'over and over again she has renewed her childhood and youth and age . . . we are very old, and trackless centuries whisper in our ears; yet we have known how to regain our youth again and again, though the memory and dreams of those past ages endure with us'.³² This inversion of the life cycle of an individual is reinforced by the suggestion of an individual who is simultaneously old and youthful, a young person who paradoxically has the memories of an aged

person, so that India is both 'very old but ever youthful in appearance'.³³ In a phrase which merges narrative with the life history of an individual and that of a collective entity Nehru contends that 'It is interesting to note that at this dawn of India's story, she does not appear as a puling infant, but already grown up in many ways.'³⁴ This representation of India as a temporal entity is in marked contrast to the figure of India in Surendranath Banerjea's autobiography. Banerjea confesses that he has 'not always followed the chronological order in developing the incidents of my life'. As a result, 'taking up a particular chapter, I have sometimes found it more convenient to close it and begin a new one, some of the events related being of prior date'.³⁵ Nonetheless, he underpins his argument for dominion status 'to be obtained by a process of orderly evolution' and through the 'progressive realisation of self-government', by referring to the individual's life cycle: 'The infant grows to boyhood, and the boy to manhood.'³⁶ This conflation of the conventional chronology of an individual's life with the trajectory of Moderate politics is made explicit when Banerjea recounts the secession of the Moderates from the INC in 1918. The separation from Congress was a 'painful wrench' because we 'had raised it from infancy to adolescence, from adolescence to maturity'.³⁷ The metaphor of paternity and the conventional time frame, along with the claim that the Moderates are true to the early political ideals of the Congress, suggest that the establishment of the Moderate party is an attempt to win back control of that orderly process of evolution which is plotted along the axis of linear time.

Whereas Banerjea sees an orderly evolution in a linear narrative from infancy to adulthood, one which is mirrored in the evolution of the Indian nation itself, for Nehru such a closure is not possible. Nehru's autobiography is incomplete because it is the expression of a perpetual becoming, of (as he describes it in the Epilogue to *An Autobiography*) having 'continually had the feeling of growing up'.³⁸ The process of self-discovery which the autobiography enacts has its external counterpart in the process of discovering India itself. Nationality is a process of becoming rather than a condition of being, in which a linear chronology of orderly evolution is continually interrupted. Whereas Banerjea begins his autobiography with a given script of development, namely placing 'India on the road to constitutional freedom to be achieved by constitutional means',³⁹ the Epilogue to *An Autobiography* ends with a very different image, of a journey which is deceptively easy at the outset, but becomes an increasingly difficult undertaking: 'The distant mountains seem easy of access and climbing the top beckons, but as one approaches, difficulties appear, and the higher one goes the more laborious becomes the journey and the summit recedes into the clouds.' It is the 'climbing itself' which gives joy, 'the struggle' which gives value, rather than the 'ultimate result'.⁴⁰ The art of becoming national is like the art of travel itself, a way of becoming for which the fixed horizon is an optical illusion. Along the stations of the way, one also discovers that it is 'difficult to know

which is the right path'.⁴¹ There is no already built road that stretches out before the traveller. This celebration of the inability to enact closure is exemplified by the actual text of *An Autobiography* itself; the Epilogue in which these images of travel appear is itself succeeded by a postscript, and then by a section entitled 'Five years later'. For Nehru, the necessarily incomplete form of *An Autobiography* demonstrates the impossibility of self and national completion, and it also resonates with the mixed temporality of India itself, in which cyclical renewal rather than linear progression is the dominant form. This interruption of linearity is succinctly captured in his paradoxical formulation of Indians as 'ancient people, who had grown so young again'.⁴²

Ricoeur has argued that a discontinuous structure suits a time of dangers and adventures, while a more continuous, linear structure suits a *Bildungsroman* where the themes of growth predominate.⁴³ The discontinuous structure of temporality in Nehru's autobiography evokes its nature as an adventure narrative, while the invocation of a linear structure reflects Banerjea's autobiography as a narrative of orderly growth for both himself and India. In the context of trying to describe the 'extraordinary difficulty' of writing an autobiography to his daughter, Nehru explains how 'instead of doing this in a straight fashion, I wandered into the past and began to lose myself in its mazes'.⁴⁴ This peripatetic and non-sequential mode of reflection is precisely the style of his autobiographical project, as his mind begins 'wandering and exploring strange and half-forgotten by-ways of my past being'.⁴⁵ However, there is another reason why Nehru's autobiography is a tale about time, rather than a tale of time, which brings us back to the importance of the autobiographical project as a prison narrative.

In part, the linearity of time has so little hold on Nehru's imagination because he loses all sense of the stability of the present as a clearly defined moment while in prison. As he says, 'time seems to change its nature in prison. The present hardly exists, for there is an absence of feeling and sensation which might separate it from the dead past. Even news of the active, living and dying world outside has a certain dream-like unreality...'⁴⁶ In prison, the present is 'something vague, shadowy, something I cannot come to grips with, or experience as the sensation of the moment. It ceases to be the present for me in any real sense of the word, and yet it is not the past either, with the past's immobility and statuesque calm.'⁴⁷ He also loses any sense of the future as a concrete possibility, so that he partly attributes his disturbed sleeping patterns to his sense of 'a certain blankness about the future' while he is in prison,⁴⁸ and he is prey to this pessimistic sense of the future in general as 'vague and shadowy' or 'dark, uncertain'.⁴⁹ In prison the instabilities of chronological time are brought home to Nehru, and time reveals itself to have many layers, each layer with its own pace. His heightened acuity in jail also makes him sensitive to the varying flows of time, in which time now and then passes swiftly, while at other points 'time seemed to stand still or to move with desperate slowness, and every

hour was a burden and a horror', or every week seems 'eternity and every day seems a long and painful affair'.⁵⁰ In keeping with his autobiography's governing motif of an adventure narrative, this shattered sense of time is articulated elsewhere in terms of two different experiences of being shipwrecked, on the one hand, struggling to maintain a sense of orderly time, so that 'like Robinson Crusoe, I make a notch for a day', or, on the other hand, abandoning one's self to the soporific and beguiling excesses of prison time, so that 'we might, with a stretch of the imagination, think ourselves in the South Sea islands or in Tennyson's island in the Western Sea where it is always afternoon and the lotus eaters dwell'.⁵¹

The 'jagged chronology' (to use a phrase of Ricoeur's⁵²) of Nehru's autobiography is suited to his loss of any overall view of time while in prison. But the images of shipwreck drawn from Defoe and Tennyson also suggest how the aporias of time which his prison experience opens up might also dislodge the autobiographical project as adventure narrative, catapulting the narrator back into the colonial adventure narrative which he seeks to appropriate for his own postnational purposes. When he loses sense of the present while in prison, Nehru becomes dominated by a feeling of the 'pastness' of the past, acutely aware of the 'stillness and everlastingness about the past; it changes not and has a touch of eternity, like a painted picture or a statue in bronze or marble'.⁵³ In part, this is because 'we live . . . dead men's lives, encased in our pasts, but this is especially so in prison where we try to find some sustenance for our starved and locked-up emotions in memory of the past or fancies of the future'.⁵⁴ Prison becomes primarily a site for Nehru's exploration of and wrestling with the past, which begins to acquire a kind of colossal immutability, 'an immobility and an unchangeableness' which 'is not life'. It represents a form of death, 'a gradual oozing out of hope and vitality, a settling down on lower levels of existence, a slow merging into non-existence. We become prisoners of the past and some part of its immobility sticks to us'.⁵⁵ Moreover, the dominance of the past is not only obviously clear in the retrospective nature of the autobiography, but also evident in Nehru's personalised historiography in his autobiography, which represents 'voyages of discovery into the past, ever seeking a clue in it, if any such existed, to the understanding of the present'.⁵⁶ It is also clearly evident, in the closest that Nehru ever comes to defining nationalism in his autobiographies, when he refers to it as 'essentially a group memory of past achievements, traditions and experiences'.⁵⁷ It is striking that in this near definition of nationalism, it is temporality and not territoriality which is stressed. It is India as a temporal entity which comes to exercise Nehru's formative powers, more so than India as a spatial entity. India becomes a spatial equivalent of a certain kind of time, so that its spatial extension is secondary to its temporal existence. This valorising of temporality is also clear when Nehru reflects upon how 'we seek to understand a particular event by isolating and looking at it by itself, as if it were the beginning

and the end', but 'it has no beginning and is but a link in an unending chain . . . resulting from the wills, urges, and desires of innumerable human beings coalescing and conflicting with each other, and producing something different from that which any single individual intended to happen'.⁵⁸ There is a hint here that the formation of group identity itself needs to be read as an event in time, as part of an 'unending chain' of occurrences, rather than in terms of any spatial coordinates.

I have argued above that prison becomes the site of Nehru's autobiographical selfhood. This includes his attempt to shape the temporality of both his narrative and India. While Nehru describes how in prison 'outer objective time ceases to be' he also describes how 'the inner and subjective sense remains, but at a lower level, except when thought pulls it out of the present and experiences a kind of reality in the past or in the future'.⁵⁹ The introspective and mentalistic dimensions of the Nehruvian autobiography extend to the realisation of time itself. This is stressed in another deployment of the image of travel, when Nehru argues that 'we travel . . . from Bombay to Calcutta, passing various stations one after the other, and we get the impression that Wardha, Nagpur, Raipur &c &c succeed each other in time. Yet they are always there. It is only we who somehow sense them in a time sequence. So also the events and happenings of our lives. There they are all the time but we experience them in what we call a time order'.⁶⁰

Nehru's representation of the surfeit of India's past as burdensome, even oppressive, determines the combination of personalised historiography with autobiography. The sense of an oppressive Indian past is clear in a whole series of images, which in fact far exceeds the taxonomic demands of his autobiography's personalised historiography. India as a surfeit of pastness is evoked as 'the odour of decay' under a 'hot, pitiless sun',⁶¹ and as an 'old world [which] still clings to our fancies'.⁶² As we have seen, India is also represented as a grotesque colossal figure.⁶³ Or else 'Indian life becomes a sluggish stream, living in the past, moving slowly through the accumulations of dead centuries. The heavy burden of the past crushes it and a kind of coma seizes it. It is not surprising that in this condition of mental stupor and physical weariness India should have deteriorated and remained rigid and immobile, while other parts of the world marched ahead'.⁶⁴ In addition to these evocations of a comatose and physically deteriorated condition, India's past is also represented as debris and clutter,⁶⁵ inconvenient relics,⁶⁶ and as the 'dust and dirt of ages' which have 'stunted her growth'.⁶⁷ On one level, then, India's long past is both a personal and a national burden for Nehru, and in part this makes the autobiographical project a therapeutic one, with Nehru explicitly invoking the image of psychoanalysis to suggest how writing might 'bring some relief from the weight and burden of the past'.⁶⁸ It is for this reason that he avoids the method of an academic history,⁶⁹ and argues that the aim of his brand of historiography is to rejuvenate images of the past, letting 'my mind wander or take root for a while, keeping in

tune with my mood, allowing impression to sink in and fill the dry bones with flesh and blood'.⁷⁰ The personalised nature of this historiographical technique is especially evident in the genesis of *Glimpses*, which consist of a series of letters to his daughter that contain sketches of key epochs of world history. As he explains it, this history also endeavours to provoke her imagination to cover 'the skeleton of old happenings' he has placed before her 'with flesh and blood',⁷¹ so that in some ways both *Glimpses* and the autobiography are intersubjective projects whose aim is to enable Indians to internalise their histories in a way which renders it part of their cosmopolitan identity, rather than for those histories to stand over them as reified substance. The personalised nature of the historiography is especially evident in the rhetoric of an eyewitness account which underpins this narrative, as a 'sense of adventure' in which 'I lived successively different ages and periods and had for companions men and women who had lived long ago'.⁷² Again, attention is drawn here to this reimagining of history as a product of his time in prison,⁷³ so that the personalised historiography is always intertwined with the autobiography as a prison narrative. This emphasis on the visual is clear when the narrator refers to those 'journeys and visits of mine' which 'gave me an insight into the past', in which 'the long panorama of India's history unfolded itself before me'.⁷⁴ The historical imagination at work here is clearly what Ricoeur has called an 'ocular' one, in which the past is presented as what 'I would have seen, what I would have witnessed if I had been there'.⁷⁵ In this way, Nehru's autobiography as personalised history testifies to the life-giving properties of his imagination, through historical figures and places which 'rose out of the void, took living shape, vibrant with that instinctive feeling which makes the past touch the present'.⁷⁶

However, India as disorientating a linear chronology strengthens Nehru's autobiography as the articulation of a first-person subjectivity. The inwardness of the autobiography is not hindered by India's mixed temporality, but is in fact secured by it. Nehru questions the very possibility of a stable chronology of events which underpins autobiography as a genre of writing. He is aware that any chronology of events is a constructed artefact, and he struggles to give voice to the necessarily artefactual nature of his textual enterprise and his sense of the unceasing flow of time itself: 'Events take place one after the other and the uninterrupted and unending stream of happenings goes on. We seek to understand a particular event by isolating it and looking at it by itself, as if it were the beginning and the end . . . Yet it has no beginning and is but a link in an unending chain.'⁷⁷ He draws an explicit analogy between this and the individual's internal experience of time as manifested in the stream of consciousness itself: 'Though one thought leads to another, each usually related to life's changing texture, and a logical movement of the human mind is sometimes discernible, yet thoughts overlap and the new and old run side by side, irreconcilable and often contradicting

each other.⁷⁸ The lived experience of time which we try to render coherent through autobiographical narrative parallels the mixed temporality of India itself, which he likens to 'some ancient palimpsest on which layer upon layer of thought and reverie had been inscribed, and yet no succeeding layer had completely hidden or erased what had been written previously'. This mixed temporality also exists within 'our conscious or subconscious selves, though we may not have been aware of them'.⁷⁹ Thus, there are explicit parallels between individual subjectivity and its sense of time, and India as a figure of mixed temporality, which mean that India's temporality is in fact consonant with the complexities of a genuine first-person subjectivity with its sense of time. This also has to be seen in relation to the normalisation of India's cosmopolitan hybridity as an 'odd' mixture which reciprocally secures the autobiography's celebration of a cosmopolitan self in disarray. For some colonial authors and scholars, the multiplicity of calendars in use in India, sometimes in the same region of the subcontinent, was yet another level of heterogeneity which proved India was a collection of diverse nationalities. Thus Robert Sewell, when trying to explain the use of multiple calendars in India, observes that 'when considering "Indian" science we are considering the science of a number of different tribes or nationalities, not of one empire or of the inhabitants generally of one continent'. So 'if a number of persons belonging to one of these nationalities, who have been in the habit for many years of using a certain era with all its peculiarities, leave their original country and settle in another, it is natural that they should continue to use their own era, notwithstanding that another era may be in use in the country of their adoption; or perhaps, while adopting the new era, that they should apply to it the peculiarities of their own'.⁸⁰ For Sewell, then, India's multiple temporalities reflected its heterogeneous nature as a collection of countries and nationalities. In contrast, for Nehru, this heterogeneity is consonant with the constitution of individual subjectivity and its sense of time, which counters third-person perspectives of India as a collection of groups in which the individual as a category does not surface. It also adds another layer to the radical heterogeneity of self in his autobiography as underpinning a cosmopolitan nationalism.

Nehru also uses a set of geological images to characterise the ancientness of India. As already pointed out, he refers to the 'debris' of custom and tradition in both India and China.⁸¹ He also uses the term 'fossils' to suggest the survival of what he sees as anachronistic forms of thought, so that organised religion is described as being 'an empty form devoid of real content', and is likened to a 'fossil which is the form of an animal or organism from which all its own organic substance has entirely disappeared, but which has kept its shape, because it has been filled up by some totally different substance'.⁸² Similarly, he refers to the 'accretions of later ages' which have overlain ancient practices so that only 'the empty shell of the fossil remains'.⁸³ The solidification of this 'debris' of the past is also referred to in terms of petrification, as when he considers how 'truth has been petrified by dogma in a

past age', so that 'it ceases to grow and develop' and instead becomes 'dead thought'.⁸⁴ India itself becomes a petrified figure, its 'face' set and 'petrified by external pressure imposed upon it', the 'dust and dirt of ages' having 'petrified her spirit',⁸⁵ while Hindu law is seen as having been 'petrified' by the interventions of the colonial state.⁸⁶ These images are reinforced by his use of the word 'shell' in conjunction with geological processes to suggest the dangers of a narcissistic self-absorption, as when India's decline is described as occurring because 'she has narrowed herself, gone into a shell . . . and thus sunk into a state of "mummified" and "crystallized" civilisation'.⁸⁷

A number of geologists have suggested a metaphorical tie between geology and auto/biography. In the preface to the tenth edition of his *Principles of Geology* (1867), Charles Lyell referred to geology as a 'symbolical language, in which the earth's autobiography is written'⁸⁸ while the subtitle of James Lovelock's *The Ages of Gaia: A Biography of Our Living Earth* (1988) makes explicit the notion of geology as a textual exercise for which the writing of auto/biography is the most appropriate emblem.⁸⁹ The tie between autobiographical writing and geological processes is made even more specific by Nehru when he refers to an earlier draft of his autobiography written during his term of imprisonment from October 1940 to December 1941, which he could not complete: 'It was fortunate that I had not finished what I had undertaken, for if I had done so I might have been induced to send it to a publisher. Looking at it now, I realise its little worth . . . The incidents it deals with have lost all importance and have become the debris of a half-forgotten past, covered over by the lava of subsequent volcanic eruptions.'⁹⁰ There is a slippage between geological time with its large-scale upheavals, the geologically informed landscape of India,⁹¹ and the writing of autobiography itself. Nehru's writings of his own past and of the past of India are cast in terms of geological processes and deposits. In Nehru's geologising, the notion of India as a spatial equivalent for a certain kind of temporality is deepened, in so far as geological maps have the complex role of representing four dimensions (three of length and one of time) by means of two-dimensional figures.⁹² The notion of 'deep time' also becomes a spatial metaphor.⁹³ Hence the geological image of a stratified India with its accretions, debris, shells and fossils is one in which the spatial and the temporal are necessarily conflated. Furthermore, Nehru's autobiographical text, with its buried but not completely erased layers, becomes a palimpsest which again mirrors India herself, which 'was like an ancient palimpsest on which layer upon layer of thought and reverie had been inscribed, and yet no succeeding layer had completely hidden or erased what had been written previously'.⁹⁴

For Nehru, then, the eschewal of a linear chronology strengthens the tie between his individual subjectivity and India's mixed temporality. In Iqbal's thought and work, on the other hand, what is stressed is the experience of time as unreal. This experience can be seen as a defining feature

of mysticism. Iqbal's tutor at Cambridge, the philosopher J.M.E. McTaggart, whose influence on Iqbal I have explored in more detail elsewhere,⁹⁵ wrote a famous essay on 'The Unreality of Time'.⁹⁶ He argued that one of the recurring features of mysticism is the experience of time as unreal, 'that which appears as successive being regarded as really included in the deeper unity of an eternal co-existence'.⁹⁷ Time was also always problematic in the Sufi lexicon. The word *waqt*, literally 'time', came to designate the present moment, in which a mystical state is granted to the Sufi. In this moment, they figured themselves as breaking through created time and reaching an 'Eternal Now' in God, when everything created is annihilated.⁹⁸ In the *Jāwīd Nāma*, the experience of time as unreal is the culmination of the experience of *khudī* or selfhood. The paradox of temporality in the poem consists in the way that the orderly progression of the poet is not underpinned by a narrative of linear and homogenous time, but by the opposite. His persona is constituted through heterogeneous times which correspond to different modes of being in different worlds. This becomes evident in his journey through the cosmos, when he notes that 'Time [waqt] in each world flowed like the sea/here slowly, and there swiftly/our year was here a month, there a moment/this world's more was that world's less'.⁹⁹ The progressive emptying of time is in part enabled by the multitude of temporalities in the poem and not by the subtraction of time alone. But the sense of stasis in which time becomes unreal also emerges from the play between the images of overwhelming experiences and the carefully controlled aesthetic order of the poem. As we have seen, the defining image of these experiences is that of drowning. We have also seen how the poem inverts these images of drowning, so that the advancement of the poet's self is figured as drowning the world within himself. This inversion is prefigured earlier when Rumi describes the heart of man as a 'sea without a shore [be-saḥīl]' in which 'All ages and all times are drowned'.¹⁰⁰ The inversion of the figure of drowning illustrates the way the poem absorbs and withholds the restless oceans which recur as images. This also reflects the way in which ecstatic experience in some Sufi orders is framed within carefully controlled ritual.¹⁰¹ The interplay between ecstasy and order is captured within the poem through its carefully controlled aesthetic structure which frames the experiences of ecstasy.

The unreality of time in Iqbal's autobiographical journey becomes problematic for a number of reasons. In abstracting himself from the world in order to find himself, the question becomes one of how to return to the world with this newly elaborated self. This has been commented upon by a number of scholars, in particular by Professor Schimmel in her important study of Iqbal, *Gabriel's Wing*. She shows how the archetypal episode from which Iqbal derived his inspiration for *khudī* is the prophet Muhammad's ascension, when he stood in the presence of God without being annihilated.¹⁰² Iqbal is clearly aware of this problem of return. In *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, he commented that the significance of this experience

is not just that he stood before God with perfect self-possession, but that he returned unscathed from that experience to this world. It is in this context that Iqbal cites the words of 'Abd al-Quddus Gangohi that 'Muhammad of Arabia ascended the highest Heaven and returned. I swear by God that if I had reached that point, I should never have returned.'¹⁰³

The problem of return also surfaces as a tension between the metaphysics of being and the realm of politics in Iqbal's work. In the same year as the *Jāvid Nāma* was published, Iqbal delivered his presidential address to the All-India Muslim conference in 1932. In this he followed up his argument for a possible single state within India for Muslims, which he made in his 1930 presidential address to the same conference. But what is striking about the 1932 speech is his acknowledgement of the difficulties of reconciling metaphysics with politics; the speech is framed by this difficulty. He describes how the process of abstraction which involves reflecting upon concepts and defining ideals necessarily requires a 'clean jump over temporal limitations'. Describing himself as 'a visionary idealist', he describes how such a thinker 'has constantly to take stock of, and often yield to, the force of those very limitations which he has been in the habit of ignoring'. The result is the experience of living in 'perpetual mental conflict' and 'self-contradiction'.¹⁰⁴ Elsewhere, I have explored in more detail the philosophical and theological implications of these contradictions, and have also tried to explain why in the *Jāvid Nāma* and *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* Iqbal is not able to resolve the tensions which characterise his work generally.¹⁰⁵ The point here, however, is that the problems of reconciling the two realms of politics and metaphysics are clearly illustrated by putting his 1932 presidential speech alongside the *Jāvid Nāma* of 1932. In the *Jāvid Nāma* the category of nation is associated with the body and the world of dimensions, which, as we have seen, the poem works towards dissolving so that the poet can achieve his status as a master poet. This is made clear when one of the ancient gods of the Arabian peninsula celebrates how 'Free man [mard-e ḥur] has fallen into the bonds of directions [band-e jaḥāt] / joined up with fatherland [watan] and parted from God.'¹⁰⁶ The poem clearly places the territorial concept of the nation in the realm of the body which the poet is struggling to transcend: 'A nation's [millat] spirit exists through association/a nation's spirit has no need of a body [badan]'.¹⁰⁷ The conflict between the world of the poem and the category of national territory is made explicit in Afghani's speech, when he asserts that 'God's remembrance [zīkr-e ḥaq] requires not nations [ummatān] / it transcends the bounds of space [makān] and time [zamān]'.¹⁰⁸ The cosmic landscape of the poem makes explicit this journeying away from the territorial character of the earth divided up into empires and nations. Furthermore, the category of the nation is also seen to be a Western category which is used to divide non-European peoples in general, but the Muslim *ummah* (roughly speaking, a global Muslim community) in particular.¹⁰⁹ This incompatibility between Iqbal's category

of Islam and what he calls 'the growth of territorial nationalism, with its emphasis on what is called national characteristics' is also made explicit in his *Reconstruction of Religious Thought*.¹¹⁰

This sense of two realms which are difficult to reconcile is also made explicit in the use of the terms 'East' and 'West' in the poem. In keeping with the multiple levels of meaning in the text, the poet uses these terms literally in the sense of the direction of sunrise and sunset, so that they signify the world of dimensions and the diurnal round of time. He also uses them as discursive terms signifying opposing civilisations and cultures which reflect different ways of being in the world. In one passage, he uses this play of meaning to illustrate the problematic nature of the relationship between a nation and its people, while at the same time framing this within the metaphysical problem of relations and the absolute as a point which is beyond all relations:¹¹¹ 'Though it is out of the East [mashriq] that the sun rises/showing itself bold and bright, without a veil [be-ḥijāb] / only then it burns and blazes with inward fire [sauz-e darūn] / when it escapes from the shackles [qaid] of East and West/its nature [fīrat] is innocent of both east and west/though relationship-wise [nisbat], true, it is an easterner [khāvarī]'.¹¹² In the context of the metaphysics of being which the poem investigates through its carefully controlled aesthetic, the nation appears as an impediment to self-realisation and to knowing the true nature of things. This is why the *Jāvid Nāma* ends with this exhortation to the poet: 'Abandon the East, be not spellbound by the West [afsūnī-ye ifrang]/for all this ancient and new is not worth one barleycorn'.¹¹³ The poet goes beyond the oppositional categories of East and West as he reaches his final station. The culminating act of self-fashioning in the *Jāvid Nāma* is irreconcilable with the demands of becoming national.

It is against these complexities that one needs to read the two earlier poems by Iqbal which are perhaps his most famous among Hindi-Urdu speakers in South Asia. These are 'Tarāna-e Hindī' ('The Song of India') and 'Tarāna-e Millī' ('The Song of the Muslim Community'). The first was published in 1904 and the second was composed in 1910, but both appeared in *Bāng-e Darā* which was published in 1923.¹¹⁴ Here I will only concentrate on a few points which emerge from my preceding argument. The first general point is that both poems obviously are meant to be read as a pair; not only does the second poem recall the first through its title, but it is also composed in the same metre and rhyme scheme [muzāri].¹¹⁵ In both poems the poet refers to himself in the last couplet, in a way which is reminiscent of the ghazal form. In both there is also what appears to be a strong sense of the passing of time, evoked by the flow of rivers, in one case the waters of the river Ganges and in the other the river Tigris. The rivers are personified by the poet and addressed by him as witnesses to former greatness. There is also a play between stasis and journey in both pieces. In the first, the staying power of India is contrasted with the flow of time which has destroyed other

great civilisations. In the second, the contrast is between the flow of time and the nature of inward faith. But the poems also recall each other because of the way the poet uses a roll-call of place names to evoke history (Greece, Egypt, Byzantium, China, Arabia, India, Andalusia), so that time is converted into space through this list. The passing of time is made nugatory through the grandness of the place names of geographical location. Rather than a narrative with connectives between succeeding events, the poems strive to create a picture suspended in time, and create a map for its readers which can be viewed at one glance. What we have in the poems is the creation of simultaneity in which both pieces exist side by side within the same frame of viewing.

The two poems are inextricably linked while being opposed to each other. This needs to be read in terms of the central role pan-Islam played in Indian Muslim separatism. Scholars have pointed out that the Muslim League struggled to form an all-India Muslim constituency by playing a pan-Islamic card to bolster the status of Indian Muslims as a minority.¹¹⁶ For a time, though, this process was usurped by the Khilafat movement, which pushed the League to the periphery of significant politics. As Gail Minault has argued, it was in the Khilafat movement that a pan-Indian Muslim constituency was formed through the use of pan-Islamic symbols.¹¹⁷ However, there were earlier signs that this strategy was emerging in the aftermath of the annulment of the partition of Bengal in 1911. This was clear in the reactions to Montagu's speech in the House of Commons of 25 April 1919, in which he insisted that it was a 'mistake to talk of the Mahomedans of India as though they were a homogenous nationality. The Mahomedans of Eastern Bengal and the Hindus had little or no relation with those outside Bengal.' The secretary to the Muslim League responded to this statement by describing it as an attack on 'the unity of Muslims all over India, not to say all over the world, on the basis of religion, of political rights and social homogeneity'.¹¹⁸ In this rhetoric, the unity of Muslims within a heterogeneous India was based on a putative global unity of Muslims; the one necessarily implied and secured the other.

However, pan-Islam was also an ideology which came to define itself in opposition to the European ideology of nationalism. This is made clear in the speech by Afghani in the *Jāvid Nāma*, discussed above. The predominant theme in al-Afghani's discourse in the *Jāvid Nāma* is the incompatibility of the rival ideologies of pan-Islam and the European notion of nationalism. This concern with nationalism reflects the increasing threat that the latter posed as a rival ideology to pan-Islam in the period between the breakdown of the Khilafat movement and the outbreak of the Second World War.¹¹⁹ It was this period which saw the laying of the foundations of a novel state system in the Middle East that reorganised existing forms of associations and solidarities, and transformed the focus of political vocabularies which had their roots in more traditional discourses.¹²⁰ While it is now clear that pan-Islam cannot mount any serious challenge to the existing state-structure in

the Middle East,¹²¹ at the time Iqbal was writing the *Jāvid Nāma* this process of transformation was taking place and was not yet fully accomplished.

Thus, the two poems 'Tarāna-e Hindī' and 'Tarāna-e Millī' implicate each other through opposition, and in doing so articulate the tension within Indian Muslim separatism of securing a nationality within India on the basis of an ideology which saw itself as the antithesis of the idea of nationalism. This mutual implication through opposition is also articulated through the geographical spaces of both poems. Reading both poems together, the carefully delineated territory of India as a geographical image is secured through an equally carefully delineated geographical image of pan-Islam. The images secure each other through their mutual opposition. There is a more fundamental point here, which is that separation is necessarily incomplete because the entity from which one separates is continually required to validate that separation. The second poem, as a pan-Islamic and potentially separatist poem, can only make sense if the reader recalls the first, Indian nationalist, poem. It is orientated towards the first poem, spatially as geographical image, textually as writing back against, and in terms of a paradoxically denied identity. Its title and form identify it with the first poem while simultaneously rejecting it. Taken together, the poems enact an identification and rejection which lies at the heart of the rhetoric of separatism. In this enactment what appears to be successive becomes simultaneous, but the simultaneity emerges from the rhetoric of temporality in the poems themselves.

'Tarāna-e Millī' ends with the poet likening his poem to the bell of a caravan, announcing the start of the day's journey. This opens the poem outwards, while 'Tarāna-e Hindī' ends inwards, with the poet's withholding of the secrets which make him uniquely isolated. What also holds the poems together in their mutual opposition is the poet's own persona. The space of both poems refers to the projection of different parts of himself, the one inside, the other outside India. It is important to stress that the figure of the poet as Indian is emphasised in the *Jāvid Nāma* when he meets, in the highest region of the poem, the fifth-century¹²² Sanskrit poet Bhartrihari, who was renowned for his epigrams. This encounter is presented as a meeting between two great Indian poets, with Rumi introducing Iqbal as a 'magician of Indian stock' to Bhartrihari, 'that Indian minstrel/the grace of whose gaze converts the dew to pearls/a broderer of subtleties'.¹²³ It is to Bhartrihari that the poet puts his final question about the nature of poetry: 'Say, whence comes the fire into poetry?/Does it come from the Self, or from God?'¹²⁴ And it is Bhartrihari who gives the definitive answer, as a master poet to an aspiring poet: 'Our soul's delight is in questing/poetry's fire is of the station of desire.'¹²⁵ The high status which Bhartrihari is given in the poem, signified by his place in the final section of the poem beyond the spheres, is also due to his view on karma in terms of the status of actions as the determining force in human life. Thus in response to Zinda-rud's request that he tell him the 'secret of God unveiled',¹²⁶ Bhartrihari responds, 'Prostrate

yourself before the Law of action's reward/For from action are born Hell, Purgatory and Paradise.¹²⁷ The very first meeting the poet has with his guide is 'an Indian ascetic, known to the people of India as Jahan-Dost'. In this meeting the sage interrogates the poet, and leaves him with nine epigrammatic sayings on the nature of God, Being and faith. It is clear that Jahan dost or the world's friend is a Persian translation of the Sanskrit name Visvamitra, which literally means 'one who is unattached to the world and is therefore a friend of the world'.¹²⁸ It is obviously significant that at the beginning of his journey to become a poet and a gnostic, Zinda-rud should meet a Hindu sage who through penance and meditations became one of the seven great rishis.¹²⁹ Alongside the more obvious allusions to the Qur'ān and the pan-Islamic passages in the *Jāvid Nāma*, there are other significant Indian Hindu figures who play an important role in the poem. This dual identity of the poet is also clear in Iqbal's earlier *The Development of Metaphysics in Persia*, in which on the first page the tradition of metaphysical inquiry in Persia is measured against a Hindu tradition in India and is found wanting. The author argues that whereas the subtle Brahmanical tradition 'sees the inner unity of things', the Persian tradition only grasps a 'bare universality' which lacks the 'richness of its inner content'. In India we have the 'awful sublimity of the searching Vedanta' with its 'all-embracing exposition of the principle of Unity', and in Persia we have only partially worked out systems of thought.¹³⁰ In this sense, the juxtaposition of the figure of Persia with that of India as a kind of inter-ecumenical composite figure recalls an earlier tradition of Indian Persian writings of which perhaps the most famous is Dara Shikoh's *Majma'ul bahrain* ('The mingling of the two oceans'). This tradition reflects one of the defining characteristics of Sufism in India, namely its syncretism.¹³¹

In terms of its wide range of references, then, the *Jāvid Nāma* is clearly an eclectic and cosmopolitan text. This is also evident in its literary models, which include Dante's *Divine Comedy* and Milton's *Paradise Lost*,¹³² alongside, as we have seen, Rumi's *Masnavi*. The variety of figures the poet meets also reflects its cosmopolitan nature. These figures include not just his guide Rumi and the others mentioned above, but also Nietzsche, Buddha, Zoroaster and Christ, who is presented through a vision of Tolstoy. The *Jāvid Nāma* also includes historical figures such as Tipu Sultan, as well as legendary figures drawn from a variety of religious traditions such as Ahriman, Iblis, Sarosh and Zarvan. As we have seen, this eclecticism is also the defining feature of Iqbal's seminal *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*. It is, moreover, embedded in his category of Islam. When considering Persian inflections of this category, he refers to how the restatements of Islam in Persia emerged from a confluence of Christian ideals and Christian Gnosticism with an approach to the Qur'ān. Similarly, he identifies an interaction between multiple strands of thought in the Ismaili notion of the *imāmat*. These strands include Greek philosophy, Christianity, Rationalism, Sufism and

Manichaeism.¹³³ Iqbal's own cosmopolitan eclecticism, then, emerges from what he sees as its long history in Islam itself.

There are, however, problems with this eclecticism. It could be argued that Iqbal's eclecticism, rather than being a means to an end, becomes an end in itself. The multiplication of points of reference in his work begins to acquire a logic of its own and is well in excess of the demands of any argument he makes. This is the case, for example, in his prose works, as when in a typically dense paragraph on the different currents of thought in al-Ghazali's work he refers to al-Ghazali, Descartes, Borger, Solger, the Ash'arites and pantheism.¹³⁴ These problems are prefigured in Iqbal's own reading of cosmopolitan episodes in the history of Islam. For example, he discusses the Ismaili movement's recognition of the possible 'collapse of its ever widening structure' of thought, so that by 'a strange irony of fate', it secured for itself a 'stable basis' by hitting upon an idea which was 'revolting to its whole being'.¹³⁵ The abstract form of this tension, between the need for a stable basis and an ever-widening structure through the multiplication of points of reference, is reproduced in Iqbal's work on multiple levels, whether in the tension between faith in revelation and philosophical inquiry, or in the difficulties of passing from metaphysics and mysticism to the politics of nationality. Moreover, the vocabulary of fragmentation, unity, plurality and multiplicity recurs throughout his prose texts in a variety of metaphysical, philosophical and political contexts. A flavour of this diction can be conveyed by listing some instances. These include discussions of the primal oneness of being and the plurality of things in Ismaili thought, Zoroastrian conceptions of the interdependence of 'visible diversity' and 'eternal unity', the notion of unity, multiplicity and relations in the work of Mulla Hadi, the 'fundamental problem of the diversity of things' in pre-Islamic Magian dualism and post-Islamic Greek dualism which Persian metaphysics struggled against, notions of unity and plurality in J.S. Haldane, the interpretation of a verse in the Qur'ān as referring to 'the emergence and multiplication of individualities', an argument as to the nature of the ego and 'the mutually penetrating multiplicity we call experience' (again in relation to a verse in the Qur'ān), the 'inadequacy of logical understanding' vis-a-vis 'a multiplicity of mutually repellent individualities with no prospect of their ultimate reduction to a unity', the relationship between the Ash'arite 'scheme of atomism' and 'spiritual pluralism', the question as to whether space and time 'can hold together the multiplicity of objects and events' or whether it is 'the appreciative act of an enduring self only which can seize the multiplicity of duration – broken up into an infinity of instants – and transform it to the organic wholeness of a synthesis', 'the unity of the appreciative ego' and its individual experiences 'not as a plurality, but as a unity in which every experience permeates the whole', 'the appreciative self' synthesising instants of time into a 'coherent wholeness of personality', 'fragments of a total experience which do not seem to fit together', 'the

necessary supplement to our own fragmentary meanings', 'the unanalysable wholeness of mystic experience', consciousness as 'something single, presupposed in all mental life' and 'bits of consciousness, mutually reporting to one another', and the question of 'mental unity'.¹³⁶

As this list demonstrates, these terms begin to acquire a valency and presence of their own, over and above any attempt to explicate them. The repetitive use of these terms severs them from any argumentative or hermeneutic purpose, suggesting that Iqbal's work remains embedded in irresolvable questions of unity and plurality, on metaphysical, religious and political levels. The very form of the *Reconstruction of Religious Thought* enacts this irresolution not just in its interrogative character, but also in its very texture as a confluence of fragments from a variety of currents of thought, which remain unintegrated into any textual whole. What is in play in Iqbal's work, then, is a creativity of cosmopolitanism which grounds and yet renders impossible a politics and a metaphysics (themselves in tension with each other) of transcendence.

'Arabian Imperialism' and 'Persian Magianism'

These tensions are also clear in Iqbal's engagement with the notion of race. The interaction between European notions of community subsumed under the inchoate concept of 'race', and a set of notions for categorising groups that had a genealogy independent of and preceding European colonial expansion, was at the core of reconstructions of Islam in the Indian context by prominent thinkers and writers from the early twentieth century onwards. The first signs of these reconstructions occur in the aftermath of the annulment of the partition of Bengal in 1911, and become increasingly evident during the Khilafat movement. However, they truly come into their own after the failure of the Khilafat movement, when an increasing concern with 'race' manifests itself, as thinkers struggle to fashion notions of pan-Islam in the context of the creation of nation states in the Middle East following the disintegration of the Ottoman empire. The significance of events outside India in influencing the course of these reconstructions of Islam, and also in fashioning the notions of 'race' as a foil to these reconstructions, cannot be ignored.

The course of these reconstructions and their possible uses as political strategies within British India are evident in all their complexity in Iqbal's later work. Iqbal drew upon two pools of ideas about 'race': the first, an Islamic sphere in which the notions for categorising people had a genealogy independent of and preceding European colonial expansion; the second, ideas of type, which formed the core of European notions of race from the early nineteenth century onwards.¹³⁷ It was the interaction of these two set of ideas in Iqbal's thought that sharpened his concern with concepts of community in Islam, categories which had been important in early Islam

and continued to have an impact in his own day. In many ways, the agenda for thinking about types of communities and their possible relations to each other had been set in terms preceding European expansion, although they were re-activated and partially transformed as a result of it. It may prove useful to consider here the extent to which a thesis such as Richard Fox's, on the internalisation by the Singhs of a British reconstruction of their community, could be applied in a similar way to the case of Iqbal's concern with race and Islam.¹³⁸

In his presidential address at the annual session of the All-India Muslim League at Allahabad on 29 December 1930, Iqbal cited as one of the reasons for the formation of a Muslim state the need to rid Islam of what he called 'the stamp that Arabian imperialism was forced to give it'.¹³⁹ This concern with what he called 'Arabian imperialism' is paralleled by another concern with what Iqbal described as 'Persian Magianism'. What is to be noted here is not just the categories of Persian and Arab as self-evident types, but how these types represent tensions in early Islam between Arabs and non-Arabs. These tensions tended to cluster around concepts of community in Islam. The key words in this context are those whose connotations were discussed by Iqbal in a later debate with Maulana Hussain Ahmed, namely *qaum*, *millat* and *ummat*,¹⁴⁰ but Iqbal's reference to 'Arabian imperialism' in his 1930 presidential address to the All-India Muslim League indicates how the survival of historical tensions between Arab and non-Arab in early Islam had to be negotiated in his reconstruction of Islam.

Such historical tensions are considered by Bernard Lewis in his *Race and Color in Islam*. He shows how with the Islamic conquests there was a narrowing, specialising and fixing of terms of colour applied to human beings, in contrast to pre-Islamic and early Islamic poetry, where, whilst there is an awareness of difference, this is never expressed in rigid categories, and the range of terms is wider and expresses a different sense of colour.¹⁴¹ Lewis shows how this shift in colour terminology takes place in the context of increasing tensions between Arabs and non-Arab converts to Islam, and draws attention to the various incidents of what we would now see as 'racial' tension, ranging from the Zanj rebellions of black slaves in Basra in the ninth century to the so-called 'battle of the blacks' in August 1169 between Saladin's army and the black troops loyal to the Fatimid caliphate.¹⁴² It is in relation to this tension between Arab and non-Arab Muslim that one has to see the operation of the system whereby non-Arab converts had to become the clients or *mawali* of conquistador Arabs with proven genealogies, and also the emergence of the so-called *shu'ubiya* movement in the ninth century in groups seeking to distinguish between Arabism and Islam. This movement reflected, in particular, claims by Persians to social and cultural equality with Arabs, if not superiority.¹⁴³ Thus, the reference to 'Arabian imperialism' in Iqbal's speech echoes the tensions between Arab and non-Arab which had been present in early Islam, but which continued to have relevance in his own day.

Medieval Islamic literature on schemes of classification of the natural world included typologies in which 'race' played a part. An instance of this is the thirteenth-century work of Nasir ad-Din Tusi, the *Akhlaq-e Nāṣirī* (or 'Nasirean Ethics'). This text is a valuable conspectus of the significant moral and intellectual preoccupations of the medieval Islamic world, and in particular of that world's engagement with Greek philosophy. The author treats nothing in isolation, and considers all spheres of existence as interdependent; hence hierarchies and ranks based on relations between genera, species and properties abound. In the section on Ethics, he considers 'degrees' in the vegetable, animal and human world in order to show how each is related to the other. In this scheme, he writes of the 'utmost of the animal degrees' which is 'contiguous with' [muttaṣil] the 'first degrees of man' [va martabeh-e aval āz marātib insān badīn martabeh-e muttaṣil]. In this category, the author places 'peoples dwelling on the fringes of the inhabited world, such as the Negroes of the West'.¹⁴⁴ The point to be made here is that in an Islamic world, as in a European world, there are some hints of typologies of race which were part of theoretical discourses that purported to classify and interpret the diversity of all forms of life. While these discourses were embedded in the social and political life of the societies to which the authors belonged, they did stimulate a growth of knowledge that was independent of those societies.¹⁴⁵ At any rate, Iqbal's reference to 'Arabian imperialism' has to be seen both in the context of the variety of theoretical discourses on types in God's creation, and of the historical tensions between Arab and non-Arab Muslims.

As for Iqbal's abiding interest in what he called 'Persian Magianism', in his *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* (1934), in refuting Spengler's views of Islam in *The Decline of the West*, Iqbal wrote that the main purpose of his lectures was to 'secure a vision of the spirit of Islam as emancipated from its Magian overlayings'.¹⁴⁶ In the process of doing so, he clearly hints at Shi'ism as one strand of Magian culture which has survived in Islam. This concern with what he calls 'Persian Magianism' is also evident in *The Development of Metaphysics in Persia*, which considers the influence of Magianism and Gnosticism in the formation of a distinctive Islam in Persia.¹⁴⁷ The association between Sufism and Magianism in his early work becomes more pronounced in the writings of his later period.¹⁴⁸ Iqbal explicitly defines the Ahmadiyya movement as an expression of pre-Islamic Magianism in the guise of Islamic mysticism.¹⁴⁹ It is clear that Iqbal considers the main threat of Persian Magianism to lie in its subversion of the idea of the finality of Muhammad's prophethood.¹⁵⁰ This is especially evident in his series of articles on the Ahmadiyya movement.¹⁵¹

Iqbal's continual stress on Islam's message as what he calls 'deracialisation'¹⁵² must therefore be seen in the context of his perception of two powerful strands in Islam, namely 'Arabian imperialism' and 'Persian Magianism', and the historical tensions and conflicts between the two.

However, in this context of such historical tensions, Iqbal also refers to Sir Arthur Keith's *The Problem of Race*;¹⁵³ indeed, he takes the term 'deracialisation' from Keith's work.¹⁵⁴ Michael Banton has discussed the importance of the latter's work as pioneering an approach to race in terms of genetic processes.¹⁵⁵ Iqbal points to the choice which Keith offers between 'race building' and war, and achieving peace through countering 'race building'.¹⁵⁶ Keith's own solution to the 'ever-disturbing factor' of race in human life is to argue that 'evolution is true in practice – as well as in theory'. On the basis of this acceptance, he asserts the need to bring our 'inborn tribal instincts and racial prejudices under the rule of reason'.¹⁵⁷ For Iqbal, however, Keith's pleas for a 'deracialisation' of the world enabled him to define Islam as a force for deracialisation, and one which had been struggling against various forms of divisiveness springing from categories used to typify groups of people since the beginning of the Arab conquests.¹⁵⁸ The ubiquity of European theories of race sharpened Iqbal's own perceptions of historical and contemporary tensions within Islam, and helped him to define what he argued was its original spirit, namely the construction of an *ummat* which transcended *jinsiya*.¹⁵⁹

It is also on the basis of this view that Iqbal discusses the meaning of the terms *millat*, *qaum* and *ummat* in a debate with Maulana Hussain Ahmed.¹⁶⁰ All three terms occur in the Qur'ān, but the first two terms in particular underwent important changes during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.¹⁶¹ Whereas in the Qur'ān the term *millat* refers to the religion of Abraham, in post-Qur'ān usage the term appears with the meaning of religion generally. It is in this primary sense that it occurs in official Ottoman documents, where it appears to indicate especially non-Muslim communities of the empire from the seventeenth century onwards. The term became central to the so-called 'millat system', whereby the central administration of the empire perceived individual religious communities in local contexts as parts of religious and juridical communities that had an empire-wide dimension under their respective ecclesiastical leaderships. However, when Turkey came to regard itself as a 'nation', the term *millat* rather than *qaum* was used.¹⁶² The provenance of the latter term varied from the Maghrib to Persia and Ottoman Turkey in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In Qur'ānic usage the term signified the prophets who were Muhammad's predecessors. More to our purpose here, though, the term *qaumīyya* came to mean the movement of Arab nationalism within the Ottoman dominions in the Fertile Crescent. *Al-qaumīyya al-'arabīyya* was a reaction to prolonged Ottoman domination, under which the question of national identity within the 'umma (or community of believers) had not arisen.¹⁶³

The details of Iqbal's debate in March 1938 with Maulana Hussain Ahmed are of less interest here than the fact that the debate itself reflected the way in which key terms of community were being changed. That Iqbal himself was aware of this is clear from his article. Thus, he contrasts the way the terms

qaum, *millat* and *ummat* are used in the Qur'ān, with the meanings they have acquired in the contemporary world.¹⁶⁴ He also quibbles with the Maulana's interpretation of how these terms are used in the Qur'ān, and discusses in detail their significance in scriptural usage, again in the context of comparing the changes that have occurred in the scope of their meanings.¹⁶⁵ He argues that his own use of the word *millat* as 'nation' is in accordance with its usage in modern Arabic, Persian and Turkish languages, where it has come to mean nation, rather than law and religion as in the Qur'ān.¹⁶⁶ The rest of Iqbal's article attempts to establish a hierarchy of identities based on *qaum*, *millat* and *ummat*, but it is not clear how successful he is in doing this. However, his unease about nationalism is expressed explicitly:

I have been repudiating the concept of Nationalism since the time when it was not well-known in India and the Muslim world. At the very start it had become clear to me from the writings of European authors that the imperialistic designs of Europe were in great need of this effective weapon – the propagation of the European conception of Nationalism in Muslim countries – to shatter the religious unity of Islam to pieces... [This] has now reached its climax in as much as some of the religious leaders in India lend their support to this conception.¹⁶⁷

Iqbal also argues that if 'nation' is simply a 'geographical term', then he has no objections to it. In that sense, it is safe to say that 'We are all Indians and are so called because we live in that part of the world which is known by the name of India.' However, it is when the word 'nation' ceases to be a geographical term and becomes a 'political concept' signifying a 'principle of human society',¹⁶⁸ or what he describes elsewhere as 'a structuring principle of solidarity',¹⁶⁹ that the problems arise. This is mainly because, in his view, Islam's purpose was to create a community which ignored all 'national and racial' distinctions. Its aim was 'to unite and organize mankind, despite all its natural distinctions.'¹⁷⁰ It is for this reason that Muslims cannot be a nation in the political sense of the word except in terms of their being a *millat*.¹⁷¹ It is perhaps significant that Iqbal ends his article by associating (in a rather confused way) the European notion of nationalism with the Ahmadiyya movement. He describes the conception of nationalism as having the same role as the rejection of the finality of Muhammad's prophethood in the beliefs of Qadianis. In other words, those who advocate nationalism of this type are in effect urging Muslims to take up a position outside the prescriptions of the 'divine law'. Whilst nationalism is a political concept, and the Ahmadiyya position on the finality of prophethood is a theological issue, none the less there is 'a deep inner relationship between the two'. However, Iqbal does not spell this out. Instead, he states that it can only be demonstrated 'when a Muslim historian gifted with acute insight compiles a history of Indian Muslims with particular reference to the religious thought of some

of their apparently energetic sects'.¹⁷² Nonetheless, the basis of his position appears to be in linking an attack on the finality of the prophethood in Ahmadiyya beliefs with an attack on the centrality of religious belief as a whole in defining a transnational Muslim community.

The association in Iqbal's work between what he saw as a modern form of a Magian belief with European nationalism points to his simultaneous exploration of the historical tensions between Arab and non-Arab in Islam, and the notions of race and nationalism. Iqbal's concern with nationalism reflects the increasing threat that the latter posed as a rival ideology to pan-Islam in the period between the breakdown of the Khilafat movement and the outbreak of the Second World War.¹⁷³ It was this period which saw the laying of the foundations of a novel state-system in the Middle East that reorganised existing forms of associations and solidarities, and transformed the focus of political vocabularies which had their roots in more traditional discourses.¹⁷⁴ Whilst it is now clear that pan-Islam cannot mount any serious challenge to the existing state-structure in the Middle East,¹⁷⁵ at the time Iqbal was writing this process of transformation was not yet fully accomplished. The rivalry between nationalism and pan-Islam was already evident in the use which Sultan Abdulhamid II had made of pan-Islam as a policy within the Ottoman empire, namely to check nascent nationalism within the empire and, in particular, to reinforce the loyalty of Arab groups within it to the Turkish sultanate/caliphate.¹⁷⁶ Now, with the disintegration of that empire and the carving up of the Middle East by Britain and France into states which bore little resemblance to the Ottoman administrative units, there was an increasingly sophisticated approach to nationalism on the part of such pan-Islamists in the 1920s and 1930s as Hasan al-Banna (1906–1949).¹⁷⁷

Thus, Iqbal's reassessment in his March 1938 article of the various terms used to categorise communities in Islam, such as *millat*, *qaum* and *ummat*, is significant for a number of reasons. First, it shows the extent to which Muslim intellectuals at the time were self-consciously re-thinking these concepts, often aware of the genealogy of such terms, and the more recent meanings they had acquired in the twentieth century; hence Iqbal's discussion of what such terms meant in the Qur'ān, and his contrast between their usage in the Qur'ān and their present-day usage. Secondly, an important context for this discussion is the Muslim Middle East, where the European concept of nationalism is seen to be doing its most dangerous work. A Pan-Islamic position emerges in part against the European notion of nationalism *per se*, as well as against its influence on the development of nationalism in the Middle East. Furthermore, given Iqbal's explicit denunciation of nationalism, it is difficult to see how Muslim separatism in India can be reconciled with this position without the crucial pan-Islamic element in the equation.¹⁷⁸ Thirdly, a pan-Islamic position also emerges in reaction to a notion of race; hence Iqbal's repeated references to his own conception of an Islamic

community which transcends both national and racial divisions. Finally, the association between what Iqbal saw as a modern form of Magianism and the European notion of nationalism demonstrates his concern to negotiate a path between the wider tensions and conflicts inherited from early Islam, and the powerful influence of the political concept of nation.

As far as Iqbal's engagement with the notion of 'race' is concerned, we might tentatively conclude that it is the interplay between European notions of race and a set of terms in a Muslim context of an independent genealogy which forms the background to his equation of Islam and 'deracialisation'. It would seem that this interplay is a negative one, in so far as Iqbal uses notions of race in a negative way, to define an Islam in contrast to these categories. In this sense, a thesis such as Richard Fox's on a Singh identity runs counter to Iqbal's views on race and Muslimhood. Far from internalising an imperial construct of Muslimhood, Iqbal attempted to define Islam against categories of race. Nowhere does Iqbal assume that Indian Muslims, or Muslims anywhere, form a single 'race'; rather, the *ummat* consists of a wide variety of such groups, who are united in their adherence to certain religious codes. It is difficult to find in Iqbal any reference to the racial underpinnings of a Muslim *ashraf* culture to which Farzana Sheikh has drawn detailed attention.¹⁷⁹ Indeed, it might be more useful to see Iqbal in terms of his distance from, and not his proximity to, such a culture and some of its assumptions.

There is also some evidence to suggest that the vocabulary of race began to creep into the observations by some members of the Muslim League on the conflict which accompanied the dismemberment of the Ottoman empire. For example, in the All India Muslim League papers, there are a few instances where the term 'race' is used in a strident way, which sometimes suggests a view of the clear-cut nature of 'race' to which certain types of conflict give rise. Thus, in the memorial of 1 January 1919, addressed to the British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, reference is made to the 'racial conflicts' in Eastern Europe, where Muslim minorities are vulnerable victims, and to the hope that 'no racial or religious prejudices' would determine the attitude of the victorious Entente powers to the settlement regarding the dismemberment of the Ottoman empire.¹⁸⁰ In fact, there is further evidence to suggest that for some Indian intellectuals, one crucible for their thinking about race was not India at all, but South Africa. It was in the predicament of the Indian settlers in South Africa that the starker realities of racial perceptions had been earlier evident. It is ironic that the Muslim League papers show much concern for this predicament, irrespective of the religious affiliations of the Indian settlers; the development of racial segregation in South Africa in the early twentieth century with its broader notions of 'race' paid no heed to finer details of caste, communal or ethnic identities. The predicament of Indian settlers in colonies of European settlement abroad pointed to the fundamental discrepancy between the two empires of the Indian Raj and

the colonies of European settlement. Thus, at the All-India Muslim League's annual session of 1912, the League recorded 'its deep appreciation of the gallant fight that the Indian settlers in South Africa, Australasia and British North America are maintaining under depressing circumstances for their inalienable rights as British citizens', and it entered a plea to the imperial government to ensure that its Indian subjects received 'the full rights and privileges of British citizenship by the removal of racial distinctions within the Empire'.¹⁸¹ This discrepancy between the rights of citizens of the same Empire is stressed again, when the position of Indians abroad as citizens of the British Empire is described as 'very delicate; theoretically we enjoy the same rights and are amenable to the same laws as the English themselves and their kith and kin in the colonies, but in practice even the most elementary rights are denied us'.¹⁸² The position of Indians in the Transvaal was especially pointed to as further evidence of this,¹⁸³ a position earlier protested against in view of the Asiatic Registration clauses of the Transvaal Immigration Act.¹⁸⁴ It was obvious discrepancies such as these between the positions of citizens from different parts of the Empire which also revealed the weakness of the imperial centre in dealing with local colonial and settler designs to create 'white' states. In fact, in some ways the ideal of the Commonwealth was defined to negotiate these very discrepancies. The Commonwealth position not only attempted to bridge the gap between the Indian Raj and the colonies of European settlement; it also developed a form of multiracialism which had the advantage of blurring differences between policies on race developed in different parts of the Empire.¹⁸⁵ As early as 1915, Lionel Curtis, one of the most significant thinkers of the Round Table group responsible for disseminating the conception of the Commonwealth after the Union of South Africa in 1910, wrote of the need for 'equality of rights' between the two parts of the Commonwealth. However, he failed to tackle the indentured labour system head on, and continued to oppose the settlement of Indians in the dominions and European colonies. Although all indentured labourers in British colonies were freed on 1 January 1920, it was issues such as these which hampered the smooth evolution of the Commonwealth, and which continued to point to the inequality in rights between different parts of the British empire.¹⁸⁶

Thus, when considering the interplay of European notions of 'race' with Islamic notions of community, it is well to reiterate that the arena for this interaction was wider than India itself. There was the global imperial arena, in which the position of Indian settlers in colonies of European settlement pointed to the discrepancies between the statuses of citizens of the British empire. There was also the arena of the Middle East in which the foundations of the nation-state system were being laid. Finally, there was the arena of British India itself in which the Muslim League, amongst others, struggled to form an all-India Muslim constituency by playing a pan-Islamic card to bolster the status of Indian Muslims as a minority.¹⁸⁷ The three arenas in

which European notions of 'race' were manifested on different levels, and in which they played a variety of roles, were also the arenas in which reconstructions of Islam were mounted, all of which had one common thread, namely the defining of Islam as a cultural force inimical to the notions of race.¹⁸⁸ Iqbal was not alone in grappling with the notion of race in his reconstruction of Islam, nor indeed was he alone in considering the tensions between what had come to be seen as the Arab and non-Arab threads in Islam. These concerns were writ large in Abul Kalam Azad's *Masalah-e khilāfat va jazīrah-e 'Arab* ('The issue of the Khilafat and the Arab peninsula').¹⁸⁹ The breadth and depth of the argument of this work, and its ambiguities, make it a key text for understanding how these issues were negotiated by Muslim intellectuals at the time. Here only two broad and interrelated points can be stressed. The first is Azad's anxiety to show that there is nothing in the *ḥadīth* or the Qur'ān for the basis of the view that the Caliphate must be limited to the Qureish or the Arabs generally. The sophistication of Azad's argument (not least in the interpretative strategies he brings to bear in his reasoning), and the sometimes tortuous way he arrives at his conclusion cannot be examined here. Suffice it to say that he shows how the view that the Caliphate must be limited to the Qureish arose, and how it had to be placed in the historical circumstances of the time. He also argues that this view was partly based on a reading of *ḥadīth* which failed to see those portions of it relating to the Qureish and the Caliphate as predictive [*paish goī*] and not reports [*khavar*].¹⁹⁰ He concludes that there is no evidence in Islamic doctrine that the Caliphate was limited to any nation [*qaum*] or family [*khāndān*] or lineage and race [*nasl*].¹⁹¹ Having argued that the Caliphate can be held by an '*ajam*' as well as an Arab, and that historically this has been the case,¹⁹² Azad moves onto his second point, namely a consideration of what the correspondents of European papers have called 'pan-Islamism' and, in particular, their claim that Abdulhamid II fostered the notion of pan-Islam in order to buttress the prestige of the Turkish sultanate among Muslim groups living outside the confines of the Ottoman empire.¹⁹³ In rebutting this claim, Azad reiterates a point he has stressed all along, that, in his view, the brotherhood of Islam pays no heed to distinctions of nationality, race or country.¹⁹⁴

Thus, there were parallels between Iqbal's concern with race and pan-Islam and the reconstructions of other thinkers;¹⁹⁵ significantly, some of these reconstructions were in the context of negotiating the historical differences between '*ajam*' and Arab in the Islamic world. What is interesting about Iqbal's thinking here is that his work reveals signs of both an attempt to define Islam by using the notion of race as a foil, and of the increasing acceptance of European notions of race as self-evident concepts. Despite his identification of what he calls the 'race idea' as inimical to his definition of Islam,¹⁹⁶ and despite his castigation of Attaturk's 'Pan-Turanianism' for resting on an assumption of the 'absoluteness of races',¹⁹⁷ Iqbal sometimes wrote as though races were self-evident categories. This is partly because

he needed some sort of notion of race in order to define a pan-Islamic community which transcended racial groups but did not collapse into them. This is clear in his statements on the nature of pan-Islam, and in his characterisation of Islam as 'stooping to conquer without itself becoming a race-making factor'.¹⁹⁸ This also emerges in his attempt to define a hierarchy of allegiances on the basis of *qaum*, *millat* and *ummat*.¹⁹⁹ However, Iqbal was also at pains to endorse what David Washbrook has called the British 'vocabulary of a sociology of ethnicity' as it was applied to India.²⁰⁰ Hence, he repeatedly emphasises the heterogeneity of the subcontinent in terms which almost exactly mirror this sociology in order to deny the validity of any form of Indian nationalism.²⁰¹ Furthermore, he sometimes expresses in biological terms his aversion to the sort of India envisaged by the INC, as when he points to the possible 'fusion of the communities in a biological sense'.²⁰² He refers to 'martial races' as self-evident categories when he considers what the future security arrangements in a federal India might look like, whilst simultaneously arguing that the British have used such notions of race for their own political ends.²⁰³ This parallels his perception of the British creation and manipulation of a rural-urban divide in Punjab,²⁰⁴ and what he takes to be their creation of Zionism in the Middle East.²⁰⁵ Iqbal's simultaneous reliance on categories of race, whilst attempting to escape from them in his definition of Islam as a force of 'deracialisation', affords a poignant example of how, like many others, he was sometimes trapped in the very categories he sought to challenge, and how that challenge was often launched on the same premises as the concepts he sought to undermine.²⁰⁶

I have suggested that what is in play in Iqbal's work is a creativity of cosmopolitanism which grounds, and yet renders impossible, a politics and a metaphysics of transcendence. So too in his engagement with terms of identity, he tries to disentangle a category of Islam from the historical processes and ethnic particularities in which it is instantiated. He attempts to extract the 'birth of an International ideal' as 'the very essence of Islam' from what he calls the 'Arabian imperialism of the earlier centuries of Islam'.²⁰⁷ He also defines this international ideal against European notions of race. However, as we have seen, he relies on these notions as self-evident, and this extends to his use of the terms 'Arab' and 'Persian'. The bringing together of different groups as Muslims both grounds that global ideal and, by instantiating it, dispels that ideal, since the terms of ethnicity which precede that bringing together remain in place in his discourse. What his work repeatedly uncovers then, and on multiple levels, is the impossibility of transcending plurality into a unity that is grounded and made possible by that plurality. All that remains for him is a moment of illuminating and intoxicating beauty in the *Jāvid Nāma*, in which he achieves the apotheosis of his selfhood, when he beholds the earth and the heaven 'drowned [gharq] in the light [nūr] of dawn' and 'crimson [surkh] like a jujube-tree'.²⁰⁸ Significantly, it is this vision which concludes his magnum opus, rather than any narrative of return to the earth.

Notes

1. Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1985), 2: p. 101. Ricoeur does not deal with autobiographies specifically, but the unstable temporality of autobiographies makes them especially illuminating for his explorations of the rhetoric of temporality in texts.
2. Nehru, *Discovery*, p. 10.
3. Ibid., p. 10.
4. Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, 2: p. 101. See also 3: p. 139, p. 141.
5. Nehru, *Discovery*, p. 200.
6. Ibid., p. 49.
7. Ibid., p. 24.
8. Entry to Jail Diary, August 9, 1933, SW 5: pp. 495–9, p. 495.
9. Nehru, *Discovery*, p. 23.
10. 'To J.C. Wedgewood', April 23, 1941, SW 11: pp. 577–80, p. 579.
11. Nehru, *Discovery*, p. 23.
12. Ibid., p. 500.
13. 'The Congress in Perspective', October 7, 1936, SW 7: pp. 502–9, p. 503. See also 'Two Messages', SW 7: pp. 488–98, p. 493.
14. Nehru, *Discovery*, p. 23.
15. Ibid., p. 15.
16. Ibid., p. 1.
17. Ibid., p. 94.
18. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Confessions*, translated by J.M. Cohen (London: Penguin, 1953).
19. Mary Evans, p. 24.
20. Ibid., p. 1.
21. For an exploration of these aporias in relation to fictional and historiographical narratives, see his *Time and Narrative*.
22. Of course, there is no necessary link between the two; but Lajpat Rai links them in the story of his own personal and political development.
23. The instabilities of chronology in autobiography have been commented upon in different ways by Germaine Bree, 'Michel Leiris: mazemaker', in Olney, pp. 194–206, p. 203; Sturrock, p. 20, p. 47, p. 252; Spengemann, pp. 6–8; Laura Marcus, p. 165.
24. 'The Story of My Life' was written in November 1914, while 'The Story of My Deportation' was first published in 1908.
25. Lajpat Rai, 'The Story of My Life', p. 128.
26. The original readers would of course have read 'The Story of My Deportation' before 'The Story of My Life'. Only once both texts were in the public domain could readers opt for either order.
27. This also corresponds to almost antithetical portrayals of his relationship to his father; 'The Story of My Deportation' uses the language of filial obedience and respect, and it is dedicated 'To my father as a mark of love'. This language is conspicuous by its absence in the earlier/later 'The Story of My Life' where the author charts his political progress in terms of his disavowal of his father and a rejection of his own upbringing.
28. Lajpat Rai, 'The Story of My Life', p. 12.
29. For a similar deployment of this trope combining memory and prophecy, Jayakar recounts how, when he was born, the family astrologer prophesied the death of

- Jayakar's father, 'a prophecy which was to be fulfilled'; Jayakar, p. 1. Surendranath Banerjea also uses this trope when he recalls his premonitions of his father's death; see his *A Nation in the Making. Being the Reminiscences of Fifty Years of Public Life* (1925; Bombay: Oxford University Press, 1963), pp. 14–15.
30. 'The Congress in Perspective', October 7, 1936, SW 7: pp. 502–9, p. 503.
 31. 'To J.C. Wedgewood', April 23, 1941, SW 11: pp. 577–80, p. 579.
 32. Nehru, *Discovery*, p. 152.
 33. Nehru, *An Autobiography*, p. 431. See also 'Presidential Address', December 29, 1929, SW 4: pp. 184–98, p. 198, where Nehru refers to 'India, the ancient but ever young'.
 34. Nehru, *Discovery*, p. 72.
 35. Banerjea, p. 52.
 36. *Ibid.*, pp. 371–3, p. 291. However, as mentioned above, not only does Banerjea have difficulty in maintaining the chronology he invokes here, he explicitly notes this difficulty in the course of his narrative.
 37. *Ibid.*, p. 284.
 38. Nehru, *An Autobiography*, p. 596.
 39. Banerjea, Preface.
 40. Nehru, *An Autobiography*, p. 597.
 41. *Ibid.*, p. 597.
 42. *Ibid.*, p. 608.
 43. Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, 2: p. 81.
 44. 'Letter to Indira Nehru', May 15–16, 1941, SW 11: pp. 591–7, p. 595.
 45. 'To Bharati Sarabhai', November 21, 1935, SW 7: pp. 6–8, p. 7.
 46. Nehru, *Discovery*, p. 20.
 47. *Ibid.*, p. 36.
 48. Prison Diary, entry for February 27, 1934, SW 6: p. 240.
 49. Nehru, *Discovery*, p. 25, p. 33.
 50. Nehru, *An Autobiography*, pp. 566–7, Prison Diary, entry for September 22, 1934, SW 6: p. 292.
 51. 'To Indira Nehru', June 21, 1935, SW 6: pp. 374–81, p. 376, and 'To Father', September 1, 1922, SW 1: p. 332–40, p. 338.
 52. Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, 2: p. 81.
 53. Nehru, *Discovery*, p. 20.
 54. *Ibid.*, p. 20. See also Prison Diary, entry for February 1, 1935, SW 6: pp. 315–6: 'Memories crowd back and fill the mind, memories of the past, especially in jail, where the present is too flat to offer any grip to the imagination and so the mind wanders back to the past . . . ' (p. 314).
 55. Nehru, *Discovery*, p. 20.
 56. *Ibid.*, p. 23.
 57. *Ibid.*, p. 515.
 58. *Ibid.*, p. 480.
 59. *Ibid.*, p. 20.
 60. 'To Padmaja Naidu', June 16, 1941, SW 11: pp. 614–17, p. 614.
 61. Nehru, *An Autobiography*, p. 430.
 62. Nehru, *Discovery*, p. 166.
 63. *Ibid.*, p. 152, cited in Ch. 3.
 64. *Ibid.*, p. 54.
 65. *Ibid.*, p. 288, p. 507. See also 'A distinguished visitor', October 28, 1940, SW 11: pp. 347–9, on how India and China 'like all ancient countries . . . have gathered

- round them all manner of debris in the form of old custom and tradition which hinder growth . . . ' (p. 348).
66. Nehru, *Discovery*, p. 50, p. 525.
 67. Ibid., pp. 509–10.
 68. Ibid., p. 36; see also p. 479, where he states that 'by writing of the past I have tried to rid myself of the burden of the past'.
 69. Ibid., p. 36.
 70. Ibid., p. 24.
 71. 'Letter to Indira Nehru', June 10, 1932, SW 5: pp. 390–3, p. 392. See also 'The last letter to Indira', August 9, 1933, SW 5: pp. 493–9, in which Nehru argues that if 'you look upon past history with the eye of sympathy, the dry bones will fill up with flesh and blood' (p. 496).
 72. Nehru, *Discovery*, p. 24.
 73. Ibid., p. 24.
 74. Ibid., p. 51–2, and also p. 201 on how 'new panoramas opened out before me, new perspectives of history, new conceptions of India's past'.
 75. Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, 3: p. 185.
 76. Nehru, *Discovery*, p. 201.
 77. Ibid., p. 480.
 78. Ibid., p. 181.
 79. Ibid., p. 59.
 80. Robert Sewell and Sankara Balkrishnan Dikshit, *The Indian Calendar with Tables for the Conversion of Hindu and Muhammadan into A.D Dates & Vice Versa, with Tables of Eclipses Available in India by Robert Schram* (London: Swan Sonnenschein, 1896), p. 39.
 81. See above.
 82. Nehru, *An Autobiography*, pp. 374–5.
 83. Nehru, *Discovery*, p. 144.
 84. Ibid., p. 510.
 85. Ibid., p. 308, pp. 509–10.
 86. Ibid., p. 330.
 87. Ibid., p. 337. Nehru frequently uses this image of India retiring into 'her' shell; see *Discovery*, p. 209, p. 232, p. 281, p. 343.
 88. Charles Lyell, *Principles of Geology or the Modern Changes of the Earth and Its Inhabitants Considered as Illustrative of Geology* (1830–1833; London: John Murray 1867), 2 vols., 1: p. vi.
 89. David R. Oldroyd describes the geologist's task as 'a kind of hermeneutic exercise' in which the earth's strata are similar to a book, which has to be 'read'. See David R. Oldroyd, *Thinking about the Earth. A History of Ideas in Geology* (London: Athlone Press, 1996), p. 4.
 90. Nehru, *Discovery*, pp. 34–5.
 91. I have taken the phrase 'geologically informed landscape' and 'geologizing' from Rebecca Bedell, *The Anatomy of Nature. Geology and American Landscape Painting 1825–1875* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2001), p. xi.
 92. Oldroyd, *Thinking about the Earth*, p. 130.
 93. John Wyatt, *Wordsworth and the Geologists* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 151. On the sense of deep time, see *ibid.*, p. 168.
 94. Nehru, *Discovery*, p. 59. Geologists have also seen the earth's stratified structure as a palimpsest. Oldroyd refers to geology as the historical mapping of the earth's sedimentary strata which 'may be thought of as a kind of palimpsest and the

- task for the geologist – a historian of a kind – is to identify the elements of this palimpsest and to correlate the fragments and arrange them in temporal sequence'. Oldroyd, *Thinking about the Earth*, p. 115.
95. See my 'Putting God in His place: Bradley, McTaggart, and Muhammad Iqbal', *Journal of Islamic Studies*, vol. 4 (1993), no. 2, pp. 208–36, republished in revised form as 'God, self and politics: Bradley, McTaggart and Iqbal', in T.J. Cribb (ed.), *Imagined Commonwealths. Cambridge Essays on Commonwealth and International Literature in English* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999), pp. 219–45. In these papers, I examine the distinctive nature of Iqbal's mysticism as an inverted Sufism.
 96. J.M.E. McTaggart, *Philosophical Studies* (London: Edward Arnold and Company, 1934), pp. 110–31. McTaggart (1866–1925) was a British Hegelian philosopher whose early reputation rested on two works (*Studies in the Hegelian Dialectic*, 1896, and *Studies in Hegelian Cosmology*, 1901) which developed and expounded Hegel's *Logic*. His magnum opus is considered to be the *Nature of Existence* (2 vols., vol 1, 1921; vol. 2, 1927) in which he worked out a systematic deductive philosophy arguing that ultimate reality consists of being composed of loving perceptions of one another by a community of selves.
 97. *Ibid.*, p. 50.
 98. Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, pp. 129–30, p. 220.
 99. JN 151/6–7, Arberry 111/2689–92.
 100. JN 68/9–10, Arberry 60/1173–4.
 101. Michael Gilsenan, *Recognising Islam. Religion and Society in the Modern Middle East* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1990), p. 82, p. 86. See also J.C. Burgel, 'Ecstasy and order: two structural principles in the ghazal poetry of Jalal al Din Rumi', in Leonard Lewisohn (ed.), *The Legacy of Medieval Persian Sufism* (London: Kaniqahi Nimatullah Publications, 1992), pp. 61–74.
 102. Annemarie Schimmel, *Gabriel's Wing: A Study into the Religious Ideas of Sir Muhammad Iqbal* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1963), p. 121. For a direct reference to the mi'rāj in the JN, see JN 20/1–3.
 103. *Reconstruction*, p. 99. Swami Vivekananda also refers to the mi'rāj in his *Raja-Yoga* in terms of what I call the 'problem of return', but his conclusion as to its significance is different from Iqbal's; see Swami Vivekananda, *Raja-Yoga* (1956; New York: Ramakrishna–Vivekananda Center, 1982), p. 81.
 104. A.R. Tariq (ed.), *Speeches and Statements of Iqbal* (Lahore: Sheikh Ghulam Ali and Sons, 1973), pp. 33–4.
 105. See 'Putting God in his place'.
 106. JN 91/8, Arberry 75/1654–5.
 107. JN 193/3, Arberry 139/3601–2.
 108. JN 82/1, Arberry 69/1499–1500.
 109. JN 62/5–6, Arberry 55/1033–6.
 110. *Reconstruction*, p. 112, p. 123.
 111. For a detailed argument regarding this aspect of metaphysics in Iqbal, see my 'Putting God in his place'.
 112. JN 63/11–12, 14, Arberry 56/1061–4, 1067–8.
 113. JN 195/6, Arberry 140/3635–6.
 114. For both poems see *Kullīyāt-e Iqbal Urdū*, p. 83 and p. 159. For a useful English translation with facing Urdu text, see D.J. Matthews, *Iqbal. A Selection of the Urdu Verse. Text and Translation* (London: School of Oriental and African Studies, 1993), pp. 16–17, pp. 28–9.

115. This is the most common metre in Urdu poetry. There are 14 syllables per line, arranged in this pattern: - - u/- u - u/u - - u/- u -. The common metre suits the popular nature of these poems. The regular pattern of alternating long and short syllables, which is reversed only in the middle, accounts for the measured pace of both poems.
116. Jacob M. Landau, *The Politics of pan-Islam. Ideology and Organization* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), p. 306.
117. Ibid., 214. Gail Minault, *The Khilafat Movement. Religious Symbolism and Political Mobilization in India* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), p. 208, pp. 211–12.
118. All India Muslim League papers, vol 91: Council Meetings, 1912, circular letter of Secretary, 27 April 1912, which cites the passage from Montagu's speech. See also the resolution passed by the Punjab Muslim League to the effect that this speech represented 'an unwarranted departure from a recognised principle of Imperial Indian policy which has hitherto accepted all Indian Musalmans, irrespective of locality and origin, as constituting one community', and that the interests of Punjabi Muslims are identical to those of Bengali Muslims (Resolution enclosed in circular letter of Secretary, All India Muslim League, 8 May 1912).
119. Landau, *The Politics of pan-Islam*, pp. 217–8.
120. Roger Owen, *State, Power & Politics in the Making of the Modern Middle East* (London: Routledge, 1992), pp. 19–23; M.E. Yapp, *The Near East since the First World War* (London: Longman, 1991), pp. 2–5.
121. Yapp, *The Near East since the First World War*, p. 45.
122. Although this date is not beyond dispute, B.S. Miller argues that this is the most likely. See B.S. Miller, *Bhartri and Bilhana. The Hermit and the Love-Thief* (1978; New Delhi: Penguin, 1990), p. 3.
123. JN 168/1–3, Arberry 123/3086–8.
124. JN 169/10, Arberry 124/3103–4.
125. JN 170/3, Arberry 124/3109–10.
126. JN 170/6, Arberry 124/3116.
127. JN 171/4, Arberry 124/3125–6. Iqbal follows these lines with a note in brackets 'tarjuma āz bartārī hindī', that is, translated from Bhartrihari. I have been unable to trace which sloka this might be a translation of. It may be that like all the figures in the poem, Bhartrihari is fashioned in the light of the poet's own concerns and preoccupations. Perhaps the most interesting figure in this context is Nietzsche, who is the first character the poet sees in the region beyond the spheres.
128. Both Arberry and Schimmel note that jahān-dost is Visvāmītra; see Arberry, endnote 529, p. 143, and Schimmel, *Gabriel's Wing*, p. 334.
129. For two detailed studies of references to Visvāmītra in Vedic and post Vedic literature, see B.H. Kapadia, *Visvāmītra in the Vedic, Epic and the Puranic Literature* (Gujarat: K.A. Amin, 1971) and B.B. Chaubey, *Visvāmītra in Vedic and Post Vedic Literature* (Hoshiarpur: Vishveshwaranand Vishva Bandhu Institute, 1987).
130. *Metaphysics*, pp. ix–x.
131. Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, Ch. 8.
132. Schimmel, *Gabriel's Wing*, pp. 52–3.
133. *Metaphysics*, p. 82, p. 48.
134. Ibid., pp. 59–60.
135. Ibid., p. 48.

136. Ibid., p. 50, p. 51, p. 135, p. 147, *Reconstruction*, p. 35, p. 70, p. 82, p. 5, p. 58, pp. 44–5, p. 38, p. 39, p. 33, p. 15, pp. 14–15, p. 81, p. 79.
137. Michael Banton, *Racial Theories* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. ix.
138. Richard Fox, *Lions of the Punjab. Culture in the Making* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985).
139. A.R. Tariq (ed.), *Speeches and Statements of Iqbal* (Lahore: Sheikh Ghulam Ali and sons, 1973), p.14.
140. Ibid., pp. 235–46.
141. Bernard Lewis, *Race and Colour in Islam* (New York, 1971), pp. 7–9.
142. Ibid., pp. 66, pp. 72–3.
143. Ehsan Yarshatar (ed.), *Encyclopaedia Iranica* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982), 1: p. 700–1.
144. Nasir ad-Din Tusi, *Akhlāq-e Naṣirī* (1235; abridged text Tehran, Intishārāt tūs, n.d.), p. 21.
145. Michael Banton, *Racial Theories* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 167.
146. *Reconstruction*, p. 114–15; *Speeches and Statements*, p. 103.
147. *Metaphysics*, p. 21, p. 82, pp. 147–8.
148. *Speeches and Statements*, pp. 103–4.
149. Ibid., p. 120.
150. *Reconstruction*, p. 115. For an examination of this issue in relation to the development of the Ahmadiyya movement, see Yohann Friedmann, *Prophecy Continuous. Aspects of Ahmadi Religious Thought and Its Medieval Background* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), pp. 49–82.
151. *Speeches and Statements*, pp. 92–3, p. 106, p. 110, pp. 117–20.
152. Ibid., pp. 134–5.
153. Ibid., pp. 135–6.
154. Sir Arthur Keith, *Ethnos or the Problem of Race* (London, 1931), pp. 89–91.
155. Michael Banton, *Racial Theories* (Cambridge, 1987), pp. 93–6.
156. *Speeches and Statements*, p. 136.
157. Arthur Keith, *Ethnos*, p. 9, p. 91.
158. *Speeches and Statements*, pp. 6–7, pp. 48–9, pp. 91–2, p. 195, pp. 227–8.
159. Ibid., pp. 235–40.
160. Ibid., pp. 235–46.
161. What follows is drawn from the entries in the *Encyclopedia of Islam*, which trace in detail the genealogy and development of these terms in various parts of the Islamic world from the early Islamic period to the twentieth century.
162. *The Encyclopedia of Islam* (Leiden and New York, 1993), 7: pp. 61–4.
163. Ibid., 4: p. 794.
164. *Speeches and Statements*, pp. 229, pp. 236–7.
165. Ibid., pp. 237–41.
166. Ibid., p. 229.
167. Ibid., p. 230.
168. Ibid., p. 231.
169. Ibid., p. 136.
170. Ibid., p. 232.
171. Ibid., p. 235.
172. Ibid., p. 245.

173. Jacob M. Landau, *The Politics of Pan-Islam. Ideology and Organization* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), pp. 217–8.
174. Roger Owen, pp. 19–23; Yapp, pp. 2–5.
175. Yapp, p. 45.
176. Landau, *Politics of pan-Islam*, p. 23, pp. 37–8, pp. 42–3.
177. *Ibid.*, pp. 223–4.
178. This is discussed in more detail below.
179. Farzana Sheikh, pp. 93–6.
180. *All-India Muslim League papers* (Karachi: Quaid-e Azam Academy, hereafter AIML papers), 503: Memorial presented to British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs by Aga Khan et al., January 1, 1919.
181. *AIML papers*, 64: Resolution 8 for annual session of 3rd and 4th March, 1912.
182. *AIML papers*, 65: Reports and Proceedings of the Annual Session of the Muslim League 1912.
183. *Foundations of Pakistan. All India Muslim League Documents: 1906–1947*, 3 vols. ed. by S.S. Pirzada (Karachi: National Publishing House, 1969), Presidential Address, 5th Session, Calcutta, March 3–4, 1912, 1: pp. 244–5.
184. *AIML papers*, 4: 1908 Central Committee Meetings, Letter from Hamidia Islamic Society, Johannesburg, dated 25 November 1907, to the president of Muslim league, and subsequent resolution passed by Central Committee (in English and Urdu).
185. Paul B. Rich, *Race and Empire in British Politics* (1986; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 55.
186. *Ibid.*, pp. 59–60.
187. Landau, *Politics of Pan-Islam*, p. 306.
188. For some examples of these definitions, see Landau, *Politics of Pan-Islam*, pp. 84–6, pp. 189–92, pp. 223–4, pp. 335–41; see also Appendix I, which contains the text of a 1910 pamphlet by Ahmed Hilmi. See also *AIML papers*, vol. 10 (Morley-Minto Reforms): ‘The Reform Scheme’ from the *Observer* (Lahore), November and December 1907; vol. 65: Reports and Proceedings of Annual Session of 1912 ‘Turkey and Persia’; vol. 91: Council Meetings 1912, Madras Presidency Muslim League to AIML (London branch) 19 June 1912.
189. This was a discourse delivered in Urdu before the Bengal Khilafat conference in 1920; for my purposes, I have relied on an edition published in 1963 by Khalid Book Depot, Lahore.
190. Abul Kalam Azad, *Masalah-e khilāfat va jazīrah-e ‘Arab* (Lahore: Khalid Book Depot, 1963), p. 111, p. 116. For the need to establish a priority of credence on the basis of distinguishing different types of dictum in Islamic law and in *ḥadīth*, see especially pp. 102–4. Abul Kalam Azad (1888–1958) joined the Indian National Congress in 1920, and participated in the Indian Association of Muslim theologians who were sympathetic to political nationalism and expelling the British from India. He was also a pan-Islamicist, and an opponent of Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan (1817–1898), a leading Muslim modernist. Azad became Minister of Education in post-Independence India, a position he held until his death in 1958. See also his autobiography, *India Wins Freedom* (1958, 2nd edn, 1988; this edition contains sections which were cut from the 1st edn).
191. *Ibid.*, p. 97; the word ‘nasl’ originally meant lineage and pedigree, but came to mean race too.
192. *Ibid.*, pp. 94–5; Azad uses the word ‘*ajam*. See also p. 105.

193. Ibid., p. 135.
194. Ibid., p. 135; see also p. 97 for a strong statement of Islam as opposed to specificities of lineage and nation [ikhtaṣāṣ ul-nasl va qaum] and racial distinctions [imtīāz ul-nasab], and pp. 98–100. For an interpretation of the hijrat in accordance with these views on Islam and race, see pp. 52–3.
195. There were, of course, major differences between the thought of Iqbal and Azad; for example, in broad terms between Iqbal's concept of *khudī* and Azad's comments on *infirādīyyat* (individuality) in *Masalah-e khilāfat*, p. 52. However, these major differences make the similarities between their work all the more significant.
196. *Speeches and Statements*, p. 195, p. 207.
197. Ibid., p. 136.
198. Ibid., p. 207, p. 135.
199. Ibid., pp. 235–46.
200. Washbrook, 'Ethnicity', p. 170.
201. *Speeches and Statements*, pp. 9–14, p. 27, p. 35, p. 42, p. 63, pp. 67–8, pp. 94–5, p. 110, p. 169, p. 182.
202. Ibid., p. 214.
203. Ibid., p. 20, p. 22. For a lucid exposition of theories of martial race, see David Omissi, ' "Martial Races": Ethnicity and Security in Colonial India 1858–1939', *War and Society*, 9 (May 1991), pp. 1–27.
204. *Speeches and Statements*, p. 97.
205. Ibid., pp. 218–19.
206. Washbrook, 'Ethnicity', p. 159.
207. *Reconstruction*, p. 126.
208. JN 195/1–2, Arberry 140/3625–9.

6

Gandhi's Vulnerability

Nehru's secularising turn

In the previous two chapters, I showed Nehru constructed India and himself in relation to modernity. I also showed Gandhi articulated a sacred geography to counter the geography of modernity and the narrative of modernising progress, which was an integral part of Indian travelogues in the nineteenth century. Here I develop my analysis of Gandhi's notion of the sacred by considering how he returns to the spiritual roots of autobiography as a Western genre of literature in his writing. This reflects the discourse of vulnerability in his writings, and is indicated in particular by his representation of stage fright.

Gandhi's self-presentation in his *Autobiography* as a seeker after religious truth¹ is in marked contrast to Nehru's secularism, which has been noted by commentators.² Here I focus on the secularising turn in Nehru's autobiographical project, which parallels the secularising of autobiography as a genre in the West from the late eighteenth century onwards. Autobiography had its roots in the religious act of confession, but with the coming of modernity, the vertical axis of communication with a deity was displaced by a horizontal axis of inter-human communication, in which the author addresses his or her readers.³ In Indian nationalist autobiographies the language of religion is re-worked as a political language, rather than being displaced or supplanted by it. Nationalism itself has quasi-religious features of nationalism, and has been called the 'religion of modern times'.⁴ We have seen how Rai uses the language of religious conversion to plot his own move towards Hindu nationalism. In Banerjea's autobiography, nationalism has the hallmarks of a religious faith, focussing in particular on a quasi-mystical union between himself and the audiences he addresses in his public speeches. The defining of his persona as a public speaker reaches a euphoric climax in the account of his presidential speeches at the INC annual session in 1895.⁵ He describes how a 'galvanic current' is established between himself and his audience, and he refers to the divine nature of inspiration for the orator ('the high and holy atmosphere fragrant with the breath of the gods', 'the immortals of the earth, breathing an atmosphere fragrant with their breath', 'the celestial fire').⁶

The disquisition ends with Banerjea as an orator achieving a quasi-divine status himself as 'the younger section of the audience rushed up the platform and were at my feet, eager to touch them . . .'⁷ Banerjea depicts himself as being in a trance-like state, withdrawn from his surroundings, when he is preparing his speech.⁸ This transported state becomes an epiphany in which he achieves a kind of prophet-like vision: 'For the moment, glancing through the great past, the genius of which seemed now to stand revealed to me, I could realize the spirit that moved the ancestors of those young men, to found the greatest Hindu empire of modern times.'⁹ In this scene of ecstatic union, Banerjea merges with his audience in a 'full flood' by giving voice to their powerful emotions and sentiments.¹⁰

Banerjea sees the relationship between himself and the nation as a semi-mystical one, in which his self merges with an audience who represent the nation in the making. Nehru deliberately avoids the religiosity of nationalist language which Banerjea uses. While Nehru does describe his illness in the autumn of 1923 as 'in the nature of a spiritual experience', he stresses that this experience leads to a sense of detachment and an 'increasing distance from the religious outlook on life and politics'.¹¹ He treats terms in religious discourse as tropes referring to a variety of processes and entities. The term 'God' is seen, variously, as a signifier for 'the vital energy inherent in matter', 'a creative life-giving force', 'personal, national or international' ideals, and finally a 'vague conception of a perfect man and a better world' which underpins the narrative of history as progress.¹² He sees religious texts as authored by human beings, rather than as revealed scripture and the 'incarnations or mouthpieces of a divinity'.¹³ This makes readers alive to their aesthetic qualities, which would be missed if they were to be believed in literally. Instead readers would be 'oppressed by [the] weight of belief'. For Nehru, Indian mythology, like Greek mythology, should be treated as the product of a literary imagination, rather than as revealed scripture. This has other consequences. Treating scripture as the 'product of the human mind' means interpreting it in terms of its historical context, so that 'the trappings of ritual and religious usage in which it is wrapped' reflect its time, and are not to be emulated. This underpins Nehru's narrative of history as progress, calling to the creativity of human agents, rather than seeing them as 'the mouthpiece of a divine or superior power'.¹⁴ Nehru also sees the concept of divinity as a projection of human capabilities, but by not recognising it as such, scriptures are treated as revealed truths, and religion checks 'the tendency to change and progress inherent in human society'.¹⁵ The secularising process underlines the narrative of history as progress, which, as Robert Nisbet argues, replaced the notion of destiny presided over by a transcendental deity.¹⁶ While Banerjea also invokes the narrative of history as progress, he qualifies this with the adjective 'divine', so that progress is a 'divine law'.¹⁷ This qualification is indicative of how his nationalism is intertwined with a religiosity of language.

Gandhi's double shame

The secularising turn in Nehru's project creates the possibility of autobiography as self-authorship, in which God or divinity is displaced by the concept of human self-authorship. In appropriating autobiography as a Western genre of literature Gandhi returns to its confessional roots, in keeping with self-rule as a return to the pre-modern and religious civilisations of both India and Britain.¹⁸ Returning to the confessional roots of autobiography is consistent with this aspect of self-rule. Gandhi's autobiography is a confession of what he calls 'my double shame'.¹⁹ But by turning autobiography back to its confessional roots, Gandhi is being anti-modernist in other ways. Commentators have suggested that in modern society there has been an atrophying of the sense of shame. Retzinger suggests that in such societies shame has gone underground, and is now not spoken of openly,²⁰ while Braithwaite argues that with the commodification of the body, sexuality and violence, the threshold of shame has been lowered.²¹ Moore notes that 'people have become ashamed of shame'. The reasons for this includes the assumption that there is a link between shame and historical forms of repression by the Church, State or other agents of higher rank, so the word shame sounds 'antiquated'. Shame is associated with formal systems based on inequalities of power and status and is therefore considered an inappropriate emotion in the modern, rational and formally democratic world.²²

However, on the basis of affect theory and the sociology of emotions, Moore suggests that the experience of shame has increased in modern societies but there has been a shift away from how it is expressed,²³ while Braithwaite argues that the proliferation of available roles in modern society makes us more vulnerable to shame. As society becomes increasingly more role-differentiated, the potential for shaming increases,²⁴ but because shame is denied or discouraged, responses to it include avoidance and attacking others.²⁵ One response is what H.B. Lewis has called 'shame rage'; shame is often experienced as an attack coming from the Other, and so the self feels anger at its inferior place in the eyes of the Other. Unconscious shame can act as both the inhibitor and the generator of anger.²⁶ If these interpretations are correct, then modern industrial societies may in fact be debilitated by shame.²⁷ The forthright expression by Gandhi of his 'double shame' therefore needs to be measured against the tendency in modern societies to be ashamed of shame. One way of overcoming the debilitating effects of shame is to make the unconscious aspects of shame conscious,²⁸ and clearly Gandhi's 'double shame' in his autobiography does this.

Levinas characterises the experience of shame thus: 'What appears in shame is precisely the fact of being chained to oneself, the radical impossibility of fleeing oneself to hide oneself from oneself, the intolerable presence of the self to itself . . . What is shameful is our intimacy, that is our presence to

ourselves.²⁹ As Retzinger puts it succinctly, 'shame concerns *the whole self*'.³⁰ The intense self-scrutiny in Gandhi's autobiography concerns his whole self. There are also political implications to this, since the experience of shame involves taking one's responsibility for one's self. *Hind Swaraj* argues that it is ultimately Indians who are responsible for the creation of British colonial rule.³¹ Elsewhere, Gandhi concurs with Seeley's view that the British have not conquered India.³² The experience of shame in Gandhi's confessions then counters the seductive 'self-handicapping' habits which relieve agents of their responsibilities towards themselves.³³ There is therefore a crucial difference between shame in Gandhi's autobiography and the role of shame in Australian autobiography as explored by Rosamund Dalziell. In the latter, the authors' sense of shame at the stigma of being born illegitimate is an unjust imposition for what they cannot be held responsible for.³⁴ Their texts are 'complex textual responses' to 'destructive shaming'.³⁵ Dalziell also argues that in the context of Australian culture and history, autobiographies have an important role to play in resisting destructive shaming, where the practice has become integrated into social or institutional structures.³⁶ The emphasis in Gandhi's autobiography is different. His text is not a response to destructive shaming by others, instead it is a confession of his own sense of shame for his lack of responsibility. This extends to the self in Indian self-rule not facing its own responsibility for the colonial state's functioning in India. Thus, the aim of Gandhi's confession of double shame is not to dissipate it,³⁷ but to explore and utilise it for the purposes of responsible self-empowerment. Shame in Gandhi is a self-directing and self-generating experience, rather than a humiliating experience which is suffered at the hands of others.

Gandhi and stage fright

Gandhi's confession of his 'double shame' needs to be read further in the context of a larger discourse on vulnerability in his writings. Far from being a masculine, heroic self-presentation of the kind that Mary Evans argues characterises the bulk of modern autobiographical narratives in the West authored by men,³⁸ Gandhi is at pains to articulate his own vulnerability as a human being, both sexually and emotionally. An important instance of this is the intimate detail of his sexual jealousy towards his wife.³⁹ Gandhi's self-confessed vulnerability includes his experience of stage fright in his autobiography. Indian travellers of the nineteenth century described, amongst other things, their experience of the theatre in Europe and Britain. Some mention their visits to the theatre and opera in passing only,⁴⁰ and others, such as Yusuf Khan, provide more detailed accounts of the plays they saw.⁴¹ Mirza Abu Taleb summarises in some detail the plays he sees, and observes the subdivisions in the audience. He also provides an account of masquerades for his readership.⁴² Malabari's travel account is different

from these other travelogues in that it contains an extended reflection on a passion play at Ober-Ammergau. This account is framed by a comparison with the Muharram rituals of Shi'i Muslims in India, which he describes as a 'Mohammedan Passion Play'.⁴³

In contrast, Gandhi uses the vocabulary of performance and theatre to represent himself, but what he is concerned with is the failure of performance in stage fright. His representation of stage fright is pivotal to the loss and recovery of his voice in autobiography, and it opens up an empowering relationship with others. To begin with, Gandhi is at pains to present himself as a poor public speaker. In contrast to the other Indian nationalist autobiographies in which the author's first successful public speech is presented as a triumphant moment of inauguration into public life,⁴⁴ Gandhi's rehearses his early attempts at public speaking as conspicuous failures. The symptoms Gandhi details are the somatic and psychological sensations of stage fright: dizziness, blurred vision, stammering, trembling and a consequent feeling of shame.⁴⁵ While at one point Gandhi follows one experience of stage fright with the remark that he became more confident at public speaking in South Africa, on a subsequent occasion when he experiences stage fright at a public meeting he writes that the 'facility for speaking that I had acquired in South Africa seemed to have left me for the moment'.⁴⁶ There is no progressive enhancement of his stage presence and voice in the autobiography. Unlike other nationalist autobiographies which re-enact stage successes as constitutive of finding a public voice, Gandhi's experiments with his selfhood re-enact his moments of stage fright as a recurring experience. This experience becomes difficult to clearly isolate or demarcate from other experiences. Towards the end of *An Autobiography*, he describes how after a bout of serious illness 'I could not at that time sufficiently raise my voice at meetings. The incapacity to address meetings still abides. My entire frame would shake, and heavy throbbing would start on an attempt to speak for any length of time'.⁴⁷ This closely echoes his representation of stage fright, so that it becomes difficult to distinguish the symptoms of his bout of illness from those of stage fright. Stage fright amounts to something like a general condition rather than a specific and isolated experience.

The tone of intimacy in Gandhi's texts includes such details as a discussion of his sexual life, and extends to his feelings of sexual jealousy. In Indian nationalist autobiographies as a whole, such sexual details are crucially absent.⁴⁸ Ridout has suggested that stage fright can be a precondition for theatrical success in terms of the 'truthful' presentation of emotions.⁴⁹ The staging of stage fright in Gandhi's autobiography can also be read as part of the more general strategy of deploying vulnerability as the basis for mutual self-rule.⁵⁰ Given the importance of dialogue in Gandhi's work as a whole, which is especially evident in the dialogue form of *Hind Swaraj*, the foregrounding of vulnerability is an important strategy for winning the trust of his readers and interlocutors. Stage fright is a public display of that vulnerability, reflecting his autobiographical project as a whole.

Gandhi's staging of stage fright sets the scene for his own self-empowerment and the empowerment of others. His inability to raise his own voice grounds the voices of others. Ridout suggests that what occurs during stage fright is a split between the functioning and the observing self so that the performer stands by as a helpless witness to his own malfunctioning; he witnesses himself.⁵¹ In stage fright the actor or performer is viewing himself as though he or she were in the audience. Gandhi's change from single speaker to one of many listeners, unique performer to a member of a collective audience, is in keeping with the other switches which take place in the Gandhian autobiography, for example between author and reader, and as we shall see, teacher and pupil, and translator and translated. These switches open up the possibility of reciprocity and empathy which are an important part of Gandhi's strategies of dialogue.

However, Gandhi is not just a part of the audience. He listens to his speeches being made by others. This reinforces the split between the observing and the malfunctioning self. Thus, 'I had . . . written down my speech. I stood up to read it, but could not. My vision became blurred and I trembled, though the speech hardly covered a sheet of foolscap. Sjt Mazumdar had to read it for me. His own speech was of course excellent and was received with applause.'⁵² Or 'I was trembling as I began to read my speech . . . my voice [sank] lower and lower. My old friend Sjt Keshavrao Deshpande came to my rescue. I handed my speech to him. His was just the proper voice. But the audience refused to listen . . . So Mr. Wacha stood up and read the speech, with wonderful results.'⁵³ Gandhi absents himself from the stage so that others can take his place, and his performance of failure enables others to speak. Moreover, there are clearly different ways of reading his script. It is handed from speaker to speaker, from Deshpande to Wacha, each voicing it differently with different results, just as Gandhi's experiments are devices for the reader to try and test out in different ways, according to their own inclinations and capacities. These experiments form a repertoire in which others might find 'provision' for their onward journeys.⁵⁴ Stage fright opens a space for his own self-development and self-awareness in the individual and group project of self-rule.

Gandhi's loss of command over his voice in the experience of stage fright becomes a scene of mutual self-empowerment in his autobiography. The sense of having lost possession of one's self, of losing one's poise in stage fright as something that takes over and possesses the performer, stealing away all will and control,⁵⁵ is transformed into a set of opportunities for another kind of self-possession. In general terms, as we have seen, Gandhi refuses to play the role of the sedentary 'native' as defined in the script of British ethnography. It is perhaps no coincidence that the first incidence of stage fright which Gandhi represents is his speech before his school on the occasion of a 'send-off in my honour. It was an uncommon thing for a young man of Rajkot to go to England. I had written a few words of thanks.

But I could scarcely stammer them out. I remember how my head reeled and how my whole frame shook as I stood up to read them.'⁵⁶ From the outset, then, stage fright is configured with the liberating possibilities of travel. Enacting a self-empowered subjectivity through forms of travel is entangled with his dramatisation of recovering a command of one's voice through the experience of stage fright. Gandhi also fails, to use his own overtly theatrical terms, in 'playing the English gentleman'.⁵⁷ This failure covers all the paraphernalia of theatrical make-up: costume, dining room and living room scenes, conversation set pieces, dancing, music and learning French.⁵⁸ It also includes his attempt to master elocution. Here again he uses a parliamentary set piece as his starting point, 'a speech of Mr. Pitt's',⁵⁹ and it is this attempt to train and articulate his voice in the English tradition of elocution which leads him to doubt the role itself.⁶⁰ Similarly, the scenario of Gandhi's stage fright in the courtroom prepares the way for self-empowerment. The courtroom is framed in terms of theatricality, with the struggle over dress and costume in the courtroom,⁶¹ Indians as a vocal audience in the gallery, and Gandhi's playing before that gallery,⁶² all involving the attempt to stage the courtroom in such a way as to usurp the positions of the judge and other officials who conduct the proceedings, defining roles for others. From Gandhi's experience of stage fright in his failed debut as a barrister in the courtroom,⁶³ we arrive at a scene where Gandhi as the defendant puts the government itself on trial.⁶⁴ Gandhi uses the strategy of self-indictment in court when he readily confesses his guilt at his 'crimes' as they are defined by the law, and even helps the police to obtain the witnesses to testify against himself ('the beauty of it was that the charge was proved against me only by the witnesses furnished by myself'⁶⁵). In this way, the key elements of Gandhi's autobiography are configured together, with stage fright, civil disobedience and confession in interplay with each other.

An additional point needs to be made about the nature of Gandhi's engagement with stage fright. In *An Autobiography*, Gandhi notes the deep impression the *Ramayana* made on him. He also refers to the *Ramayana* of Tulsidas as 'the greatest book in all devotional literature'.⁶⁶ In his excellent study of Tulsidas' text and its performance, Lutgendorf outlines how Gandhi utilised the imagery of the Ramayan narrative to explain his own political activities.⁶⁷ However, there is another deeper link between Tulsidas' text and Gandhian autobiography, which goes beyond the deployment of imagery. The very notion of an autobiography as a text which others can actualise, instead of an irreducible testament to a unique subjectivity which by its very nature cannot be rehearsed by others, needs to be read against the background of Indian traditions of oral literature and performance. Scholars have drawn attention to these traditions and in doing so have shown how they involve distinctive notions of authorship and originality. The essays in the collection edited by Paula Richman have drawn attention to the plurality of the Ramayan narrative tradition in its various tellings and performances,

both in Sanskrit and in other South Asian languages.⁶⁸ The volume stresses that the *Ramayana* is less an ur-text in relation to which all other tellings can be located, and is more a set of resources upon which people have drawn for their own narratives.⁶⁹ In his study of Tulsidas's text and its enactment in different kinds of performance, Lutgendorf makes key points about the relationship between text and performance, showing how Tulsidas' epic poem is itself framed through narratives which provide cues for performance.⁷⁰ He argues that performance is constitutive of the text itself, and the text has an emergent quality. The text is a means rather than an end, a blueprint rather than a finished artefact.⁷¹ As he puts it, what is important is not what the text says but what one can do with it.⁷²

The notion of an autobiography as a text which is to be actualised by others can be understood in the light of these traditions of performance which entail their own distinctive notions of authorship, originality and meaning. Gandhi offers his text as a set of resources, experiments and strategies for others to enact. As he says in his introduction to *An Autobiography*, 'the experiments narrated should be regarded as illustrations, in the light of which every one may carry on his own experiments according to his own inclinations and capacity'.⁷³ Given Gandhi's own commitment to cross-cultural dialogue, this enactment is a composite performance in cultural terms, echoing and actualising the nature of both the *Gita* and Tulsidas' epics as projects of reconciliation while using the Western genre of autobiography.⁷⁴ Bhiku Parekh has discussed some ways in which Gandhi might have 'Indianised' the genre of autobiography.⁷⁵ Here we might add that Gandhi imbues what his friend calls the 'Western' practice and 'adventure' of writing an autobiography with Indian-derived notions of text and performance, in order to make his autobiography open to actualisation by others.

Gandhi as embarrassing

Nicholas Ridout has also stressed the embarrassing nature of stage fright.⁷⁶ Gandhi's willingness to be embarrassed and embarrassing is evident in one episode in which he uses it as a tool to transform a debilitating situation into a scene of self-empowerment. He challenges the criteria which construct behaviour as embarrassing. This episode is described in theatrical terms, in the chapter entitled 'Playing the English Gentleman'. It occurs in a restaurant in which Gandhi and his friend eat prior to a visit to the theatre.⁷⁷ The episode centres on 'the scene I had created' in the restaurant.⁷⁸ Gandhi embarrasses his friend, who is trying to inculcate in him the ways of being an English gentleman, in the midst of a 'very big company of diners'. Gandhi tries to summon the waiter to inquire whether or not the soup is vegetarian, and is prevented from doing so by his friend who describes him as being unable to behave himself and being 'too clumsy for decent society'. He asks Gandhi to leave the restaurant ('this delighted me'). Gandhi ends by writing

that 'I accompanied my friend to the theatre, but he never said a word about the scene I had created. On my part of course there was nothing to say.'⁷⁹ Gandhi gives no account of the theatre or the play he went to see. In making that scene in the restaurant he is challenging the menu which dictates what he eats and also the more general script of etiquette which underlines what it means to be an English gentleman. Given the importance of diet and fasting in Gandhi's version of self-rule ('I went without food that night'),⁸⁰ we can see how making an embarrassing scene in the restaurant contains within it some elements of self-rule and how it challenges the construction of embarrassment itself as part of the maintenance of a status quo. The restaurant as a space where the allocation of seating is clearly an exercise of power (like the seating on a train) is brought home when Gandhi is allowed to stay in a hotel in Pretoria but is at first allocated a room to eat his dinner, which is separate from the main dining room. This is because of the possible objections of the European customers to the presence of a 'coloured' man.⁸¹ It is therefore not surprising that the restaurant should be one arena where Gandhi chooses to make the kind of embarrassing scene which hints at the possibilities of self-rule in matters of diet and fasting.

In addition to Gandhi's confession of his 'double shame' and his representations of stage fright, there is another aspect to his discourse of vulnerability. Both Christopher Ricks and Rom Harre have argued that there is a close connection between embarrassment and adolescence. As Rom Harre puts it, 'Embarrassment is the adolescent emotion par excellence',⁸² while Ricks suggests that what adolescents know about and 'can help us to know about, is embarrassability'.⁸³ Gandhi's defining concerns have the angst and the vulnerability of adolescent experience. Gandhi's deep concern with sartorial politics resonates with an adolescent-like experience of trying on and experimenting with clothes.⁸⁴ Gandhi's preoccupation and struggle with sexuality and the intensity of sexual desire reads less like the testimony of a 'mature' adult, supposedly knowledgeable about the ways of sexuality, and more like the eloquent testimony of an adolescent for whom sexuality is a newly overwhelming and potentially disorienting experience. Gandhi is also preoccupied with the facts of embodiment and corporeality.⁸⁵ The physiological changes which occur in adolescents with the onset of puberty are part of an adolescent's heightened sense of corporeality. These changes include the ways in which the voice of a boy 'breaks', and to a certain extent this 'breaking' of voice resonates with the general concern in *An Autobiography* to define a genuine first-person voice. Throughout *An Autobiography* there is a certain amount of agonising by Gandhi about social situations, his shyness and the rightness or wrongness of various social conventions. Harre notes Aristotle's observation that the young are to be praised for blushing, but a similar blush would be discreditable among the mature. He suggests that this is this because the blushing of the older person manifests a childish degree of insecurity about social place or a lack of nonchalance which one would

expect from socially experienced person, whereas adolescence is associated with high degree of embarrassability.⁸⁶ Gandhi's foregrounding of his social inexperience and his awkward attempts to be in society are not the self-presentation of a mature and nonchalant adult, but are more reminiscent of the social awkwardness of an adolescent.

The experimental nature of the Gandhian autobiography's concern with questions of identity is characteristically adolescent in its openness. But the confusion and open-ended nature of adolescence is an empowering state for his project. It opens up a space for the re-thinking of the terms of identity and for a readiness to speak and think of basic issues which we are embarrassed to speak of when we are supposedly mature and sedate adults, settled into accepting the world as it is. As Christopher Ricks suggests, the traits of immaturity can be 'not just excusable errors, but vantage-points'.⁸⁷ It is crucial to his autobiography that this sense of open-ended and vulnerable crisis is maintained as part of the project of self-rule, and not resolved by it. Gandhi is able to combine the retrospective nature of the autobiography with the future-oriented concerns of the adolescent, poised between different avenues of self-definition, rebelling against the norms which define a settled adulthood and which impose a role for him or her to play, defined by others. The playfully ambiguous poise of the vulnerable and anguished adolescent creates a vantage point from which to conduct the experiments with identity and 'Truth' in his autobiography. As Matustik has pointed out, in the context of postnational identity, the figure of the adolescent is evocative in so far as the adolescent's earnestly questioning attitude and refusal to accept the status quo can be conducive to the reconstruction of alternative normative orders.⁸⁸ In Gandhi, the concern is not to secure identity against adolescent crises, but to use the figure of a crisis individual to erect a new normative structure from what Matustik has called the 'rubble of devalued traditions'.⁸⁹ This is in keeping with the general strategy in Gandhi's key texts of keeping alive a sense of crisis vis-a-vis the concept of modernity.⁹⁰ In this sense, then, the Gandhian autobiography in its content and form opens up the existential possibilities of an adolescent-like state. This state is entangled with stage fright and a high degree of embarrassability, and becomes a scene for self-transforming.

Gandhi also uses the instabilities of temporality in the autobiographical form to reverse the linear chronology of progress from childhood to the state of a mature adult which is the mainstay of autobiography. Richard Coe has argued that the formal literary structure of autobiography is 'complete exactly at the point at which the immature self of childhood is conscious of its transformation into the mature self of the adult who is the narrator of the earlier experience'.⁹¹ Gandhi says in his introduction, 'the instruments for the quest of Truth are as simple as they are difficult. They may appear quite impossible to an arrogant person, and quite possible to an innocent child'.⁹² Christopher Ricks has also argued that what is disconcerting

about the adolescent is his 'affinity with the infantile'.⁹³ The re-evaluation of the childlike in Gandhian autobiography has a larger polemical purpose to it. Thomas Metcalf has pointed to some characterisations of Indians as childlike in British imperial ideologies,⁹⁴ while both Bill Ashcroft and Gail Ching-Liang Low have argued that the trope of the child was an important tool for managing the ambivalence of imperialism, because it absorbed and suppressed contradictions of imperial discourse.⁹⁵ Anne McClintock has shown how the image of the child played an important role in nineteenth-century narratives of progress, typified by the work of the zoologist, Ernest Haeckel, who argued that the ancestral lineage of the human species could be read off the stages of a European child's growth. The adults of 'inferior' racial groups are comparable to the European child before he matures. It was the idea of the child as 'the not yet fully evolved or consequential subject' which made possible the project to 'improve' colonial subjects.⁹⁶

Indian nationalist autobiographies that internalised the narrative of progress worked with the conventional linear chronology of autobiographical development from childhood to mature adult. As one commentator puts it, the growth of a child into an adult can be read as a national fable.⁹⁷ This fable structures Banerjea's autobiography, but if there is a national fable at work in Gandhi's autobiography, it is one in which Indians achieve self-rule by becoming childish adolescents again. Gandhi's valorisation of childishness is an appropriation and inversion of the construct of the childlike native that needs to be read alongside his general questioning of the validity of the narrative of history as progress, which was used in part to justify imperial expansion. It also counters the general representation of childhood in autobiography, where childhood signifies the 'constraints placed on individual initiative and of the formative power of external agents',⁹⁸ and the absence of the political realm.⁹⁹ For Gandhi, re-connecting with childhood becomes a way of relating to the political realm and of defining one's own agency. His construction of childhood challenges the regime of Truth at work in the narrative of progress as it was applied to both the development of human history and the life cycle of the individual person. McClintock has argued that 'inferior' groups could be mapped, measured and ranked against the male white child within the organic metaphor of family and the Enlightenment embrace of rational measurement as an 'optics of truth'.¹⁰⁰ The 'optics of truth' are reversed in Gandhi's rejection of binoculars on the ship, which is an attempt to magnify distance in order to constitute more possibilities of arduous travel. This also recreates a childlike view of the world, in which both distances and time are much longer and more significant when compared to an adult's masterly negotiation and repressive disciplining of time and space.

There is also a link between stage fright and brahmacharya. Both involve a heightened sense of corporeality as part of an enhanced self-awareness. In stage fright one sees one's self as others see one, as a physical, embodied

being, or as, Ridout says, picked out as the object of special attention in front of others.¹⁰¹ The sense of being petrified and so rooted to the spot brings home one's corporeality to one's self. The sweats, trembles, blushes and stammers during stage fright call attention to the corporeality of the body, and some of these symptoms also appear when one is embarrassed or 'burning with shame'. Brahmacharya, too, involves a heightened sense of the body, and it is seen by Gandhi as the final episode in a process of body reflexive practices, which includes fasting.¹⁰² Ridout argues that an understanding of mind-body interaction is crucial to an understanding of the processes of acting, and by extension the failure to act, which characterises stage fright.¹⁰³ Brahmacharya is always imbricated in the entire somatic and psychological, as well as psychosomatic, tissue of experiences which we might call 'sexuality'. Gandhi makes it clear that brahmacharya is concerned not just with the body, but also with the mind and the interactions between the two.¹⁰⁴

Gandhi's gender

There is another dimension to Gandhi's discourse of vulnerability. This is in relation to his active gendering of his identity, which has been insightfully discussed by a number of scholars, who have stressed the relationships between Gandhi's vow of celibacy and his identification with women, and also his express wish to become a woman. They have analysed his attempt to present himself as a mother, and his disposition to nursing.¹⁰⁵ Clearly for Gandhi gender becomes a role which one can play, rather than one which is rooted in the body as a destiny.¹⁰⁶ Gandhi's experimentation with self-feminisation included breaking from masculine and martial notions of courage which were strengthened by the notion of the 'martial races'.¹⁰⁷ But alongside this self-feminisation, Bhiku Parekh has called attention to how Gandhi's was in his own way conventionally chauvinist in his stereotyping of women.¹⁰⁸ My aim here is not to repeat these insights but to suggest four additional points with regard to Gandhi's gendered identity, in terms of how they are rooted in his discourse of vulnerability.

First, as Toril Moi has argued, regardless of whether we believe that masculinity and femininity are manifestations of deep sexual essences or the products of dazzling discursive performances, continuing to label qualities and behaviours as 'masculine' and 'feminine' will foster sex-based stereotypes.¹⁰⁹ It is for this reason that in Gandhi's discourse, the same text can contain both elements of repressive fixed gender distinctions (or what Erikson has eloquently called 'patriarchal bad manners'¹¹⁰) and fragments of an alternative liberating discourse. These two strands are comprehensible only in mutual terms. The tactic of satyagraha as a mobilising strategy which appropriates conventionally recognised norms of femininity reifies that femininity,¹¹¹ but also utilises it for subversive ends in a project in

which Indian men are to become more like women. This play of contradictory tendencies, at once repressive and liberating, is also at work in other instances where Gandhi takes on the role of women in specific situations.¹¹² His taking on of conventionally 'feminine' activities displaces women from a multiplicity of important and powerful roles, even while he radicalises his own gendered identity. This especially refers to what Erikson has called his 'usurpation of motherhood'.¹¹³ Karen Horney has argued that male fears of women stem from a dread of the 'mystery of motherhood'.¹¹⁴ She suggests that boys deny their dread of maternal omnipotence by glorifying and disparaging them at the same time.¹¹⁵ As an example of the masculine dread of the mother figure, she points to the image of Kali dancing on the corpses of slain men.¹¹⁶ Nancy Chodorow suggests that children of both sexes will maintain a fearsome unconscious maternal image as a result of projecting upon it hostility derived from their own feelings of impotence at the hands of their mothers; they might simultaneously have an image of an omnipotent protective mother.¹¹⁷ In the context of exploring Gandhi's oft-repeated remark that he was half a woman, Vinay Lal has written of Gandhi's 'vulva envy',¹¹⁸ but this envy can also be read in terms of an ambivalent dread of women and, in particular, of mothers. Gandhi playing the role of mother can be seen to dissipate the 'mystery of motherhood' as well as appropriating maternal power for men, in order to release utopian possibilities for the project of self-rule.

Toril Moi has argued that reinforcing the idea of traditionally feminine qualities can have the reactionary effect of forcing us to classify more actions and behaviours as masculine and feminine, which in turn will produce more gender stereotyping.¹¹⁹ Gandhi's discourse is trapped in just such a circular movement of gendering. There is another problem here, unavoidable in any attempt to move into intersex spaces. As Moi says, when we try to move into such spaces we no longer have an adequate vocabulary to characterise our experiences, which may mean falling back on familiar gender terms.¹²⁰ It is precisely this problem which is evident in Gandhi's gendered discourse of vulnerability. The more he tries to move into intersex spaces, the more he falls back on a conventional language of femininity. Hence the repressive and liberating strands in his discourse are only comprehensible mutually.

The second point I wish to make is in relation to the British colonial division of Indian males into effeminate and martial groups, which lay at the heart of the theory of martial races. The gender order of British India gifted Gandhi an opportunity to experiment with androgyny and self-feminisation. The notion of martial and effeminate Indian men destabilised gender as a category, and opened up spaces for androgynous and intersex categories. The radical instability of the figure of the Indian man gave Gandhi a degree of freedom and flexibility in his experiments, which colonial masculinity denied to itself as it sought to secure its own stability. Gandhi's discourse on gender, then, actualises the subversive possibilities repressed by, but central

to, the gender order of British India. He enacts the possibilities of androgyny which were inherent in notions of Indian masculinity in that gender order. In doing so, he also breaks from the way in which many Indian male groups reinforced the martial-effeminate classification.¹²¹

The third point I wish to add to the debate about Gandhi's gendered identity is in regard to brahmacharya. Critics have focussed on this in relation to his desire to be a woman, and have pointed out the problems with this.¹²² However, Erikson has rightly gone further and considered Gandhi's brahmacharya in terms of his relationship with his father. There are two key episodes here. The first is the father's arrangement of Gandhi's marriage. The second is Gandhi's nursing of his father on his deathbed. Gandhi's depiction of his wedding resonates with resentment at his father's responsibility for arranging it, even as it is framed within respectfulness. His father has a near fatal accident in his journey to the wedding, and it is interesting to note that Gandhi's memory of his wedding focuses on his father. He expresses his resentment for his 'father having married me as a child'.¹²³ The image of his father, whom he can picture so vividly on the wedding dais,¹²⁴ is supposedly a picture of authority, but he is injured and also humiliated by his employer who would not let him go 'until the last moment' (hence the need for the special coaches for his father to get to the wedding).¹²⁵ Furthermore, after describing his father's injuries, Gandhi adds, 'However, I forgot my grief over my father's injuries in the childish amusement of the wedding'.¹²⁶ This forgetfulness is to be repeated later in another scene in which Gandhi's marriage bed and his father's deathbed are juxtaposed. Here Gandhi describes how when he was nursing his sick father he left his father's bedside to make love to his wife in their bedroom; in the interval his father dies and Gandhi is left with a 'blot I have never been able to efface or forget'.¹²⁷ On top of this, the 'poor mite that was born to my wife scarcely breathed for more than three or four days'.¹²⁸

It is clear that Gandhi's complex attitudes to sexuality and his vow of brahmacharya are motivated by his experience of his early marriage and his neglect of his father. Erikson explores Gandhi's obvious ambivalence towards his father by making a number of persuasive points. He suggests that Gandhi's nursing care of his father might be read as a parable in which the son not only atones for his own sins but also forgives the father for his forcing Gandhi into an early marriage. The early marriage permanently marred Gandhi's sexuality, and also depleted his 'power of spiritual concentration'. Here Erikson, like others, points in particular to the Hindu belief that loss of semen signifies a drain on higher vitality. Powers of concentration are increased by celibacy because the physical sexual substance lost in ejaculation is transmuted into a higher form of energy.¹²⁹ Gandhi shared the belief that when accompanied by appropriate spiritual exercises, semen got transformed into *ojas* or spiritual power, which sharpened the intellect and increased powers of concentration.¹³⁰ Hence for Gandhi there was an intimate link between celibacy, energy and a self-empowering politics.¹³¹

Erikson also points out that on his first page of his autobiography, Gandhi refers to his father as 'given to carnal pleasures'.¹³² Gandhi's mother was in fact his father's fourth wife. By insisting on his son's early marriage, Gandhi's father had passed his own carnal weakness to his son.¹³³ Gandhi's abandonment of his father on his deathbed for his own marital bed can then seem like a form of almost exquisite vengeance. The reader is left wondering whether Gandhi's hasty recourse to the marital bed is not at some level seen by Gandhi himself as an act of vengeful parricide. In part this is suggested by his own admission of the 'shame of carnal desire even at the critical hour of my father's death'.¹³⁴ The juxtaposing of 'my carnal desire' with 'my father's death' at the turning point of a crucial moment suggests that at some level there was a causal link for Gandhi between his desire and his father's death.¹³⁵ In general Gandhi associated sexual intercourse with death. This association is a recurrent theme in a number of schools of Hindu thought.¹³⁶

On one level, then, Gandhi defined his brahmacharya against the typically masculine weakness of his father's concupiscence. In nursing his father, he was also defining his motherly identity against him.¹³⁷ Brahmacharya is seen in general as a route to an androgynous identity, in so far as it assumes that sexuality divided human qualities into masculine and feminine poles. In Hindu religious thought, the unity of male and female principles has been conceptualised in a variety of traditions, and Gandhi's belief that brahmacharya opened up possibilities for such a unity stems in part from these traditions.¹³⁸

However, there is another element here in Gandhi's representation of his wedding which has not been commented upon. Gandhi describes how his father as a *diwan* in favour with the ruler was provided with special stage coaches in order to reduce his journey so that he could get to his children's wedding on time.¹³⁹ Although his father does complete the five days' journey in two days, the coach topples over in the third stage and 'he sustained severe injuries. He arrived bandaged all over. Both his and our interest in the coming event was half destroyed.'¹⁴⁰ As already mentioned, the appendix to *Hind Swaraj* lists Thomas Taylor's *The Fallacy of Speed* (1909) as one of the works Gandhi consulted. Gandhi's father is both the first perpetrator and the first victim of the fallacy of speedy travel. What is key here is the configuration of speedy travel with sexuality (and there is a sense in which the attractiveness of speed is seen as typically masculine), and the combination of slow travel with brahmacharya. Gandhi's crucial reflections on brahmacharya take place on his long marches during the so-called Zulu rebellion.¹⁴¹ Once again, insights into the difficulties of what Gandhi calls 'self-realisation'¹⁴² are intertwined with the choice of his style of travelling. Given Gandhi's criticism of the fallacy of travel, his insights into brahmacharya could not be achieved while on a train journey. Gandhi's inner explorations of brahmacharya on his long marches carrying the wounded during the Zulu 'rebellion' recalls as a counterpoint the earlier episode of a

journey in which issues of sexuality in relation to his father are entangled with modes of travel. Erikson has pointed to the complexities of Gandhi's wish to better his father, and to prove himself spiritually superior to him.¹⁴³ Not only does Gandhi tackle the carnality which his father so spectacularly failed to do so, he also elaborates alternatives to speedy travel in doing so, thereby defining himself as a different kind of traveller from his father.

Gandhi's active gendering of his identity also underpinned the hyper-empathy and hyper-sensitivity necessary for satyagraha. Playing the mother is important for Gandhi's conception of satyagraha. Gandhi's concern with the mother is focussed on the mother-infant relationship, but the image of clinging to India 'even as a child clings to its mother's breast'¹⁴⁴ is more than just sentimental. Chodorow has pointed to the powerful, transformative claims that motherhood makes upon identities and a sense of self.¹⁴⁵ Here I will focus on one crucial aspect of the transforming nature of maternal role behaviour which is central to satyagraha and the project of self-rule. Chodorow explores the transforming process of mothering in terms of the mother-infant relationship in particular. She argues that the infant experiences itself as merged or continuous with its mother, and that its preverbal demands and expectations flow from this feeling of merging. The infant's identification is primary in the sense that its object of cathexis is someone it does not yet differentiate from itself. So the infant is 'cognitively narcissistic' in that its experience of self is an experience of everything else in the world. Chodorow also argues there is an infant-mother mutuality in this relationship. Women get gratification from mothering at fundamentally different levels of experience from any other human relationship. Mothering is done through the empathy of primary identification in which they experience the infant as continuous with the self and not separate. So women more than men will be open to and preoccupied with relational issues that go into mothering – feelings of primary identification, lack of separateness or differentiation, and ego and body-ego boundary issues. Because girls identify with their mothers as the same sex in a way in which boys do not, girls emerge from this period with a basis for empathy which is built into a primary definition of self in a way that boys do not. Boys come to define themselves as more separate and distinct, with greater sense of rigid ego boundaries, and differentiation. According to Chodorow, in order to feel adequately masculine the boy has to differentiate himself from others in a way in which girls need not do so. This also means that masculinity is defined negatively, rather than positively, as that which is not feminine or connected to women. The 'masculine' personality is defined more in terms of the denial of relation and connection, and the denial of 'femininity', whereas the 'feminine' personality comes to include fundamental notions of the self in relationship with others. 'The basic feminine sense of self is connected to the world, the basic masculine self of self is separate'; 'Feminine identification processes are relational, whereas masculine identification processes tend to deny relationship.'¹⁴⁶

The psychological and relational capacities for mothering, as argued by Chodorow, are central to Gandhi's project of self-rule. In general terms, the project of self-rule with its exploration and constitution of the relationships between inner space and political realm requires loose boundaries of ego and body-ego, to the extent that, as we have seen, the terms 'inner' and 'outer' cannot be clearly demarcated from each other. Gandhi's reliance on dialogue and mutuality requires a powerful capacity for connecting and empathising, which, if Chodorow is right, are the features of mothering. There is also something cognitively narcissistic about the assumption Gandhi makes that events in the social realm can be read in terms of one's own personal failings at a fundamental level, even before one has acted or failed to act in these events. A number of scholars have stressed how Gandhi sometimes explained communal conflict in the social realm in terms of his own temporising in the matter of brahmacharya.¹⁴⁷ Louis Reiza has pointed to the dangers of the narcissistic extremes of autobiographical writing, in which one relapses into a kind of anarchic privacy where the consciousness of one's life as one's own becomes exclusive of others in and through discourse.¹⁴⁸ Gandhi recreates the narcissism of autobiography as a political form in which the relationships between the inner world of subjectivity and the political realm are mutually constitutive in the project of self-rule. But in this he relies on a maternal capacity for relationships and empathy, as well as the infant's own cognitively narcissistic sense of the world.

Ridout has convincingly argued that the loss of control of bodily functions during stage fright, including the key functions of movement and speech, is like some 'ghastly regression to a state of infant capacity'.¹⁴⁹ For Gandhi this regression in stage fright is necessarily productive for his gendered identity. This is because, as Chodorow speculates, girls do not experience regression in the same threatening terms to their egos as boys do.¹⁵⁰ Being open about one's experience of stage fright in Gandhi's autobiographical project means staging one's regression as a productive act. In particular, it means that Gandhi as a man is not afraid to regress to an infant-like stage. The configuration of motherhood, infancy and stage fright is evident in another episode. At a vegetarian dinner party hosted by Gandhi in a non-vegetarian restaurant in Holborn as a 'new experiment', Gandhi describes the scene thus:

When my turn for speaking came, I stood up to make a speech. I had with great care thought out one which would consist of a very few sentences. But I could not proceed beyond the first sentence. I had read of Addison that he began his maiden speech in the House of Commons, repeating 'I conceive' three times, and when he could proceed no further, a wag stood up and said, 'The gentleman conceived thrice but brought forth nothing'. I had thought of making a humorous speech taking this anecdote as the text. I therefore began with it and stuck there. My memory entirely failed me and in attempting a humorous speech I made myself ridiculous. 'I thank you, gentlemen, for having kindly responded to my invitation', I said abruptly, and sat down.¹⁵¹

There is an uncanny similarity between Gandhi's description of the British parliament as a 'sterile woman'¹⁵² and his own subject position in this experience of stage fright when he takes as his script a moment from the annals of British parliamentary speaking. Gandhi's stage fright here involves a premature and miscarrying attempt at maternal role behaviour. What blocks his becoming an Indian mother is his attempt to play the English gentleman. It is only with his failure to inhabit this role that he can enter the space where he can adopt maternal role behaviour, when he willingly appropriates the role of the Indian man as both 'masculine' and 'feminine' in the taxonomy of the gender order of British India.

Gandhi's experimentation with inter-gender positions is in sharp contrast to Indian travelogues of the nineteenth century. While these reflect on the different gender arrangements in British and Indian societies, they rarely question gender categories themselves, or the boundaries of their own gendered identities. Pillai sees the status and well-being of English women as further proof of Britain's superiority over the 'East'.¹⁵³ Malabari reflects on the differences between Europe and Asia by focussing on a monolithic figure of the woman,¹⁵⁴ while Sayyid Ahmad Khan has a section in his travelogue on a comparison and contrast [mauqabla] between Hindustani and European women, in which the former's lack of education is referred to in relation to the latter's educational opportunities.¹⁵⁵ These reflections on the status of women in Indian and British societies emerge from a genealogy of texts in which the standard of civilisation in each society was seen to be revealed, in part at least, by the position and treatment of women. Sayyid Ahmad Khan's use of the word 'mauqabla' is an interesting one since it also means competition or a contest, thus evincing how the position of women became a competitive issue in inter-cultural perceptions in the nineteenth century. As we have seen, these travelogues internalise the narrative of progressive modernity, and in doing so their authors reflect upon their lacking selves in relation to that modernity. So, too, they see Indian women as failed selves in relation to British women. By identifying Indian women with the backwardness of Indian society, the concern with gender arrangements in these travelogues falls under the aegis of a progressive politics. The authors' ostensible aim is to progressively modernise Indian society, in part by emulating the gender arrangements of British society as well as its modern technology. Hence the association made in these travelogues between British women, the attributes of freedom and civilisation,¹⁵⁶ and the mission of progressive reform, sometimes dedicated to British women as inspirational figures in their texts. Pillai's work is 'respectfully dedicated to the Enlightened Daughters of Great Britain in appreciation of their generous spirit and deep interest in the author's mission', while Malabari appeals to English women and a personified mother England to support his mission of progressive gender reform in India.¹⁵⁷ However, both Pillai and Malabari work with fixed gender roles. This is clear in Pillai's anxiety

about the possibility of inter-gender identities. He qualifies his praise for gender arrangements in British society when he refers to the 'tendency in English women to appear like men. They seem to forget that sex is eternally fixed by nature, that it is an *alte terminus hoerens*'.¹⁵⁸ Malabari criticises what he sees as one of the consequences of gender arrangements in Britain when he refers to 'mothers who belie their motherly instincts', thereby 'neglecting to utilize nature's bounty'.¹⁵⁹ His image of a mother England as the presiding figure of his programme of reform reinforces a conventional gender role: 'May He lead the motherly kindness of England to soften the hard lot of the orphans of India, sustained by the sympathy of a Queen Mother, who is a queen amongst mothers, and a mother amongst earthly queens!'¹⁶⁰ Malabari's concern with a progressive politics focuses on safeguarding domesticity as a feminine space rather than undermining it. We have seen how he points to the stressful consequences of the modern technology of transport without questioning the master narrative of progressive modernity. In part, this is evident in the way he foregrounds the effects of this technology of transport on women in particular, referring to 'some fashionable cad, nearly driving over a fragile old woman', and the exhausted faces and demeanour of some of the women passengers on public transport. For him the 'crowds of women in the streets' are a 'sight more striking than attractive'. This is because 'after all, a woman's place is at home, rather than in the street'.¹⁶¹ Pillai's and Malabari's travelogues also contain conventional moralising sententiae which draw on stereotypical images of women.¹⁶²

The gender politics of these travellers typify the larger politics of gender reform in British India which both Sinha and Burton have discussed as collusion between two patriarchal elites, aiming at the circumscription of Indian women within an enlarged sphere of domesticity.¹⁶³ For these reasons, Indian travellers dedicated to the progressive reform of the position of Indian women actually have much in common with other Indian travellers who seem to articulate a different position. Mirza Abu Taleb Khan's perceptions of gender arrangements in Britain in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries seem to be the reverse of the later travel writers. For him the liberty that English women have is apparent only and lacking in substance [*āzādī zāhirī*], and, in fact, for him the repressive nature of English laws and customs at that time towards women are worthy of emulation in India. This is because, according to him, women in India have much more freedom of movement outside their immediate households, precisely because of the institution of purdah [*vaz'e purdah*], and they have inheritance rights and custodial rights of children in the case of divorce.¹⁶⁴ Thus, although on one level this position is the inverse of the later perspectives of Pillai and Malabari, it shares with them the same fear and anxiety of women's freedom of movement outside a domestic space.

Whatever the progressive politics of Indian travellers in the nineteenth century, then, they tended to work with fixed gender distinctions, and

expressed a fear of inter-gender or cross-gender identities, even as they identified with the suffering of Indian women. This configuration of a narrative of modernising progress and fixed gender distinctions and identities is also evident in Nehru's travelling autobiography. While Stanley Wolpert has suggested the possibility of at least one homoerotic attachment in Nehru's life,¹⁶⁵ in his autobiography Nehru presents both himself and India in conventionally gendered terms. India becomes a woman in a variety of relationships with Nehru. Nehru conflates the figure of India with his wife Kamala, who 'becomes a symbol of Indian women . . . curiously mixed up with my ideas of India . . . so elusive and so full of mystery'.¹⁶⁶ Here, then, India becomes a woman in a difficult arranged marriage. Taking another masculine subject position, Nehru presents himself as a lover who courts India as the elusive beloved, referring to India as possessing and beckoning him, giving him 'occasional and tantalizing' glimpses of herself.¹⁶⁷ Nehru's autobiography also contains elements of a paternalistic language of possession and a masculine language of sexual honour and shame when he discusses Indian history in terms of harlotry and virginity.¹⁶⁸ He also, in language reminiscent of Fanon's 'Algeria Unveiled', writes of trying to 'unveil' India.¹⁶⁹ Finally, his attitude of repulsion and attraction towards India as a woman is evident in his epilogue to the *Discovery*, where he describes India as 'shameful and repellent . . . perverse and obstinate, sometimes even a little hysteric [sic], this lady with a past'.¹⁷⁰

In Indian travelogues of the nineteenth century, and in Nehru's travelling autobiography, the internalisation of the narrative of modernity clearly takes place alongside the fixing of gender distinctions. In Gandhi's travelling autobiography, while there is a similarly complex interplay between the liberating and the repressive in his gender discourse, he strives to become effeminate in all kinds of ways and elaborates inter-gender identities which previous travellers found fearful. In this sense, Gandhi breaks from the phenomenon of the 'Founding Father', in which, as Bill Ashcroft has noted, decolonising states invest their notions of political maturity.¹⁷¹ Gandhi also uses the instabilities of temporality in the autobiographical form to reverse the linear chronology of progress from childhood to the state of a mature adult, and in doing so overcomes masculine fears of regression into a childlike or infant-like state. Moreover, in Gandhi's discourse brahmacharya is not just figured as an alternative kind of journey, but also imbricated with processes of self-authorship. It fuses together the image and practice of self-control with creative play which is imprinted on the autobiography as a self-made text, with its combination of careful and controlled narrative, its concern for the goals of impression management,¹⁷² and its playful experimentation with a variety of roles in the quest for 'Truth'. The journey of being hurled on the ocean as children, itself the outcome of previous journeys in previous lives,¹⁷³ is re-fashioned through brahmacharya as the forward-looking and self-empowered journey of self-rule, in which the reawakening

of childhood, adolescence and even infancy suggests alternative possibilities for renewed growth. The paradox of Gandhi's self-empowerment through self-reduction in his discourse of vulnerability is captured in his own remark, which he made in the context of reflecting upon brahmacharya, namely 'I must reduce myself to zero'.¹⁷⁴ But zero is a productive number. We have seen how episodes of self-reduction in Gandhi's autobiographical texts are moments of self-empowerment as well. This is the case with the processes of stage fright, regression to an infant-like stage, becoming childish, being an embarrassing adolescent, and ultimately belittlement by colonial rule, which turns out to be a form of self-belittlement. There is one further dimension to Gandhi's discourse of vulnerability, and this lies in his self-representation as a translator. It is to this I now turn.

Notes

1. Gandhi, *An Autobiography*, Part 1, Ch. 2.
2. Zachariah, p. 262.
3. Matustik, pp. 17–19; see also Goodwin, p. 9.
4. Etienne Balibar and Immanuel Wallerstein, *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities* (London: Verso, 1995), p. 95.
5. Banerjea, pp. 129–133.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 130, p. 133, p. 134.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 133.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 129, where the narrator as orator details his walks by the river as he mentally prepares his speech; and pp. 131–2, where he describes himself on two occasions as absorbed in the act of memorising some verses and preparing a speech, 'insensible to all distraction'.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 133.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 133.
11. Nehru, *An Autobiography*, p. 134.
12. Nehru, *Discovery*, pp. 513–4.
13. *Ibid.*, pp. 77–8, which contains in essence a methodology for reading religious texts.
14. *Ibid.*, pp. 77–8.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 511.
16. Robert Nisbet, *History of the Idea of Progress* (New York: Basic Books, 1980), p. 172.
17. Banerjea, p. 286.
18. *Hind Swaraj*, p. 115.
19. This is the episode where he leaves his dying father's side to have sexual intercourse with his wife. Gandhi, *An Autobiography*, pp. 43–44.
20. Suzanne Retzinger, 'Shame and the social bond', in David Parker, Rosamund Dalziell, Iain Wright (eds), *Shame and the Modern Self* (Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 1996), pp. 6–20, p. 7.
21. John Braithwaite, 'Shame and modernity', in David Parker, Rosamund Dalziell, Iain Wright (eds), *Shame and the Modern Self* (Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 1996), pp. 21–41, p. 27.

22. D.B. Moore, 'Shame: Human universal or cultural construct?' in David Parker, Rosamund Dalziell, Iain Wright (eds), *Shame and the Modern Self* (Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 1996), pp. 42–83, p. 75.
23. Moore, p. 76.
24. Braithwaite, pp. 35–7.
25. Moore, p. 76.
26. Reitzinger, p. 14.
27. Moore, p. 76.
28. Reitzinger, p. 14.
29. Cited by Nicholas Ridout, 'The Undoing of Theatre: the Politics of Affect on the Contemporary Stage' (University of London, Ph.D., 2003), p. 131. I am grateful to my colleague Nicholas Ridout for allowing me to consult his Ph.D. thesis.
30. Reitzinger, p. 11.
31. *Hind Swaraj*, pp. 39–40.
32. Gandhi, 'Cinderella of Empire', *Collected Works*, 3: p. 383.
33. The word 'self-handicapping' is from James Shepperd and Robert M. Arkin, 'Shyness and self-presentation', in W. Ray Crozier (ed.), *Shyness and Embarrassment. Perspectives from Social Psychology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 286–314, p. 292.
34. Rosamund Dalziell, 'The bastards Smith and Jones: illegitimacy, shame and Australian autobiography', in David Parker, Rosamund Dalziell, Iain Wright (eds), *Shame and the Modern Self* (Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 1996), pp. 130–47.
35. *Ibid.*, p. 132, Rosamund Dalziell, *Shameful Autobiographies. Shame in Contemporary Australian Autobiographies and Culture* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1999), p. 268.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 268.
37. *Ibid.*, p. 272.
38. Mary Evans, Ch. 4.
39. Gandhi, *An Autobiography*, pp. 26–9, p. 38, pp. 42–4. For Gandhi's openness with regard to intimate sexual details in other contexts, see Parekh, pp. 187–9.
40. For example, Karim Khan, pp. 132–3, p. 168, and Pillai, p. 24. Neither Sayyid Ahmad Khan nor Pandian mentions the theatre in their travel accounts.
41. Yusuf Khan summarises the action of the play he sees in some detail, pp. 43–8.
42. Mirza Abu Taleb Khan, pp. 339–43.
43. Malabari, p. 204 ff.
44. For example, in the case of Banerjea, see above.
45. See Gandhi, *An Autobiography*, p. 51, p. 71, p. 98, p. 170, p. 215. Nicholas Ridout notes that while studies of stage fright from a musical perspective are numerous, theatrical literature tends to avoid the subject. He concurs with those who suggest that this is because stage fright is seen as 'shameful' by performers, and is therefore hidden away as a subject (Ridout, pp. 77–8). As we shall see below, Gandhi strongly emphasises his sense of shame at his stage fright.
46. Gandhi, *An Autobiography*, p. 72, p. 215.
47. *Ibid.*, p. 412.
48. Nehru, Lajpat Rai, Jayakar, Banerjea and Iqbal make no mention of sexual issues.
49. Ridout, pp. 62–3.
50. For my discussion of this, see above in this chapter, and Chapter 7.
51. *Ibid.*, p. 92.
52. Gandhi, *An Autobiography*, p. 71.

53. Ibid., p. 71, p. 170.
54. Ibid., pp. 14–16.
55. Ridout, p. 82.
56. Ibid., p. 51.
57. This is the title of Part 1, Ch. 15 of Gandhi, *An Autobiography*.
58. Ibid., pp. 60–2, p. 74.
59. Ibid., p. 62.
60. This is made clear in *ibid.*, p. 62.
61. Ibid., pp. 109–11.
62. *Satyagraha in South Africa*, p. 272.
63. 'This was my debut in the Small Causes Court. I appeared for the defendant and had thus to cross-examine the plaintiff's witnesses. I stood up but my heart sank into my boots. My head was reeling and I felt as though the whole court was doing likewise. I could think of no question to ask. The judge must have laughed, and the vakils no doubt enjoyed the spectacle. But I was past seeing anything. I sat down and told the agent I could not conduct the case . . .' Gandhi, *An Autobiography*, p. 98.
64. Ibid., p. 373.
65. *Satyagraha in South Africa*, p. 247. See also p. 122.
66. Gandhi, *An Autobiography*, pp. 45–6.
67. Philip Lutgendorf, *The Life of a Text. Performing the Ramacaritmanas of Tulsidas* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1994), pp. 378–82.
68. Paula Richman (ed.), *Many Ramayanas: The Diversity of a Narrative Tradition in South Asia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, c. 1991).
69. Paula Richman, 'Introduction' in *Many Ramayanas*, p. 12.
70. Lutgendorf, pp. 18–29.
71. Ibid., p. 36.
72. Ibid., p. 439.
73. Gandhi, *An Autobiography*, p. 16. See also pp. 249–50.
74. Lutgendorf has stressed that Tulsidas' text was an attempt to integrate and synthesise different strands of Hinduism; this echoes the underlying theme of the epic itself, which is reconciliation (Lutgendorf, p. 10, p. 16).
75. Parekh, Ch. 8.
76. Ridout, Ch. 3.
77. Gandhi, *An Autobiography*, pp. 60–1.
78. Ibid., p. 61.
79. Ibid., p. 61.
80. Ibid., p. 61.
81. Ibid., p. 120.
82. Rom Harre, 'Embarrassment: a conceptual analysis', in W. Ray Crozier (ed.), *Shyness and Embarrassment. Perspectives from Social Psychology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 181–204, p. 201.
83. Christopher Ricks, *Keats and Embarrassment* (1974; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), p. 12.
84. For an excellent exposition of Gandhi's sartorial politics, see Emma Tarlo, *Clothing Matters. Dress and Identity in India* (London: Hurst, 1996), Ch. 3.
85. The best discussion of this is to be found in Alter, *Gandhi's Body*.
86. Harre, p. 191.
87. Ricks, p. 12.
88. Matustik, p. 46.

89. Matustik, p. 46. Rudolph & Rudolph discuss Gandhi's commitment to non-violence and satyagraha in terms of his transformation of traditional ideals for modern purposes, p. 158, while Parekh considers the play between 'rootedness and openness' in Gandhi's drawing upon the cultural capital of others, while remaining rooted in a Hindu tradition; p. 21.
90. See above, Ch. 3.
91. Richard N. Coe, *When the Grass Was Taller. Autobiography and the Experience of Childhood* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1984), p. 9.
92. Gandhi, *An Autobiography*, p. 16.
93. Ricks, p. 12.
94. Metcalf, p. 25, p. 192, p. 199, pp. 229–30.
95. Bill Ashcroft, 'Primitive and wingless: the colonial subject as child', in Wendy S. Jackson (ed.), *Dickens and the Children of Empire* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2000), pp. 184–202, p. 184, Gail Ching-Liang Low, *White Skins/Black Masks: Representation and Colonialism* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), p. 45.
96. Jo-Ann Wallace, 'Describing the Water-Babies', in Chris Tiffin and Alan Lawson (eds), *Describing Empire. Post-Colonialism and Textuality* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), pp. 171–84, p. 176.
97. Wolfgang Binder, 'Finding the right words: the invention of selfhood in David Dabydeen's work', in Alfred Hornung and Ernstpeter Ruhe (eds), *Postcolonialism and Autobiography* (Amsterdam: Editions Rodopi B.V., 1998), pp. 135–47, p. 135.
98. Keith Shearer, 'Depictions of childhood in South African autobiography, with particular reference to the 1920s', *English in Africa*, 16, 1 (May 1989): pp. 39–69, p. 42.
99. Coe, *When the Grass Was Taller*, p. 233.
100. McClintock, pp. 50–1.
101. Ridout, Ch. 3.
102. Gandhi, *An Autobiography*, p. 199. For an important discussion of Gandhi's philosophy of fasting, see Alter, Ch. 2. For the eclecticism behind Gandhi's philosophy and practice of fasting, see Parekh, p. 21.
103. Ridout, 'Undoing of Theatre', Ch. 3.
104. See Part III, Chapters 7 and 8, also p. 301, Gandhi, *An Autobiography*.
105. Parekh, Ch. 6, Rudolph & Rudolph, p. 204, pp. 214–5, Erikson, p. 116, p. 120, pp. 128–30, p. 404, p. 405, Vinay Lal, 'Nakedness, non-violence, and Brahmacharya: Gandhi's experiments in celibate sexuality', *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, vol. 9, nos 1–2 (January–April 2000), pp. 105–36. For some instances of Gandhi's self-presentation as a mother, see his description of himself as a 'mother' to the children at Tolstoy farm in general, and to the girls in particular (*Satyagraha*, p. 196; Erikson has some pertinent criticisms to make here of Gandhi's subject position; see Erikson, pp. 238–41). There are other examples of his attempt to actively take the subject position of a mother. In *An Autobiography*, there is a moment when he plays the role of a nursing mother after reading a text entitled 'Advice to a mother': 'I nursed both my children according to the instructions given in the book' (p. 193). This is continuous with his role as a nurse at other moments in the text (pp. 167–9).
106. Toril Moi, expanding on Simone de Beauvoir, argues that the female body is a 'situation' and not a destiny; 'What is a woman?' p. 76. The relationship between gender and the biological body continues to be an area of debate. For two clear and useful interventions in the question of the sex-gender distinction, see Toril Moi, *What is a Woman? And Other Essays* (Oxford: Oxford University

- Press, 1999), pp. 3–120 and R.W. Connell, *Gender* (Cambridge and Oxford: Polity Press, 2002), pp. 6–10, pp. 30–6. See also Donna Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women*, pp. 197–8.
107. Rudolph & Rudolph, p. 161, p. 168–9, pp. 183–92, p. 248; for the notion of martial races in India, see David Omissy, '“Martial Races”: Ethnicity and Security in Colonial India 1858–1939', *War and Society*, 9 (May 1991), pp. 1–27.
108. Parekh, pp. 182–3. Gandhi's focus on Sita and Draupadi as legendary and epic role models for Indian women resonates with this fixing of women in the domestic and traditional realm (Geraldine Forbes, *Women in Modern India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 124–5, p. 150). These role models involve proofs of their sexual 'fidelity' to their husbands. This normalising discourse on sexual chastity and fidelity is evident in Gandhi's use of the reverse and negative image of the prostitute to signify corruption and lack of agency (*Hind Swaraj*, p. 30). It has been argued that in the Indian context, some of the women included in the term 'prostitute' were able to exercise agency and thereby subvert the patriarchal paradigm (Veena Talwar Oldenburg, 'Lifestyle as resistance', in Douglas Haynes, Gyan Prakash (eds), *Contesting Power: Resistance and Everyday Social Relations in South Asia* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1991), pp. 23–61). Gandhi's singular use of the term effaces the heterogeneous groups which the term includes, especially in India, and it also resounds with the attempts by reformers to apply the term to such groups as the devadasis, thereby normalising them by depriving them of their lands and professions (Forbes, p. 182). When measured against an Indian background, the term's singularising and homogenising function is even more emphatic in Gandhi's discourse. There is also a further sense of the 'prostitute' as a threat to male sexual control in Gandhi's work, which is dramatised in his autobiography in terms of his encounters with women of 'loose virtue' (*An Autobiography*, pp. 37–8, pp. 79–80, p. 107, p. 159).
109. Toril Moi, p. 107.
110. Erikson, p. 243.
111. One of the targets of satyagraha in South Africa was the Cape Supreme Court judgement in March 1913 to the effect that all marriages which were not conducted according to Christian rites and registered in South Africa had no legal status. This nullified all marriages in the Indian community which were conducted according to other religious rites, and also all marriages contracted in India itself (*Satyagraha*, p. 221). As Gandhi says, this was an 'insufferable situation' but what is telling is his use of language: married Indian women ceased to 'rank as the wives of their husbands and were degraded to the rank of concubines' (*Satyagraha*, p. 221). Satyagraha here represents an intervention to restore the hierarchy of imagery and roles within the category of 'woman', fixing the very 'feminine' qualities which satyagraha seeks to appropriate in the first place.
112. In *Satyagraha in South Africa*, during the long march of the striking miners, Gandhi discusses the cooking arrangements in the camps, and makes it clear that he was the 'leader among the cooks' and also in sole charge of 'serving the food' (*Satyagraha*, p. 236). On the one hand, he takes upon himself a conventionally 'feminine' role in the kitchen but on the other hand this appropriates the role of other women and also in a sense displaces them from one arena of possible power. This simultaneous appropriation of a feminine role and the displacement of women is also at work in his self-presentation as mother and nurse to his children. In his focus on himself as a mother, he effaces his wife in

the process. As Erikson has noted, Gandhi did not indicate what his 'usurpation of motherhood' meant to the children concerned or to the mothers themselves (Erikson, p. 241). Moreover, not only does Gandhi act as a mother and nurse to his children, he also acts as midwife. He mentions that when he delivered their last child, the doctor was not immediately available and 'some time was lost in fetching the midwife'; he adds 'even if she had been on the spot, she could not have helped delivery' (*An Autobiography*, p. 193). In an image in his autobiography, before his failed debut in the law court on account of his stage fright, he recounts his struggles to study Indian law and concludes, 'I had not the courage to conduct a case. I was helpless beyond words, even as the bride come fresh to her father-in-law's house!' (*An Autobiography*, p. 97). Clearly, Gandhi identifies with the subject positions of women embedded in a plurality of roles.

113. Erikson, p. 241.
114. Karen Horney, 'The dread of woman. Observations on a specific difference in the dread felt by men and by woman respectively for the opposite sex', in Harold Kelman (ed.), *Feminine Psychology* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1967), pp. 133–46, p. 141.
115. *Ibid.*, p. 136.
116. *Ibid.*, p. 134.
117. Nancy Chodorow, *The Reproduction of Mothering. Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Gender* (1978; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), p. 122. However, the main thrust of her argument is to show how girls and boys deal with this ambivalence towards the figure of the mother in different ways.
118. Vinay Lal, 'Nakedness, non-violence, and Brahmacharya: Gandhi's experiments in celibate sexuality', *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, vol. 9, nos 1–2 (January–April 2000), pp. 105–36, p. 128.
119. Toril Moi, p. 111.
120. *Ibid.*, p. 115.
121. David Omissy has noted that the British state's deployment of the theory of the martial races often merged with the self-perceptions of specific Indian groups, and he points out that Indians often did not challenge the taxonomy of martial versus non-martial races as such. They were more concerned to appropriate or include themselves in the category of 'martial' in order to benefit from state policies (Omissy, 'Martial races', pp. 1–27). Sinha has shown that this was especially clear in the 'native volunteer movement' of 1885–1886 (Sinha, *Colonial Masculinity*, pp. 69–99).
122. Parekh, p. 180ff.
123. Gandhi, *An Autobiography*, p. 25.
124. 'I can picture to myself, even today, how we sat on the wedding dais . . .' *Ibid.*, p. 25.
125. *Ibid.*, p. 25.
126. *Ibid.*, p. 25.
127. *Ibid.*, p. 44. The reader is left wondering whether Gandhi's hasty recourse to the marital bed is not at some level seen by Gandhi himself as an act of vengeful symbolic parricide. In part this is suggested by his own admission as to the 'shame of carnal desire even at the critical hour of my father's death' (p. 44). The juxtaposing of 'my carnal desire' with 'my father's death' at the turning point of a crucial moment suggests that at some level there was a causal link for Gandhi between his desire and his father's death.
128. *Ibid.*, p. 44.

129. Erikson, p. 120. See also Parekh, pp. 177–80, p. 184, Rudolph & Rudolph, pp. 196–9, Vinay Lal, pp. 125–6.
130. Parekh, p. 177.
131. This is discussed in detail in Parekh, Ch. 6. See also Rudolph, pp. 196–9.
132. Gandhi, *An Autobiography*, p. 19, Erikson, p. 127.
133. Erikson, p. 128, p. 130.
134. Gandhi, *An Autobiography*, p. 44.
135. Rudolph and Rudolph argue that the death of Gandhi's father illustrated how 'lust' could 'kill', and how 'in some so far unfronted recess of himself he had "wanted" it to do so'; p. 206.
136. Parekh, p. 178.
137. Erikson, p. 116, p. 405.
138. Parekh, p. 179.
139. Gandhi and his second brother were to be married on the same occasion, along with a cousin; see Gandhi, *An Autobiography*, p. 24.
140. Gandhi, *An Autobiography*, p. 25.
141. Ibid., pp. 289–91.
142. Ibid., p. 14.
143. Erikson, pp. 124–5, p. 129.
144. *Hind Swaraj*, p. 71.
145. Chodorow, p. xvii.
146. Ibid., p. 61, p. 85, p. 109, p. 167, p. 169, p. 174, p. 176.
147. Parekh, pp. 193–201, Alter, p. 26, Rudolph & Rudolph, p. 197, pp. 210–11, Vinay Lal, p. 133.
148. Louis Reiza in Olney, p. 291.
149. Ridout, p. 84.
150. Chodorow, p. 167. She argues that girls do not define themselves in terms of the denial of pre-Oedipal relational modes to the same extent as boys do, hence regression is not experienced as a basic threat.
151. Gandhi, *An Autobiography*, pp. 71–2.
152. *Hind Swaraj*, p. 30.
153. Pillai, p. 59.
154. Malabari, p. 22, 'Woman is a presence and a power in Europe. In Asia woman is a vague entity, a nebulous birth absorbed in the shadow of artificial sexuality.'
155. Sayyid Ahmad Khan, p. 189.
156. Pillai, p. 60, on the civilising influence of English women, and pp. 63–4, on how gender arrangements in London enable women to represent 'intellectual culture' and the 'higher forms of life' rather than the 'grosser form of love'. Malabari, p. 41, contrasts the dress of Indian and English women, arguing that the dress of the latter is 'better suited to active outdoor movements than is the Indian lady's, as a rule', and therefore indicates a marked tendency 'towards freedom'. When Yusuf Khan ends his travelogue by contrasting the decline of India and the progress of Britain, he also focuses on the position of women and the backwardness of *pardah* (Yusuf Khan, p. 295). The association between progress [taraqqī] and the abolition of *pardah* is also made by Sayyid Ahmad Khan when he links the progress of Parsis in Bombay in part to the absence of *pardah* (Sayyid Ahmad Khan, p. 51).
157. Behramji Malabari, *An Appeal from the Daughters of India* (London: Farmer and Sons, 1890), p. 11, p. 20.
158. Pillai, p. 66.

159. Malabari, p. 76.
160. Malabari, *Appeal*, p. 20.
161. Malabari, pp. 28–9, p. 33.
162. Pillai, p. 81, on the figure of Vanity as a woman, and Malabari, pp. 86–7, on how ‘there seems to be more of made-up beauty in London than perhaps in most parts of the world’. He then goes on to reflect upon the effects of old age on ‘professional beauties’: ‘And when old age is on them, what a sight they present, these beauties of a bygone day! It is a sight, pathetic in the very falsehood of attire and demeanour.’
163. Burton, p. 153, pp. 182–3. Sinha, Ch. 4.
164. Mirza Abu Taleb Khan, pp. 396–8. He develops these arguments in his ‘Tract on the liberties of Asiatic women’, reproduced as appendix D, in Stewart, Ch. 3, pp. 258–83.
165. Stanley Wolpert, *Nehru. A Tryst with Destiny* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. 24–5.
166. Nehru, *Discovery*, p. 43.
167. *Ibid.*, p. 49, p. 59.
168. *Ibid.*, p. 21, where he refers to ‘the virgin moment emerging from the veil of the future in all its naked purity, coming into contact with us, and immediately becoming the soiled and stale past. Is it we that soil and violate it? Or is the moment not so virgin after all, for it is bound up with all the harlotry of the past?’
169. *Ibid.*, p. 562. See Frantz Fanon, ‘Algeria Unveiled’, in *Studies in a Dying Colonialism*, translated Haakon Chevalier (London: Earthscan Publications, 1989), pp. 35–67. For an excellent critique of this essay, see McClintock, Ch. 10.
170. Nehru, *Discovery*, p. 563.
171. Ashcroft, ‘Colonial subject as child’, p. 195.
172. That is, his careful concern for the impression of himself he gives to others in order to validate his embodiment of his experiments in search of Truth.
173. This is Gandhi’s description of himself and his wife on their wedding night, in which he refers to how the ‘impressions of the former birth are potent enough to make all coaching superfluous’. Gandhi, *An Autobiography*, p. 26.
174. *Ibid.*, p. 454.

7

Gandhi, 'Truth' and Translatability

In the previous chapter we saw how Gandhi is at pains to articulate his own vulnerability as a human being, both sexually and emotionally. Given the importance of dialogue in Gandhi's work as a whole, especially evident in the form of *Hind Swaraj*, the foregrounding of vulnerability is an important strategy for winning the trust of his readers and interlocutors. As one eminent political philosopher has argued, it is only through the mutual and reciprocal recognition of vulnerability that dialogue can be secured by rooting it in a radically honest sense of inwardness.¹ In this sense, Gandhi's foregrounding of vulnerability is a key strategy for securing interpersonal communication through a mutually shared acknowledgement of what Matustik has called being shaken and wounded.² Gandhi's self-confessed vulnerability extends to his openness about his ignorance in crucial matters. He suggests that it is because he makes no attempt to disguise his ignorance from his pupils that he 'never lost their love and respect'. In terms which recall his invocation of radical honesty as the structuring motif of *An Autobiography* as a whole, he claims that 'In all respects I showed myself to them exactly as I really was.'³ In this sense, ignorance and vulnerability are not just the condition and medium of self-revelation in *An Autobiography*, but are the enabling conditions for his autobiographical project.

For Gandhi, revealing his ignorance is also in keeping with the general distrust of any claims to totalising knowledge. This is exemplified in the open-ended final chapter to *An Autobiography*, where he uses an image of travelling to note that he still has a 'difficult path to traverse' before him, and that he has embarked upon a set of current experiments whose conclusions are as yet not 'decisive'.⁴ This sense of the autobiography as an open-ended series of experiments with 'Truth' reflects the inexhaustible nature of 'Truth', which Gandhi describes as 'a vast tree, which yields more and more fruit, the more you nurture it'.⁵

Gandhi's self-presentation as a translator

Gandhi's discourse of vulnerability is also a part of his self-presentation as a translator. This is evident in two crucial sites of translation in Gandhi's work.

The first consists of his self-presentation as a translator in his interventions between different groups of Indians, and the second is his engagement with the *Bhagavad Gita*. My contention here is that the *Gita* is not a stable text whose doctrinal meanings are extracted and effortlessly conveyed by Gandhi to others. While other scholars have discussed Gandhi's reliance on the *Gita* for his thought,⁶ my focus here is different. I will argue that the *Gita* is a repository of 'Truth' for Gandhi precisely because of the way it is necessarily entangled with translation as both mode of thinking and process. It is translation as a category and a mode of thinking which grounds what Gandhi's autobiography refers to as 'the Story of My Experiments with Truth'. Thus, while previous scholars have discussed Gandhi's notion of 'Truth' from a variety of perspectives,⁷ my focus here is on a dimension of Gandhi's notion of 'Truth' not previously explored: the role of translatability in his project of 'Truth'.

Gandhi often refers to himself or presents himself as a translator in his autobiographical texts. Gandhi's experimental dwellings such as Tolstoy farm and the Phoenix settlement are partly sites for multilingual experiments, such as instructing pupils in a variety of Indian languages, and launching the periodical *Indian Opinion* in English, Gujarati, Hindi and Tamil. But what is striking about Gandhi's multilingual experiments is how he calls attention to their failures. Regarding the *Indian Opinion* he narrates how the Hindi and Tamil sections were discontinued, because the 'burden they imposed upon us seemed to be excessive', and 'we would not find Tamil and Hindi writers willing to settle upon the farm and could not exercise a check upon them'.⁸ Elsewhere, he describes the Hindi and Tamil sections of the paper as 'a make-believe'.⁹ Similarly, at Tolstoy farm he ultimately opts for dividing the class into two sections, a Gujarati and an English section.¹⁰

These failures parallel his own lack of success in mastering languages. He makes it clear that he 'never learnt to speak Tamil, and the little I could do by way of reading is now rusting away for want of practice'. As for Telegu, 'I did not get beyond the alphabet'.¹¹ Similarly at Tolstoy farm, where he undertakes to teach Tamil and Urdu, he again makes it clear that his Tamil is rudimentary and that 'even my Gujarati was no better than that which one acquires at high school'. He also points to the limits of his knowledge of Urdu.¹² In what he refers to as another 'experiment', he describes how he serves as (a self-appointed) 'translator by special appointment' to Gokhale during the latter's tour of South Africa, when at Gandhi's insistence Gokhale spoke Marathi at public gatherings. Yet Gandhi cites himself as admitting to Gokhale that 'What is true of my Hindustani is equally true of my Marathi. I cannot speak a single word of Marathi'.¹³

Thus, in his self-presentation as a translator, Gandhi foregrounds his lack of linguistic expertise. The shaping of his persona as an interpreter, translator and language teacher is self-consciously and paradoxically rooted in his lack

of knowledge of the languages he works with, not in his mastery of them. Gandhi also calls attention to his linguistic ineptitude in his reading of the *Gita*. He describes his encounter with the text of the *Gita* in a reading group composed of 'Theosophist friends' in which they study the text in translation. Gandhi makes it clear to the reading group that his Sanskrit 'was not much to speak of, that I had not read the Hindu scriptures in the original, and that even my acquaintance with the translations was of the slightest'. He adds that he uses 'one or two' translations of the text for the 'necessity of diving deeper into it'.¹⁴ However, his inability to read the *Gita* in the original Sanskrit does not prevent him from referring to it as 'the book par excellence for the knowledge of Truth'.¹⁵

More importantly, Gandhi uses a striking simile to represent the status of the text in his life: 'Just as I turned to the English dictionary for the meanings of English words that I did not understand, I turned to this dictionary of conduct for a ready solution of all my troubles and trials.'¹⁶ The *Gita* is not the Sanskrit text alone, but also its translations. It is also like an English dictionary which Gandhi uses to look up English words he does not understand. By likening his use of the *Gita* to his use of an English dictionary, Gandhi deepens the sense of translation as a mode because the comparison suggests that both the *Gita* and the English language are at one level 'foreign' to him; neither is his 'mother tongue', ready-made or unproblematically available. Each has to be worked through translation. This translation is simultaneously interlingual and intralingual,¹⁷ because a dictionary is used for intralingual purposes but when used by a non-'native' speaker intralingual translation of necessity becomes interlingual. We thus arrive at a complex layer in Gandhi's motif of translation as it frames his reading of the *Gita*, namely that translating within a language and translating across languages collapse into each other. Intralingual and interlingual translation cannot be clearly differentiated, and the consequence of this is that the unity and identity of a language and its decidable limits also cannot be rigorously determined.¹⁸ The act of translating from Sanskrit into another text is likened by Gandhi himself to the act of rewording within English.

There is another layer to the motif of translation in this passage. After he describes the *Gita* in terms of a dictionary, Gandhi asks a series of questions about how its key terms, such as *aparigraha* (non-possession) and *samabhava* (equability), might be translated into the daily conduct of his life.¹⁹ In this way, the encounter with the *Gita* is also framed by a reference to translation as transmutation.²⁰ Gandhi's reading of the *Gita* becomes part of a series of transmutations and exchanges between his lived life, the *Gita* and the text of his autobiography. His search for 'Truth' is embedded within these multiple translations. For him the *Gita*, 'the book par excellence for the knowledge of Truth', does not exist as a singular, autonomous and clearly demarcated text, but as a text which holds together points of equivalence and substitution (translations, dictionaries and Gandhi's own life). The 'Truth' of the *Gita* is

in some sense actually constituted through the 'mode' of translation, and not just made available through translation.²¹

But Gandhi's engagement with the *Gita* in his autobiography also represents a distinctive intervention in and appropriation of the history of its translation into English during the nineteenth century. I now turn to this history in order to show how Gandhi opens up a space for the re-thinking of the concepts of originality, commentary and textuality within the terms of his enactment of his autobiographical project as a series of 'experiments with Truth'.

The task of the translator and the nature of British rule in India: Charles Wilkins and the *Gita*

The *Bhagavad Gita* played a pivotal role in the translation of Sanskrit works into English. It was the first work to be translated directly from Sanskrit into English, without the mediation of any intervening languages, such as Persian. This cannot be ignored in its centrality to Gandhi. Its importance lies not just in its being a culturally and religiously important text but also in being the first direct translation from Sanskrit into English, in the history of which categories of authorship, translation and questions of 'Truth' were grappled with in different ways in different versions of the text. The title of the first translation by Charles Wilkins, *The Bhagvat-Geeta, or Dialogues of Kreesna and Arjoon; in Eighteen Lectures; with Notes. Translated from the original, in the sanskreet, or ancient language of the Brahmans*, drew attention to the fact that it was a direct translation from a Sanskrit text itself. Recently Michael Dodson has pointed to how subsequent Orientalists rejected work prior to Wilkins' 1785 translation of the *Gita* as lacking in authority because they were not translations made directly from a Sanskrit text.²²

The phrase 'translated from the original' in Wilkins' title sets up the relationship between the source text and its translation in terms of the category of originality. The source text is the origin of the translated text, while the translated text is secondary to and derivative of a pre-existing text. This is reinforced by Wilkins' stress on the translation's 'fidelity' and 'accuracy' to the source text, and these words are also used to describe Wilkins' translation by Warren Hastings in his preface.²³ These terms represent the relationship between source and target text which has been taken to be paradigmatic of the practice of translation in the West from the nineteenth century onwards. This practice is usually conceived in terms of the language of originality, in which the source text and the author who produces it are valorised in terms of being 'original', while the translator is denied the status of being an author in his or her own right.²⁴

There was another reason why Wilkins' translation acquired a crucial status in European Orientalist scholarship. Sir William Jones in his 'Tenth Anniversary Discourse' of February 1793, entitled 'On Asiatick History, Civil

and Natural', stressed the need for both 'an accurate knowledge of Sanskrit and a confidential intercourse with learned Brahmens [as] the only means of separating truth from fable'.²⁵ Wilkins' text fulfilled both these criteria because it was translated directly from a culturally important Sanskrit text and because it was produced with the assistance of pandits in Benares. This is stressed by Warren Hastings in his 'Letter to Nathaniel Smith' which serves as a preface to the book, and by Wilkins' own preface.²⁶ The 'authenticity' of Wilkins' translation was partly vouchsafed by his collaboration with pandits from Benares, which increasingly came into its own as 'the first seminary of Hindoo learning'²⁷ in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.²⁸

While on one level Wilkins' translation suggests that the translated text is inferior to the source text, on another level his translation also inaugurates the Orientalist translator as a heroic figure. Hastings refers to this heroic labour in terms of the difficulty of learning Sanskrit as well as the difficult nature of the text itself, in its linguistic complexities, antiquity and abstruse philosophical nature. Wilkins in his preface suggests that these difficulties actually place both himself and the pandits in a similar relationship to the text. He refers to obscure passages of the text and his own inability to deal with them effectively, so that his notes to the text are still insufficient to 'remove the veil of mystery' from it, but he adds that the text is 'imperfectly understood by the most learned *Brahmans* of the present times'.²⁹ The labours of the Orientalist translator are measured against the alleged shortcomings of the learned pandits. Furthermore, the labours include presenting the *Gita* as a text in its own right without any of its commentaries. According to Wilkins these commentaries are at times more obscure than the original they are intended to elucidate. In his notes he cites a passage from one pandit's commentary which he characterises as a 'labyrinth of scholastic jargon'. This commentary is also superfluous because the meaning of the passage it seeks to elucidate is 'too evident to require a note'.³⁰ More importantly, Wilkins modestly claims that he is able to make an important observation which 'has escaped all commentators, and was received with great astonishment by the Pandeet, who was consulted in the translation'.³¹ In producing the text, therefore, Wilkins is not just equal to the pandits whose collaboration he requires to lend his text cultural authority, but his translation is also equal, if not superior, to the text's many commentaries by pandits. Translation begins to obviate the need for commentary. It produces the *Gita* as a text in its own right which is no longer embedded in a succession of abstruse commentaries. Here, then, we have the beginnings of the translator as a heroic figure, who at one level is in tension with the relationship set up by the terms in Wilkins' title and preface between an 'original' source text and a derivative translated text. We shall see how the tense relationships between Orientalist scholar and pandit are negotiated in other translations, but we can note here that for Gandhi the question of 'brahmanical' learning is simply irrelevant for his engagement with the text of the *Gita*. For Gandhi,

the *Gita* exists as a text in its own right for him to appropriate, rather than one which had to be approached through traditions of exegesis. In this sense, then, Gandhi is a beneficiary of a process which begins with Wilkins' translation. In supposedly undermining 'brahmanical' authority, Wilkins opens up a space for Gandhi's later appropriation of the text.

Wilkins' translation of the *Gita* also reflects the larger project to legitimise British rule in Indian idioms. Hastings argues that the very availability of the translated text validates the justness and effectiveness of British rule, in contrast to the 'intolerant principles' of the British state's (Muslim) predecessors.³² Wilkins makes a similar point when he argues that it is the 'liberal treatment' of the pandits by the East India Company, and the 'blessings of internal peace', which persuaded the pandits no longer to conceal the 'grand mysteries of their religion' from figures such as himself.³³ The production of the translated text therefore bears testimony not just to Wilkins' fidelity and accuracy, but also to the fidelity of British rule to the principles of justice, a fidelity which is supposedly recognised by Indians themselves. This also needs to be read against the background of Hastings' Judicial plan of 1772 which called for the dispensation of civil justice in Bengal according to one's religious affiliation within a regularised judicial system. This plan was seen as reinstating the ancient 'constitution' of the people of India.³⁴

Thus, Wilkins' translation of the *Gita* becomes part of the legitimisation of the Company's state. Furthermore, his translation is framed within an invocation of the different levels of authority within the East India Company itself, from the Court of Directors to the Governor General of India and the Chairman of the Company.³⁵ The preface articulates a number of relationships between British officials, between Warren Hastings, 'offering' the text to the Chairman of the Company in an attempt to vindicate his own cultural policies as Governor General, and between Wilkins and Hastings as scholar and Governor General respectively. Wilkins' preface as a translator is preceded by his own letter of dedication to Hastings, in which he underlines Hastings' decisive role as enabling presence, because it is through his encouragement that East India Company servants are able to 'render themselves more capable of performing their duty in the various branches of commerce, revenue, and policy, by the study of the languages, with the laws and customs of the natives'.³⁶ The translated text becomes a space for the reconciliation of different levels of East India Company administration, and for the unification of the different branches of its activities into one coherent policy, placed within a clear hierarchy of authority. In effect, the translated text is seen as a way of stabilising the fluid and uncertain nature of East India Company authority, diffused as it is between different levels of its complicated structure. Moreover, by bringing together these three men it also works towards countering the inconveniences of physical distance between the Chairman in London, the Governor General in Bengal and the translator in Benares. So while on the one hand Wilkins' translation

opened up a space for Gandhi's later appropriation of the text of the *Gita*, independent of any commentaries, at the same time it underpinned the British state's constitution of its own colonial authority on multiple levels. Gandhi's later engagement with the *Gita* might be seen as an attempt to create alternative forms of authority to colonial authority by appropriating Orientalist translations of the text.

In some ways, the prefaces to the 1785 translation of the *Gita* also outline the different ways in which processes of translation can involve what Tejaswini Niranjana has called 'strategies of containment'.³⁷ Hastings assesses the text in relation to canonical works in European literature, such as the first and sixth books of Milton's *Paradise Lost*, and prose translations, especially the 'best French versions of the most admired passages of the Iliad or Odyssey'. Here Hastings refers to these translations because it would 'not be fair to try its relative worth by a comparison with the original text of the first standards of European composition'.³⁸ In stressing this, he is clearly trying to safeguard the pre-eminence of classical European texts from the possible destabilising effects of Europe's 'discovery of Sanskrit'. As Raymond Schwab has pointed out, the 'discovery' of Sanskrit threatened a sense of European identity by uncovering a world that was independent of both the classical Greek and Roman world, and also Biblical chronology.³⁹ Hastings' 'Letter' uses strategies of containment to safeguard the classical legacy of European culture as well as the priority of Biblical narrative.

Both Hastings and Wilkins try to read the *Gita* as both conforming to and confirming a prior narrative of Christianity as a revealed religion. The anxiety to reconcile Orientalist researches in Sanskrit literature and the rediscovery of ancient India with the status of Christianity as a revealed religion and the Mosaic chronology was to be a defining theme of the work of Sir William Jones and his successors in general.⁴⁰ In both Hastings' and Wilkins' prefaces we have the beginnings of this attempt at reconciliation. Hastings categorises Sanskrit texts such as the *Vedas* and *Puranas* as 'scriptures' whose coming into being are indicative of the inception of an organised religion, or what he calls 'a scientific and allegorical system'.⁴¹ He reads into the *Gita* 'a theology accurately corresponding with that of Christian dispensation, and most powerfully illustrating its fundamental doctrines'.⁴² Wilkins repeatedly refers to the *Gita* as 'scripture', and represents Brahmins as simultaneously Unitarian in their concept of the Deity, while complying with 'the prejudices of the vulgar, as outwardly to perform all the ceremonies inculcated by the *Veds*, such as sacrifices, ablutions, & c'. These ceremonies 'are as much the bread of the Brahmins, as the superstition of the vulgar is the support of the priesthood in many other countries'.⁴³ Not only is the category of scripture drawn from a monotheistic conception of religion in order to classify the *Gita* as a text, there is also an implicit Protestant narrative here in which the pandits behave in a similar way to the Roman Catholic clergy. Producing the text of the *Gita* in translation without any

commentary, so that 'the most difficult passages [are left] for the exercise of the reader's own judgement',⁴⁴ reflects a Protestant notion of the self-evident nature of scriptural truth in translation which can be grasped by the reader's own judgement. In this way, the 'Unitarian' conception of the deity held by the Brahmins will be revealed to 'the vulgar' as well, so that the 'superstition' which supports this powerful priesthood will also be dispelled and the position of the Brahmins as 'divines'⁴⁵ who monopolise the interpretations of key texts will no longer be tenable. Once again, this is indicative of the relationships of Company officials with pandits on whom they relied for cultural information, but whose trustworthiness they frequently suspected. Many of the translations into English from Sanskrit, especially in the legal sphere, were motivated by the desire to reduce the dependence of Company officials on the testimony of pandits and maulvis in the courts.⁴⁶ This is another reason for the repeated insistence on the terms 'fidelity' and 'accuracy' in describing Wilkins' translation. It serves as a contrast with and correction of the possible 'infidelity' of Indians themselves. As early as 1777 in his preface to his *Grammar of Persian*, Sir William Jones stressed the need for East India Company officials to learn Asian languages because it would lessen the reliance of British officials on native 'fidelity'.⁴⁷

However, it is clear that the inaugural moment of Wilkins' translation is also an unstable one, shrouded in anxieties and doubtfulness. On the one hand, Wilkins' text articulates a rhetoric of translation which makes the original text transparent in order to secure the foundations of British rule itself, but on the other hand, both Hastings and Wilkins point to how the text resists translation. Translation as a strategy of containment ultimately fails to discipline the text of the *Gita*. Alongside the inauguration of the direct translatability of the *Gita* looms the shadow of the untranslatable.

First, implicit in the framework Hastings uses to try to familiarise the *Gita* is the acknowledgement that there are no ready-made criteria for assessing it. He argues that 'in estimating the merit of such a production, all rules drawn from the ancient or modern literature of Europe, all references to such sentiments or manners as are become the standards of propriety for opinion and action in our own modes of life, and equally all appeals to our revealed tenets of religion, and moral duty' are to be excluded.⁴⁸ Secondly, Hastings suggests that the philosophical abstruseness of the text means that there are terms in the *Gita* which are 'impossible to render by any of the known terms of science in our language, or even to make them intelligible by definition'. The result is that Wilkins has left some terms with 'the same sounds in which he found them'.⁴⁹ The recourse to transliteration rather than translation is also referred to by Wilkins who explains that he has left 'untranslated and unexplained' some 'original words and proper names'.⁵⁰ These words include the 'mystic emblem of the Deity', the syllable *Om*, which not only cannot be translated, but is 'forbidden to be pronounced but in silence'.⁵¹ So alongside the more conventional problems of translating

complex terms such as *yog*, which 'bear so many interpretations' and has so many derivatives,⁵² the *Gita* forces both Hastings and Wilkins to meditate upon the nature of the untranslatable per se. In doing so they are forced to encounter the way in which the translator's will to power over the Sanskrit text is confounded, and the relationship of power between the translating colonial official and the translated Indian text is reversed. Not only does the text of the *Gita* resist translation into English in places, but the frequent slippage between translation and transliteration means that, in Hastings' words, Wilkins has 'familiarized . . . his own native language to so foreign an original'. It is not so much that Wilkins has turned Sanskrit into English, but that English has been turned into Sanskrit, so that Wilkins has left these with 'the same sounds as he has found them'.⁵³ To adopt Walter Benjamin's phraseology,⁵⁴ Wilkins has allowed his own tongue to be powerfully affected by the foreign tongue, such that English becomes a broken, hesitant language which transplants the original into a higher and purer linguistic air. Thirdly, Hastings suggests that if the meaning of the *Gita* appears obscure, this must be ascribed to 'the incompetency of our own perceptions, on so novel an application of them, rather than to the less probable want of perspicuity in the original composition'.⁵⁵ What is at stake is the inadequacy of our understanding as readers rather than any shortcomings in the *Gita* itself.

Finally, Hastings also touches on what Benjamin was to later call the great work of art's potentially eternal afterlife in succeeding generations.⁵⁶ He suggests that the *Gita* 'will survive when the British dominion in India shall have long ceased to exist, and when the sources which it once yielded of wealth and power are lost to remembrance'.⁵⁷ The translation which Hastings writes a preface for marks the continued life of the original. It is a form of its afterlife⁵⁸ which brings to the fore the fragile temporality of British rule in India. As Krishna says in Wilkins' translation, 'I am Time, the destroyer of mankind, matured, come hither to seize at once all these who stand before us'.⁵⁹ The imposing text becomes a fearful emblem of Time itself which underpins the transitory nature of British rule in India. Here translation has become less a strategy of containment and more an opening up of a text which not only pre-dates British rule by unknown centuries but will also succeed it by vast stretches of time. The attempt to secure Company authority through translation actually ends up by undermining its presence.

The tortuous nature of Hastings' and Wilkins' prose prefaces to the *Gita* evince both an attempt at translation as strategies of containment, and also the failures of those strategies. In the end, both in spite of and because of themselves as translators, the text overwhelms and interrupts their strategies of translation as containment. Wilkins' translation in the end becomes what Benjamin has called a 'real translation', one that is 'transparent' to the original and which does not 'block its light'.⁶⁰ Hastings' and Wilkins' struggles with the text are less an imposition of their will on the text, and more the text imposing its translatability on them, irrespective of whether

or not they are able to fulfil that call to be translated. We shall see how Gandhi's reinforcement of translation as secondary and derivative represents a mode of self-effacement in relation to the text of the *Gita*, which avoids the mistake of trying to aggrandise one's self in relation to the textual autonomy of the *Gita*. Gandhi willingly submits to the text, while Hastings and Wilkins are forced to do so.

Translating scenes of genealogical indebtedness

J.C. Thomson's *The Bhagavad Gita* (1855)

If Wilkins' translation marks the beginning of an attempt to displace the pandits through the figure of the translator, by the time of J.C. Thomson's 1855 translation of the *Gita*, the lineage between British male Orientalists all but displaces the source text. This accords with some key changes in the tone and self-presentation of the translator. The beginnings of the heroic figure of the translator which were evident in Wilkins' translations become more pronounced. Thomson dedicates his translation to Horace Hyman Wilson, 'To whom Europe owes so much of her knowledge of India, India so much of her esteem of Europe; and whose indefatigable labours and rare abilities have thrown a bright light over the mysteries of the East; This humble attempt to follow in his footsteps is inscribed; as a mark of admiration for his talents and gratitude for his friendship; by his pupil, The Translator'.⁶¹ In the dedication the translator is no longer in debt to the original Sanskrit text. Instead there are three other debts, all of which bind together the genealogy in the dedication. Thomson is indebted to Wilson, to whom both Europe and India owe their own debts. The relationship between Thomson and Wilson is that of a teacher to his pupil, but it is also one between friends who are at the same time translators. The act of translating brings British men together in an even closer tie than that envisaged in the preamble to Wilkins' translation. The indebtedness of the translator to the source text is displaced by his indebtedness to his Orientalist predecessors.

We also saw how Wilkins sought to displace the source text from its embedment in traditions of commentary. In Thomson's case this displacement is taken a step further. He places his own translation within a genealogy of translations in European languages. In doing so he refers to Wilkins' translation as the 'original translation' of which 'we cannot speak with entire satisfaction'.⁶² The word 'original' is no longer appended to the Sanskrit text but to the first English translation of the text. The oxymoronic implications of the term 'original translation' mark a decisive stage in the rise of the figure of the heroic translator whose text now threatens to displace the source text. It also indicates the beginning of a slippage between the category of the translator and that of the author. This blurring is in part made possible by the fact that the key texts of what emerged as the Sanskrit canon in translation did not always have single identifiable 'authors' in the

modern sense of the word. Even if they were identifiable as single individuals, reliable biographical and historical information about them was not always available. Both Wilkins and Thomson point to the uncertain historical dating of the events in the *Mahabharat* and the life of its narrator.⁶³ Thomson argued that because of the lack of historical evidence, we should 'resign ourselves to consider the authorship of the finest specimen of Hindu literature as lost in oblivion for ever'.⁶⁴ It is this 'oblivion' which enables a slippage between author and translator. Thomson also argues that this problem of the 'complete absence of any chronological data' characterised 'Hindu literature' as a whole.⁶⁵ By placing his translation in a genealogy of European translations, each of which has a specific date of publication, he is also supplying a linear chronology for textual production in sharp contrast to his inability to date the Sanskrit text itself.⁶⁶ The genealogy of European translations of the *Gita* substitutes both a list of authors and a list of dates which are lacking in the case of the source text.

This displacement of the text from its Indian commentaries is taken a step further when Thomson characterises previous European translations as having commentary-like features. The previous translations are depicted in similar terms to the way Wilkins characterises Indian commentaries on the Sanskrit texts. Thomson writes of them as explications which have rendered the Sanskrit text even more obscure. He refers to how the 1787 French version of Wilkins' translation rendered 'the meaning of Wilkins... rather more obscure than clearer', and he argues that the 1823 Latin translation by A.W. von Schlegel, supposedly improved by his pupil Lassen in 1846, is problematic because the student is often 'as much puzzled to divine the meaning of the Latin translation' as the Sanskrit text itself.⁶⁷ Wilkins' aim to produce the *Gita* as a text in its own right, shorn of its commentaries, assumes a clear-cut distinction between translation and commentary, but Thomson's ambiguous characterisation of previous translations blurs the distinction between commentary and translation. This is also made clear in Thomson's assessment of previous translations in which the nature of the explanatory notes appended to each translation assumes central significance. He distinguishes his translation from those of his predecessors precisely in terms of the range and depth of his notes, which amount to forming a commentary which frames the translation. He admits, 'I cannot pretend that I have departed very materially from any of these translations in the more essential points'. Instead he points to his 'minute investigation' of the doctrines in the poem, his historical and critical review of the work, the footnotes which enable 'the sense of every obscure word or passage [to] be grasped at once', the 'long explanations [which] are given where ever they are required', and finally the index of proper names which is much more extended than the index in Lassen's text.⁶⁸ These commentary-like features are presented as distinguishing his text from those of his predecessors, but especially from Wilkins' translation, in which there is 'nothing

but a short and barely sufficient note added to explain' obscure words.⁶⁹ We shall see later how Gandhi also blurs the boundary between translation and commentary, but he does so in a radically different way from Orientalist translators such as Thomson.

Once again, though, the *Gita* cannot be disciplined so easily by Thomson's strategies of containment. If anything, these strategies reinforce the elusive nature of the text. The greater Thomson's deployment of disciplinary tactics, the more a silhouette of the original⁷⁰ appears in his commentaries on the text. Or as Derrida says in his discussion of Benjamin, in the translation the original becomes larger. It grows rather than reproduces itself.⁷¹

The question of demanding a name

First, Thomson tries to frame the *Gita* within a master narrative of Christian doctrine. Both the excellence and the shortcomings of the *Gita* are reminders of the superiority of Christian doctrines, irrespective of the latter's date of origin. At one point, Thomson explicitly reads the *Gita* as recalling Christians to their true faith:

In the present selfish age, and this northern active clime, it [the *Gita's* teachings] could be applied and successfully carried out by Christians, as we call ourselves! It is the teaching of our Saviour when he bids us hate father and mother, and take up the cross, and when He points to the lily of the field, which toils and spins not, but puts faith in its Creator to give it nourishment. We, too, should have *our* final emancipation, our salvation ever as our only desire, and *our* Supreme Being – so far superior, so far more loveable than the imperfect deity of the Hindu philosopher – ever as our chief object of love. We, too, should do our duty in this world without self-interest and attachment, and morally renounce the world in the rejection of all interest in it.⁷²

But by the same token, this passage could be read in another way, namely that the excellence of Christianity has to be ratified through the priority of the *Gita*. Rather than Christianity supplanting the *Gita*, the *Gita* is actually grounding Christianity. In the context of 'Christianising' the *Gita*, Thomson also uses an interesting metaphor to consider the possibility of converting India to Christianity. He describes how India seems to be a 'fine groundwork for the eternal teaching of the Sacred Book', but 'the sward that looks so green and tempting to the eye, covers a morass, in which the pure doctrines of the gospel would sink to be swamped'.⁷³ Thomson's attempt to consider Christianity as the final and consummate development of the *Gita's* teaching gives way to a scenario of how Christianity might be absorbed into the 'morass' of Hinduism itself. There is no pure and stable moment of either Hinduism or Christianity in his preface, and the attempt to define either Christianity or Hinduism as exclusive and external to each other founders

on each in some way incorporating the other. Thomson's overt attempts to master the *Gita* within a Christian narrative ends up by opening a space for a religious syncretism which is rooted in the source text. In abstract terms, 'unity' and 'plurality' become interchangeable. By this I mean that for Thomson 'Christianity' and 'Hinduism' are on one level identifiable as separately monolithic categories. However, this separation is intertwined with the imagining of their mutual incorporation, an incorporation which suggests a possible syncretistic unity that by its every nature would be plural because of the varied traditions at work within it.

Secondly, this interchangeability between unity and plurality is made explicit in Thomson's key references to the Tower of Babel in his preface. For Thomson the Tower of Babel is both a site of unity and site of plurality. The two cannot be separated as succeeding each other in a temporal narrative. Similarly, construction and reconstruction are interchangeable in Thomson's representation of Babel. There is no original moment of construction of the Tower, there is only reconstruction. This is made clear in the opening passage of Thomson's preface:

There are many portions of Sacred Writ which, while it would be presumptuous to refuse their literal acceptance, forcibly prompt an allegorical construction, serving at once as a lesson and a prophecy. Such is the narrative of the building of the Tower of Babel. When the world, recovered from all but entire destruction, rose fresh in all its worldliness, Godless and independent; exulting in the discovery of the strength of its physical, and the unbounded vastness of its mental powers, man first learnt the truth that union is the secret of all strength, and that by it, though a mere unit in creation, he might attain a super-human position. Nor was ever confusion more complete or more wonderful than the miracle which crushed his efforts and lowered his proud schemes to the dust.

Yet since that moment man has ever been building another and a greater tower which, none the less, has Heaven for its object. Science and enlightenment are ever rising brick by brick, layer by layer, story by story, towards the level of super-human knowledge; and the great obstacle which put a stop to the erection of the material Babel – the confusion of tongues – still exists to impede that of the Tower of Knowledge, and still constitutes the chief hindrance to man's united action and united strength.

But if the obstacle exist [sic], the means of surmounting it have been granted us. We have never been debarred from acquiring another language than our own; and if the scientific man of each country be considered the maker of the bricks, the linguist may, at least, claim to be that no less useful workman who visits the kiln of knowledge in every land and brings together the materials for the great work.⁷⁴

What is striking about this passage is that Thomson ponders the Tower of Babel as both the unity of languages and the confusion of tongues which impedes that unity. Or put another way, it is both archaic meaning and archaic confusion of meaning.

Furthermore, while Thomson speaks of how the linguist helps to raise the tower 'brick by brick', he also represents the relationship between himself and his predecessors in similar terms. Thus, he writes that 'a period arrives in every study, when the labours of all its scholars must be reduced to one united and harmonious whole; when the bricks that one has baked, the mortar another has mixed, and the beams which a third has cut, must be brought together and arranged by the hand of the builder, in the form of another story added to the great Tower of the Knowledge which may reach to the skies'.⁷⁵ His text of the *Gita* is yet one more story/storey in the Tower but he stresses that there are always other stories/storeys to add. For Thomson the Tower of Babel is also a figure for the impossibility of completion and finishing. The multiplicity of languages which limits and impedes the completion of translation is itself a 'structural order, a coherence of construct'.⁷⁶ This needs to be kept in mind when Gandhi refers to the *Gita* as the book of 'Truth', and yet characterises 'Truth' itself as inexhaustible, growing and therefore necessarily incomplete. For Gandhi it is the confusion of tongues which underpins the growing nature of 'Truth' through translatability.

Thirdly, Thomson tries to unify the meaning of the *Gita* but at the same time keeps showing how this is impossible. In his exploration of the nature of the word, Heidegger argues that if key words did not have original meanings or capacities, there would be nothing to delimit translation.⁷⁷ Thomson tries to define just such an archaic unity of meaning in his reflections on the *Gita*. In the context of considering how in ancient Greece and India 'philosophy developed itself clearly, independently, and, so to speak spontaneously; and demanded for itself a name', he argues that in India names have an inherent significance when they refer to philosophical systems. They are not arbitrary signs for what they denote, but 'convey the meaning of the most prominent doctrine which they put forward'.⁷⁸ However, although this is characterised as being typical of the 'literal and logical Hindu', no sooner does Thomson reflect upon the term 'sankhya' than he has to consider a multiplicity of possible meanings for the word, which undermines any attempt to interpret it in strictly literal terms.⁷⁹ In fact, the *Gita* opens up to Thomson the impossibility of ever arriving at an original and archaic unity of meaning. Nor can he arrive at a stable and unprecedented moment of inception and origin. Again, when discussing the 'sankhya' system he argues that Kapila may have been its founder, but by this it is meant that he 'reduced [certain ideas] to a system'. These ideas, taken singly, must have had 'an earlier origin', and 'much speculation, much demonstration even, must have preceded Kapila'.⁸⁰ Each individually identifiable school of thought

which has a place in the *Gita* is not a site of unified meaning but is a coalescence and mediation of pre-existing ideas, with no stable or single moment of origin.

Furthermore, this coalescence and mediation reflects the nature of the *Gita* itself as a 'conciliatory' text. Each school of thought is further modified as it is brought into contact with other schools through the mediating presence of the *Gita*. According to Thomson, this is the case with the *Gita*'s engagement with Patanjali's yogic philosophy, which attempts to reconcile yoga with 'brahmanism' and so with the institution of caste. In doing so Thomson argues that the author of the *Gita* himself adds another branch to yoga.⁸¹ This in turn reflects the plasticity of the term 'yoga', which like the other names in the text is both a site of semantic plurality and a reference to a unified discourse, or at least a discourse which mediates these differences. This mediation between different schools of thought, which are themselves internally plural, reflects what Thomson calls the 'conciliatory doctrines' of the text which were 'receivable by all classes of belief [and] met on all sides with a welcome'.⁸² As Feuerstein has argued, the different schools of thought which the *Gita* engages with exist in 'flexible coalescence' in the text.⁸³ To this we can add that this flexible coalescence also means that each school of thought, itself a modified coalescence of pre-existing ideas, is further modified by the *Gita* as a mediating and 'conciliatory' text.

Thus, as in Wilkins' translation, strategies of containment are continually challenged by the text itself. In particular, the attempt by Thomson to impose a unified archaic frame of meaning on the text through translation fails. His extended reflections on the Tower of Babel are ultimately rooted in the nature of the *Gita* itself, as, to adopt a phrase from Andrew Benjamin, a site of differential plurality.⁸⁴ We will see how important this inability to arrive at a unified and archaic site of meaning is to Gandhi's notion of 'Truth'.

Self-authorship, translatability and 'Truth'

Keeping these points in mind, we can now turn to Edwin Arnold's translation of the *Bhagavad Gita, Song Celestial* (1885). Arnold's version is the one in which, according to Gandhi, he first engaged with the *Gita*.⁸⁵ Like Thomson's translation, Arnold's mentions previous translations but only briefly.⁸⁶ But unlike Thomson's version, Arnold's eschews the scholarly apparatus and lengthy commentaries of previous English translations. Arnold's own preface is brief, and there are very few footnotes to his translation. Charles Wilkins' attempt to present the *Gita* as a text in its own right, shorn of any commentary, reaches its apogee in Arnold's verse translation. As Arnold says in his short preface, 'there is little else to say which the Song Celestial does not explain for itself'.⁸⁷ From a complex text of esoteric philosophy, the *Gita* has now become a self-explanatory text which

needs virtually no commentary from either pandit or British Orientalist. While Wilkins relied on collaboration with pandits to authenticate his own translation, even as he tried to displace them through the act of translation, Arnold dispenses with any reference to pandits altogether. Rather than accruing authority through an engagement with a culturally important class of learned Indians, the translator's authority is now, like the translated text of the *Gita*, self-evidently assured. With Arnold, the act of translating the *Gita* justifies itself and requires no other grounds for legitimisation.

This unravelling of the figure of the Indian pandit from that of the British translator is also evident in the way that, for Arnold, the imbrication of the categories of Hinduism and Christianity in Thomson's introduction is reversed. In Arnold's preface the challenging potential of the *Gita* is contained by reading it as an unproblematic reflection of a given Hinduism, hermetically sealed off from any potential to subvert or challenge the category of the West or Christianity. It is referred to as a 'philosophical system which remains to this day the prevailing Brahmanic belief'.⁸⁸ The category of Hinduism is doubly essentialised, both in temporal and in cultural terms. The unfolding of philosophy in the *Gita*, far from being a complex mediation between and development of previous schools of thought, is now reduced to the unproblematic reflection of ready-made beliefs which have remained unchanged through the centuries.

It is striking that on the title page of his version of the *Gita*, Arnold is actually referred to as the 'author' of the *Light of Asia*, even though this text was also a translation. In Arnold's version the slippage between author and translator, which began with Wilkins' translation, is evident in other ways too. In Wilkins' version of the *Gita*, we saw how the text is the site for the construction of relationships between British men, and the same is also true of Thomson's dedication. In both cases, the dedications refer to processes of the mediation of expertise which enable the translated text to come into being. In Arnold's dedication, however, the translator stands alone in a direct relationship to India, to whom the poem is offered. There are no references to any other British male officials or Orientalists in the dedication. The use of the first-person singular pronoun in the dedication, unmediated by any reference to a third person, represents a final attempt to seal the construction of orientalist writer as author: 'So I have read this wonderful and spirit-thrilling speech,/By Krishna and Prince Arjun held, discoursing each with each;/So have I writ its wisdom here, its hidden mystery,/For England; O our India! is as dear to me as She!' The translator's authority is now such that, like the translated text itself, he can exist in a direct relationship with India and England, without the inconveniences of any mediators.

Moreover, unlike Wilkins' and Thomson's versions, *Song Celestial* has very little sense of the force of the Sanskrit original. Arnold's aim is to translate the poem 'because English literature would certainly be incomplete without possessing in popular form a poetical and philosophical work so dear to

India'.⁸⁹ It is as if the Sanskrit of the source text has to be erased in order to effect its integration into the canon of English literature. Furthermore, this translation is set in terms of ownership, of 'possessing' a work which is 'dear' to India. In contrast to the more complicated notion of the relationship between 'Eastern' and European literatures imagined almost a hundred years earlier by Sir William Jones in his essay 'On the poetry of the Eastern nations', in which translation would revivify moribund European literature,⁹⁰ the task of appropriation here is almost effortless. The complex comparative framework in which the *Gita* is placed in relation to Greek and Latin literature in preceding translations is also missing. This lack of effort is further signalled by the ease with which the *Gita* can be made available in 'popular form'. Its abstruse philosophical difficulties and its linguistic complexities are easily converted into a widely accessible form, with no need for the mediation of commentaries.

We are now in a position to return to the centrality of the processes and motifs of translation in Gandhi's work in general, and in his engagement with the *Gita* in particular. Edwin Arnold's translation emerges from a particular narrative of the translation of the *Gita* into English in the nineteenth century. This narrative bequeaths a legacy of translation processes and spaces which Gandhi was to appropriate and also contest for his own purposes in his autobiographical project.

It is important to note that while Gandhi expresses some regret at his basic knowledge of Sanskrit, he does not problematise English translations of the text as translations in themselves. He refers to how in his study of the *Gita* he read 'almost all the English translations of it', and how he tried to delve deeper into it by using one or two translations.⁹¹ Gandhi's endorsement of translations of the *Gita* as a way of approaching the text is in keeping with his own translation practice. His 1908 translation into Gujarati of Plato's *Apology* is not made directly from the Greek but via an English translation.⁹² As a secondary translation, that is as a translation of a source text made via an intervening language, there is no sense in Gandhi's preface or his conclusion that this in any way compromises the 'Truth' of the text. Instead he points to how Socrates' speech has already been translated into many languages. The translatability of the speech, as reflected in its history as a translated text, is referred to by Gandhi to justify his own translation. As he says, the 'speech has been translated into many languages . . . We, therefore, wish to translate it.'⁹³ Furthermore, it is clear that Gandhi sees his translation as renewing the life of the text in a new context. Socrates is set up as a model for the struggle of Indians in South Africa and in India, and he is appropriated as a 'great satyagrahi'.⁹⁴ His words are described by Gandhi as having 'the qualities of an elixir', and he urges his readers to 'imbibe a deep draught' of it.⁹⁵ Clearly, this quality of Socrates' words is not compromised by translating them. Instead it is enhanced and even deepened by the act of translation. In Benjamin's words, what is at work here is the notion of

translation as the 'after-life' of the text, as marking the stage of the continued life of the original.⁹⁶

Gandhi's Preface also seems to assume a link between the nature of the source text as already mediated, and its translation into many languages, in so far as the 'Truth' of Socrates' speech is already mediated by Plato.⁹⁷ Like the *Gita* itself, the source text is an already mediated text which enacts yet further mediation. Furthermore, in general terms, Plato's *Apology* also exemplifies the processes at work in Gandhi's authoring of his own key texts. Like Gandhi's *An Autobiography* and *Hind Swaraj*, the *Apology* is an intervention in an ongoing process of debate and dialogue.⁹⁸ Socrates' speech is dialogically oriented, in the sense that his speech is oriented towards speeches that others have made, whose charges and arguments can be reconstructed from the contents of Socrates' defence. This is in addition to their cited responses to his cross-examination.⁹⁹ Furthermore, the source text, like Gandhi's key texts, is a multi-authored text.¹⁰⁰ It is authored both by Socrates, who makes the speech, and then by 'his companion' Plato, who commits it to writing.¹⁰¹ In this sense the further mediations of the speech through translations begin to appear as part of a collective project of authoring in the history of those engagements with 'Truth' which fall under the project of self-rule. Hence the description of Socrates as a 'satyagrahi'. At the same time, Gandhi's own writings, as experiments with 'Truth', enact this ongoing project in texts which, as we shall see, are themselves constituted through processes of translation.

In translating a translation, then, Gandhi is not trying to elevate the translated text to the same level as the source text. Instead he compounds and reinforces the secondary nature of translation in a way which suggests that any understanding of the source text will be enhanced and not impeded by secondary translation. This is in contrast to European Orientalists, who, as we saw above, struggled to displace the *Gita* as source text by trying to overcome the secondary nature of translation. There is one more mark of Gandhi's wilful reluctance to overcome the secondary nature of translation. Although Gandhi outlines how his wish to 'translate' Plato's *Apology* emerges from its previous translation into many languages, coupled with its ethical content, he qualifies this by saying that he will not 'render it literally' but will summarise it instead.¹⁰² Benjamin argued that the relationship between content and language is quite different in the original and the translated text. While content and language form 'a certain unity in the original, like a fruit and its skin, the language of the translation envelops its content like a royal robe with ample folds'.¹⁰³ In his own translation of and commentary on this passage, Derrida develops Benjamin's point by saying that the best translation resembles a royal cape. It remains separate from the body to which it is conjoined.¹⁰⁴ To say of a translation that it reads as if it had been originally in that language is not to praise it.¹⁰⁵ It is also for this reason that Benjamin argues a literal translation cannot reproduce the meaning of

the original, and that anyway the translation must refrain from wanting to communicate something, 'from rendering the sense'. This is because the original has already relieved the translator and his translation of the effort of assembling and expressing what is to be conveyed.¹⁰⁶ Gandhi's refusal to render the text literally, and his intention to summarise it instead, invites attention to what his practice of 'translation' cannot do. It cannot reproduce the meaning or sense of the original, nor can it read as though it were written in that language. It also cannot reproduce the unity between the content and the language in the original, and so in no way does it attempt to displace the source text. By summarising Plato's *Apology* Gandhi calls attention to the secondary nature of his already secondary translation.

The reinforcement of the secondary nature of processes of translation highlights the distinguishing feature of Gandhi's practice of translation as part of his experimental engagements with 'Truth'. Benjamin writes of how a translation, instead of resembling the meaning of the original, must incorporate the original's mode of signification, thus making the original and the translation recognisable as fragments of a greater language, just as fragments are part of a vessel. These fragments which are to be glued together 'must match one another in the smallest details, although they need not be like one another'. As regards meaning, a translation should give voice to the *intentio* of the original not as reproduction but as harmony, as a supplement to the language in which it expresses itself.¹⁰⁷ Gandhi's foregrounding of the secondary nature of translation assumes a relationship of complementarity between his 'A Soldier of Truth' and Plato's *Apology*. Both are adjoining fragments of some larger whole, this whole being 'Truth'. But this is less a unified whole, and more an aggregate, in which, in Derrida's words, openness would not contradict unity.¹⁰⁸ They are complementary fragments of the same 'vast tree', with its many roots and branches. These adjoining fragments make sense at one and the same time in terms of each other and in terms of the nature of 'Truth', which is instantiated in a range of texts/cultures, without being exhausted by these instantiations and without being exclusive to any one text or culture. It is in keeping with this sense of the inexhaustible nature of 'Truth' that Gandhi's own autobiographical writings exemplify the necessarily incomplete nature of any experiments with 'Truth', as well as the eschewal of any totalising knowledge.

Gandhi's insistence on the secondary nature of his translations also needs to be placed in the context of another strand in the engagement of European Orientalists with the text of the *Gita*. This is the troubled attempt to frame the *Gita* within a Christian narrative so as to try to displace it as a source text by arguing that it reinforced the distinctive teachings that lie in Christianity itself. This kind of reading clearly resists the practice of translation as negotiating relationships between fragments which complement each other as part of 'Truth'. Instead it uses the *Gita* to reinforce the exclusive claims to 'Truth' on the part of Christianity. But this recurring history of the text as

supporting a comparative framework of religions, no matter how distorted and weighted towards Christianity, is sustained by the very nature of the *Gita* itself as a site of differential plurality, and, as such, is a paradoxical testimony to its power. In Gandhi's encounter with the *Gita*, the text is also framed in a comparative reading of religions, but in his reading this comparative frame of reference is not used to confirm some prior narrative of 'Truth' as exclusively circumscribed in one religion, but to expand the notion so as to put into question the category of religion which was deployed in English versions of the text. In his first encounter with the *Gita* as a written text, there are echoes of previous histories of Orientalist readings, in so far as Gandhi mentions in particular the impact the New Testament had on him, and his subsequent attempt to compare the Sermon on the Mount with the *Gita*.¹⁰⁹ But the frame of reference is immediately extended as he describes how 'his young mind tried to unify the teachings of the *Gita*, *The Light of Asia* and the Sermon on the Mount'.¹¹⁰ His conclusion that 'renunciation was the highest point of religion' bears out his clear sense that this 'Truth' is to be found not in the *Gita*, Buddhism or the New Testament alone, but in all three read together.¹¹¹ Gandhi's reading of the *Gita* as grounding an expanding frame of reference in which 'Truth' is not the monopoly of any one religion therefore subverts translations of the text into English. In these translations, as we have seen, there is an ongoing attempt to contain the expansive possibilities of the comparative frame of reference which the *Gita* as a site of differential plurality sustains. In contrast, for Gandhi the *Gita* is 'the book par excellence for the knowledge of Truth', precisely because it opens up a frame of reference for expanding and not constricting the category of 'Truth'. It helps us uncover a 'religion which underlies all religions',¹¹² precisely because it is a site of differential plurality.

Satyagraha, translatability and multi-authorship

Thus, Gandhi's autobiographical enactment of the *Gita* in translation works towards opening up possibilities for 'Truth' rather than circumscribing it within the form of pre-existing cultural narratives. Moreover, Gandhi remains consistent in his commitment to the principle of 'Truth' as inexhaustible. For Gandhi, even though the *Gita* is the book par excellence for the knowledge of 'Truth', it is by no means an exhaustive repository of it, and not just in the sense that other texts also instantiate fragments of 'Truth'. Gandhi refers to how he began memorising the *Gita* but how this had to 'give way to other work and the creation and nature of Satyagraha, which absorbed all my thinking time, as the latter may be said to be doing even now'.¹¹³ The dynamics of satyagraha not only in part flow from the *Gita*, but also transcend it, and working on the text of the *Gita* gives way to the labour of satyagraha. Gandhi's interpretation of the *Gita* is ultimately validated by his understanding of the dynamics of satyagraha, which from one

perspective is external to and independent of the text. This is why in general he can interpret the text as endorsing non-violence while others read it as reinforcing Arjuna's duty to fight as a warrior, and indeed as validating 'war in a religious cause, as the highest religion'.¹¹⁴ A key instance of Gandhi's interpretation is his invoking of some verses from Arnold's version enjoining Arjuna to do his duty, arguing that they reaffirmed his resolve to return to South Africa.¹¹⁵ Given the central importance of South Africa in the working out of satyagraha as a non-violent movement, this reflects the interplay between the principles of satyagraha and the *Gita*, because the verses occur in Chapter 3 of Arnold's version and could more immediately be read, in this version, as enjoining Arjuna to fight a battle.¹¹⁶

However, in validating his interpretation through the dynamism of satyagraha Gandhi is reinforcing the character of the *Gita* as a site of differential plurality and as a text that is already always translated. Scholars have discussed satyagraha, focussing on its content, its efficacy as a political mode of action,¹¹⁷ its antecedents in precolonial India,¹¹⁸ its multiple sources¹¹⁹ and its asceticism.¹²⁰ Here I wish to focus on satyagraha in terms of my argument regarding the translatability of 'Truth' in Gandhi's lexicon. The term 'satyagraha' is itself a site of differential plurality which is always in translation. First, Gandhi tells us that the search for the name 'satyagraha' was initially motivated by the project to find an Indian substitute for the English term 'passive resistance'. But in coining the term 'satyagraha', Gandhi and his co-workers soon give up the use of the English term 'passive resistance'. They try to avoid the phrase 'passive resistance' even in 'English writing', using instead the term satyagraha, or they also sometimes use 'some other equivalent English phrase'.¹²¹ In this way, the initial terms setting up the search for the name 'satyagraha' have been reversed; what began as the attempt to find an equivalent for the English 'passive resistance', ends up as the problem of finding an English equivalent for 'satyagraha'. Satyagraha is not a stable meaning fixed in a system of translation; instead it enacts a productivity of meaning which is released by the precariousness of translation itself, reversing the original terms of the translation. We have seen how Gandhi's autobiography enacts the undermining of the distinction between interlingual and intralingual translation in its engagement with Arnold's *Gita*. Here, in keeping with this, the distinction between source and target text/language is also subverted, with 'satyagraha' being translated or 'target' text (from 'passive resistance') and a source text for which English equivalents need to be found. The name 'satyagraha' is always, and already, a term in translation, held together by translation and constituted through translation, while simultaneously being an original term.

Secondly, the process of translation also reveals that 'passive resistance' and 'satyagraha' were not equivalents as strategies of protest and struggle.¹²² In part the search for the name was prompted by the recognition that the name 'passive resistance' was inadequate as a description of the 'new principle [that] had come into being'. So not only is the name 'satyagraha'

constituted through translation on multiple levels, this translation is itself as much constitutive of difference as similarity. What begins as a search for equivalence destabilises the notion of equivalence itself. In keeping with the problem of whether or not there can be a history of satyagraha,¹²³ the term has a precedent in 'passive resistance' but it is simultaneously productive of unprecedented meaning.

Thirdly, according to Gandhi, the term 'satyagraha' is a compound term which brings together the separate terms 'satya' meaning 'Truth' and 'graha' meaning 'firmness'.¹²⁴ In this compound term, 'Truth' is not treated as a unified term, complete in itself, but as adjoined to and operating with another term. Furthermore, this literal translation of the compound term is incomplete, because Gandhi argues that 'Truth' also implies 'love', and 'firmness' serves as 'a synonym for force'. But even this rendering of its meaning is incomplete and a further stage in translation has to take place, in order to specify that the force which is born out of Truth or Love is equivalent to non-violence. So while the term 'satyagraha' was constituted through translations at various levels, the coining of the term itself does not mark a closure of these processes of translation but rather continues it.

Fourthly, the term 'satyagraha' is also a multi-authored one which is a modification of a previously existing term, 'sadagraha', suggested by Maganlal Gandhi. This search for the term was undertaken through the Indian press: 'A small prize was... announced in Indian Opinion to be awarded to the reader who invented the best designation for our struggle. We... received a number of suggestions.'¹²⁵ This reflects Gandhi's own practice of authoring, which undermines the distinction between the book of his autobiography and the text of a newspaper. *An Autobiography* was not at first published in book form, as a complete text in its own right; it first appeared serially in Gujarati in the issues of *Navajivan* and simultaneously in English in the issues of *Young India* between 1925 and 1929.¹²⁶ While one of his co-workers wanted him to write the autobiography 'separately for publication as a book', Gandhi makes it clear that he wrote 'a chapter week by week' for weekly publication in *Navajivan*.¹²⁷ The serial publication of the text in both Gujarati and English overlapped with the publication of the first edition of the text in two volumes in 1927 and 1929, but it was not until the second edition that *An Autobiography* was published in one volume as a book entire in itself.¹²⁸ The genesis of *An Autobiography* in the Indian press extends to other key texts in Gandhi's oeuvre. *Hind Swaraj* was first published in two instalments in the Gujarati section of *Indian Opinion* in 1909; it was published later in book form by Gandhi's own International Printing Press in Phoenix, Natal, in 1910.¹²⁹ Similarly, *Satyagraha in South Africa* was published serially in the issues of *Navajivan* from 13 April 1924 to 22 November 1925; this overlapped with the publication of the text in book form in two volumes in 1924 and 1925.¹³⁰ The convergence of an

autobiographer and newspaper editor is brought home by Gandhi when he discusses the inception of *Indian Opinion* in *An Autobiography* in terms which are reminiscent of the writing of an autobiography itself: 'Indian Opinion in those days, like Young India and Navajivan today, was a mirror of part of my life.'¹³¹ This conception of authorship is reflected in the composition of the dialogue in *Hind Swaraj*, as taking place between the figures of an Editor and a Reader. The Editor in *Hind Swaraj* begins the dialogue by defining the three functions of a responsible paper as he sees it, namely to 'understand the popular feeling and to give expression to it; . . . to arouse among the people certain desirable sentiments; and the third is fearlessly to expose popular defects'.¹³² These are also the functions that Gandhi proposed for *Indian Opinion* itself,¹³³ and since as a book *Hind Swaraj* emerges from its serial publication in *Indian Opinion*, the symbiotic tie between a text as a book, and a serial publication in the press is reinforced by this identity of functions.

There are other ways, too, in which Gandhi's key texts draw attention to their genesis in collective enterprises. Gandhi asserts in *An Autobiography*, 'I started writing it in compliance' with the wishes of 'my co-workers'. For this reason he also asserts that his co-workers must share the responsibility for the writing of his autobiography.¹³⁴ He also refers to the doubts of a 'God-fearing friend' who questioned the 'adventure' of writing an autobiography as a 'practice peculiar to the West',¹³⁵ so that the autobiography is also conceived as part of an ongoing dialogue with a friend who doubts the legitimacy of the autobiographical 'adventure' as a whole. Similarly, Gandhi counters the objections to the form of *Hind Swaraj* as a dialogue by referring to how the 'dialogue, as it has been given, actually took place between several friends'.¹³⁶ In this way, Gandhi conceives two of his key texts as continuations of an earlier dialogue amongst fellow workers. As 'labours of love',¹³⁷ they are shaped as part of an ongoing dialogue in a collective project.

Thus, the inception of the designation 'satyagraha' through an Indian newspaper reflects the defining feature of authorship which is enacted in Gandhi's work and reinforces its character as a multi-authored and multiply translated term. There are other ways in which the politics of satyagraha are premised on the linguistic inadequacy which for Gandhi grounds the translatability of 'Truth'. At a Khilafat conference in Delhi, where he faces a 'critical, if not hostile audience', Gandhi expresses anxiety at his being 'handicapped for want of suitable Hindi or Urdu words'. He is unable to address the audience in 'faultless, polished Urdu', and so he expresses his views 'in such broken Hindi as I could command'.¹³⁸ But he makes it clear that he is successful in impressing his views on the audience. Furthermore, it is at this meeting that he struggles to find a 'suitable Hindi or Urdu word for [a] new idea' and then finally hits upon the word non-cooperation, an expression that 'I used for the first time at this meeting' but it was some time before the word 'became current coin'. For the time

being 'it was lost in the proceedings of the conference'.¹³⁹ It is not his facility with language, nor his eloquence, which wins critical audiences over, but the reverse; the intensity and conviction of what he wants to say can only be expressed through a broken language, not through a faultless or polished eloquence. Furthermore, it is only by working with a broken language, with a fragmented language and an uncertain linguistic expertise, that he can be open to questions of 'Truth', and the politics of non-cooperation. The foregrounding of linguistic ineptitude is also politically enabling, in so far as it is through his stumbling with words, and not through their fullness, that Gandhi can begin to broach the category of non-cooperation.

The framing of 'Truth' through translatability is also evocative of the very text of *An Autobiography*. The Gujarati and English versions of *An Autobiography* appeared simultaneously in two different periodicals between 1925 and 1929.¹⁴⁰ Furthermore, the English translation by Mahadev Desai was revised by Gandhi himself 'as far as the meaning of the author is concerned' and by Madeleine Slade 'as far as the language is concerned'.¹⁴¹ So Gandhi was involved in translating the first edition of his own autobiography. He was also involved in translating some of his other key works from Gujarati into English. In the Preface to the English translation of *Hind Swaraj*, he describes how he dictated his English translation of the Gujarati text to a European friend (Hermann Kallenbach).¹⁴² Similarly, Gandhi revised the English translation of *Satyagraha in South Africa* by Vajli G. Desai.¹⁴³ Thus, Gandhi's autobiographies are themselves texts in translation, with Gandhi simultaneously playing the role of author and translator. Indeed, for Gandhi author and translator cannot be distinguished.

I have argued that Gandhi's encounter with the *Gita* is framed by an understanding of translation as simultaneously 'intrasemiotic' and 'intersemiotic', that is, as a series of transmutations and exchanges between his lived life, the *Gita*, and the text of his autobiography. In these series of exchanges, Gandhi also enacts his own self-authoring in terms of a different kind of relationship between commentary and text from that implicit in the work of European Orientalists. Gandhi tries to construct a reciprocal relationship between the *Gita* and his autobiographical project. His translation of the *Gita* into his life is at the same time a commentary upon it, and the *Gita* as a book of daily reference is equally a commentary on the text of his own life. Here Gandhi, like previous translators, has conflated the categories of translation and commentary, but by contrast the texts are coeval and comment on each other. This reciprocal commentary between autobiographical enactment and the *Gita* compensates for the recuperative losses occasioned by Arnold's too easy and too usable translation.¹⁴⁴ The performative register of the autobiographical project regenerates the textual energy lost in the translation without forsaking the task of translation. The experiential difficulties of autobiographical enactment in the project of self-rule are a continuance of

the difficulties of the *Gita* as a text, not an attempt to erase those difficulties by presenting an easily consumable textual entity without any commentary at all.

In conclusion, Gandhi's travels in search of 'Truth' are testimony to the inescapability of translation, not just because of his reliance on a wide range of texts in translation from the *Gita* to some of Tolstoy's works,¹⁴⁵ but at a more fundamental level because of the way in which motifs of translation constitute the very nature of his texts and his notion of 'Truth'. When he says that 'Truth' is a 'vast tree', we can see how it is translation-like. Like the source text, it grows in translation rather than is displaced or contained by it. Furthermore, when he assumes 'Truth' is inexhaustible, we can also see how he has incorporated the Babelian principle of incompleteness as a structuring principle in his experiments with 'Truth'.¹⁴⁶ Since all translations are approximate, 'Truth' can never be finally translated just as it can never be finally found through the travels in search of it. The term 'translation' bears the etymological meaning of to transfer or transport, to carry across, and it is clear from Gandhi's writings that the term 'Truth' cannot be isolated from processes of travel. Both represent the structural impossibility of ever finishing or completing 'Truth'. The imbrication of travel with translation is also evident in some of Gandhi's sources. For Thomas Taylor, the fallacy of speed is necessarily intertwined with the construction of the Tower of Babel, which he argues is 'the prototype of the modern town' and which 'it is said, proved so great an attraction that in order to get the people scattered again, it was found necessary to confuse the tongues'.¹⁴⁷ For Taylor, the 'confusion of tongues' is both a consequence of and a necessary counter to the fallacy of speedy travel. For Gandhi it is the confusion of tongues which underpins the growing nature of 'Truth' and it is the slowness of travel which provides the means of approaching that 'Truth', even as (and because) it is also a reflection of the dissipation of that 'Truth' in multiple locations.

Finally, when in the preface to *Hind Swaraj* Gandhi stresses that he is not being original,¹⁴⁸ he is emphasising that because of the translation-like character of 'Truth' there are no original texts, only texts in translation. In the final analysis, Gandhi's discourse of vulnerability, as manifested in his engagement with the translatability of 'Truth', demonstrates the impossibility of nationality grounding itself in autochthonous 'Truths'. Those 'native' Truths which define a nationality are always truths instantiated in processes of translation, and are not available otherwise.

Notes

1. For an important discussion of these issues in terms of communicative ethics, see Matustik, *Postnational Identity*, pp. 50–2.
2. Matustik, p. 198 discusses this in terms of Havel's views on postnational solidarity.

3. Gandhi, *An Autobiography*, p. 307.
4. Ibid., p. 454, p. 452.
5. Ibid., p. 206.
6. Notably Iyer, p. 19, p. 49, p. 65, p. 71, p. 80, p. 92, p. 110, p. 135, p. 179, p. 184. Parekh usefully discusses the problems with Gandhi's interpretation of the *Gita* as enjoining non-violence, Parekh, pp. 165–71.
7. For two important discussions, but from opposite perspectives, see Iyer, Ch. 7 and Erikson, pp. 229–54.
8. Gandhi, *Satyagraha in South Africa*, p. 117.
9. Gandhi, *An Autobiography*, p. 263.
10. Gandhi, *Satyagraha in South Africa*, p. 195.
11. Gandhi, *An Autobiography*, pp. 161–2.
12. Ibid., p. 307.
13. Gandhi, *Satyagraha in South Africa*, p. 213.
14. Ibid., p. 244.
15. Ibid., p. 76.
16. Ibid., p. 244.
17. That is, translation that takes place within a language, or rewording in the same language. This is distinguished from interlingual translation when translation takes place across two languages, or 'intersemiotic' translation/transmutation when verbal signs are transmuted into non-verbal signs, for example, when a novel is turned into a film. These distinctions are Roman Jakobson's, for which see Susan Bassnett-McGuire, p. 14, and Edwin Gentzler, p. 1.
18. This is a point that Derrida makes about the demarcation of languages in general in Jacques Derrida, 'Des Tours de Babel', in Joseph F. Graham (ed.), *Difference in Translation* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), pp. 165–207, p. 173.
19. Gandhi, *An Autobiography*, p. 244.
20. What Jakobson calls intersemiotic translation, or the interpretation of verbal signs by means of non-verbal sign systems; see Susan Bassnett-McGuire, p. 14.
21. The exploration of translation as a 'mode' is key to Walter Benjamin's notion of translation; see his 'Task of the Translator', in *Illuminations*, translated Harry Zohn (London: Fontana, 1973), pp. 70–82.
22. Michael S. Dodson, 'Orientalism, Sanskrit Scholarship, and Education in Colonial North India', University of Cambridge Ph.D., 2003, p. 67.
23. Warren Hastings, 'Letter to Nathaniel Smith', in Charles Wilkins, *The Bhagvat-Geeta, or Dialogues of Kreesna and Arjoon; in Eighteen Lectures; with Notes. Translated from the original, in the sanskreet, or ancient language of the Brahmans* (London: C. Nourse, 1785), pp. 5–16, p. 11. The Advertisement which appears after the title page also refers to the 'fidelity, accuracy, and merit of the Translator'.
24. For a description of this paradigm, see Theo Hermans (ed.) *The Manipulation of Literature. Studies in Literary Translation* (London and Sydney: Croom Helm, 1985), pp. 7–9; Lawrence Venuti (ed.), *Rethinking Translation. Discourse, Subjectivity, Ideology* (London: Routledge, 1992), pp. 3–4.
25. Sir William Jones, 'Tenth Anniversary Discourse', in Lord Teignmouth (ed.), *The Works of Sir William Jones with the Life of the Author*, 13 vols (London 1799), 3: pp. 217–8.
26. Hastings, 'Letter to Nathaniel Smith', p. 12, and 'Translator's Preface', p. 26.
27. Hastings, 'Letter to Nathaniel Smith', p. 12.

28. For an excellent examination of the reinforcement of Benares as a culturally important centre of learning, see Dodson, 'Orientalism, Sanskrit Scholarship, and Education', Ch. 5.
29. Wilkins, 'Translator's preface', p. 25.
30. Wilkins, *Bhagvat-Geeta*, p. 154.
31. Ibid., p. 26.
32. Hastings, 'Letter to Nathaniel Smith', p. 15.
33. Wilkins, 'Translator's preface', pp. 23–4.
34. Dodson, 'Orientalism, Sanskrit scholarship, and Education', p. 44.
35. See the advertisement which reads 'The following Work is published under the authority of the Court of Directors of the East India Company, by the particular desire and recommendation of the Governor General of India; whose letter to the Chairman of the Company will sufficiently explain the motives for its publication, and furnish the best testimony of the fidelity, accuracy, and merit of the Translator.'
36. Wilkins, 'Translator's Preface', p. 21.
37. Tejaswini Niranjana, *Siting Translation. History, Post-Structuralism, and the Colonial Context* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), p. 3.
38. Hastings, 'Letter to Nathaniel Smith', p. 10.
39. Raymond Schwab, *The Oriental Renaissance: Europe's Rediscovery of India and the East, 1680–1880*, trans. Gene Patterson-Black and Victor Reinking (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), p. 17.
40. J. Majeed, *Ungoverned Imaginings. James Mill's The History of British India and Orientalism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), Ch. 1.
41. Hastings, 'Letter to Nathaniel Smith', p. 5.
42. Ibid., p. 10.
43. Wilkins, 'Translator's preface', p. 24.
44. Ibid., p. 25.
45. Wilkins argues that the term 'Brahman' signifies 'a theologian or divine'. Wilkins, *Bhagvat-Geeta*, p. 156.
46. Majeed, *Ungoverned Imaginings*, pp. 18–21.
47. Niranjana, *Siting Translation*, p. 16.
48. Hastings, 'Letter to Nathaniel Smith', p. 7.
49. Ibid., p. 9.
50. Wilkins, 'Translator's preface', p. 25.
51. Wilkins, *Bhagvat-Geeta*, p. 142.
52. Ibid., p. 140.
53. Hastings, 'Letter to Nathaniel Smith', p. 11.
54. Benjamin, 'Task of the Translator', p. 75, p. 81.
55. Hastings, 'Letter to Nathaniel Smith', pp. 9–10.
56. Benjamin, 'Task of the Translator', p. 72.
57. Ibid., p. 72; Hastings, 'Letter to Nathaniel Smith', p. 13.
58. Benjamin, 'Task of the Translator', p. 72.
59. Wilkins, *Bhagvat-Geeta*, p. 93.
60. Benjamin, 'Task of the Translator', p. 79.
61. J.C. Thomson, *The Bhagavad-Gita; or A Discourse Between Krishna and Arjuna on Divine Matters. A Sanskrit Philosophical Poem, Translated, with Copious Notes, an Introduction on Sanskrit Philosophy, and Other Matter* (Hertford: Stephen Austin, 1855), title page.
62. Thomson, p. xii.

63. Wilkins, *Bhagvat-Geeta*, p. 5, p. 23.
64. Thomson, p. cxiv.
65. *Ibid.*, p. cxiii.
66. *Ibid.*, pp. xii–xiii.
67. *Ibid.*, p. xii, p. xiv.
68. *Ibid.*, pp. xii–xiv.
69. *Ibid.*, p. xii.
70. The phrase is from Derrida, p. 205.
71. Derrida, 'Des Tours de Babel', p. 191.
72. Thomson, pp. cx–cx. Emphases are in the original.
73. *Ibid.*, p. cxii.
74. Thomson, pp. v–vi.
75. *Ibid.*, p. x.
76. Derrida, 'Des Tours de Babel', pp. 165–6. These are the opening terms in which Derrida considers the Tower of Babel, as exhibiting 'incompletion, the impossibility of finishing, of totalizing, of saturating, of completing something on the order of edification, architectural construction, system and architectonics'.
77. Andrew Benjamin, *Translation and the Nature of Philosophy. A New Theory of Words* (London and New York: Routledge, 1989), pp. 14–17.
78. Thomson, p. xvii, p. liv.
79. *Ibid.*, p. liv.
80. *Ibid.*, p. xxxvii.
81. *Ibid.*, pp. cv–cvi, p. cviii.
82. *Ibid.*, p. xci, p. cxiv.
83. G.A. Feuerstein, *Introduction to the Bhagavad-Gita. Its Philosophy and Cultural Setting* (London: Rider, 1974), p. 99.
84. Andrew Benjamin, *Translation*, passim.
85. Gandhi, *An Autobiography*, p. 76.
86. Edwin Arnold, *Song Celestial* (London: Trubner and Co., 1885), p. ix.
87. *Ibid.*, p. x.
88. *Ibid.*, p. vii.
89. *Ibid.*, p. x.
90. Majeed, *Ungoverned Imaginings*, p. 48.
91. Gandhi, *An Autobiography*, p. 76, p. 244.
92. For the text of this, see 'Story of a Soldier of Truth', *Collected Works*, 10: pp. 172–4, pp. 185–7, pp. 196–9, pp. 212–4, pp. 217–221, pp. 227–29.
93. *Ibid.*, p. 173.
94. *Ibid.*, pp. 173–4.
95. *Ibid.*, p. 174.
96. Benjamin, 'Task of the Translator', p. 72.
97. 'Story of a Soldier of Truth', p. 173.
98. Gandhi begins *An Autobiography* by referring to his friend's doubts about the practice of writing an autobiography. In this sense, *An Autobiography* begins as an ongoing discussion of its legitimacy as a form of literature. In *Hind Swaraj*, Gandhi says that the 'dialogue, as it has been given, actually took place between several friends, mostly readers of *Indian Opinion*, and myself'. See Gandhi, *An Autobiography*, p. 19, and *Hind Swaraj*, p. 6.
99. See the text of Socrates' speech in Hugh Tredennick and Harold Tarrant (eds.), *Plato. The Last Days of Socrates* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1993), pp. 37–67.

100. By calling attention to how *An Autobiography* and *Hind Swaraj* are continuations of dialogues, Gandhi is also suggesting that they are, in a sense, multi-authored, because their genesis as texts lies in the interactions between individuals.
101. Ibid., p. 173.
102. Gandhi, 'Soldier of Truth', p. 173.
103. Benjamin, 'Task of the Translator', p. 76.
104. Derrida, 'Des Tours de Babel', p. 194.
105. Benjamin, 'Task of the Translator', p. 78.
106. Ibid., pp. 78–9.
107. Ibid., p. 79.
108. Derrida, 'Des Tours de Babel', p. 190.
109. Gandhi, *An Autobiography*, p. 77.
110. Ibid., p. 78.
111. Ibid., p. 78.
112. Ibid., p. 76. See also *Hind Swaraj*, p. 42.
113. Gandhi, *An Autobiography*, p. 244.
114. Rai Bahadur Diwan Chand Obhrai, *The Bhagavad-Gita. Philosophy of War* (Lahore: Civil and Military Gazette, 1939), Preface. Parekh also discusses Gandhi's interpretation of the Gita as enjoining non-violence in relation to Tilak and the 'terrorist' wing of Indian nationalism, who used the *Gita* to justify their advocacy of violence, Parekh, pp. 151–71.
115. Gandhi, *An Autobiography*, p. 171.
116. Edwin Arnold, p. 32. For another citation from Arnold's version by Gandhi, see *An Autobiography*, p. 76.
117. Iyer, p. 275ff., p. 295ff., Parekh, p. 104, pp. 134–5, Fox, pp. 153–5.
118. Iyer, p. 270, J.V. Bondurant, *Conquest of Violence: The Gandhian Philosophy of Conflict* (University of California Press, 1965), pp. 118–20, Rudolph & Rudolph, pp. 185–6.
119. Gene Sharp, *Gandhi as a Political Strategist* (Boston: Porter Sargent, 1979), pp. 26–32, Iyer, pp. 260–70.
120. Iyer, pp. 234–9, Parekh, p. 94, Rudolph & Rudolph, pp. 196–9 on what they evocatively call Gandhi's 'this worldly asceticism'.
121. Gandhi, *Satyagraha in South Africa*, p. 92.
122. The differences between the two are stressed in the chapter following Gandhi's account of the search for the term 'satyagraha', pp. 93–6. See also Fox, p. 47.
123. For some of Gandhi's comments on this, see *Satyagraha in South Africa*, p. 92, p. 96, p. 153; also *Hind Swaraj*, p. 74, pp. 88–90.
124. In *Satyagraha in South Africa*, p. 92.
125. Ibid., p. 92.
126. M.K. Gandhi, *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi* (New Delhi: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, 1970), 39: p. 1 f.n.
127. Gandhi, *An Autobiography*, p. 13.
128. Ibid., p. 1, f.n.
129. Parel, 'A note on the history of the text', *Hind Swaraj*, p. lxiii.
130. Gandhi, *Satyagraha in South Africa*, p. 1 f.n.
131. Gandhi, *An Autobiography*, p. 263.
132. Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj*, p. 13.
133. M.K. Gandhi, 'Ourselves', in *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi* (New Delhi: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, 1960), 4: pp. 319–20, p. 320 and

- M.K. Gandhi, 'Indian Opinion', in *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi* (New Delhi: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, 1961), 5: pp. 289–90.
134. Gandhi, *An Autobiography*, p. 258.
135. Ibid., p. 13.
136. Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj*, p. 6.
137. Gandhi refers to his 'fellow workers' whose 'labour of love' consisted in working overtime to produce the translation of *Hind Swaraj* in an 'unexpectedly short time'; *Hind Swaraj*, pp. 5–6.
138. Gandhi, *An Autobiography*, p. 433.
139. Ibid., p. 433.
140. Gandhi, *Collected Works*, 39: p. 1 f.n.
141. Mahadev Desai's preface to the first edition of the English translation of *An Autobiography*, 1927, in *Collected Works*, 39: p. 473.
142. Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj*, p. 5.
143. Gandhi states this in his Foreword to the English translation; see *Satyagraha in South Africa*, p. 1.
144. Here I am calling upon Philip Lewis' discussion of the general relationship between commentary and translation. See his 'The measure of translation effects', in Graham (ed.), *Difference in Translation*, pp. 31–62, pp. 61–2.
145. See Gandhi's appendix to *Hind Swaraj*, which lists those works of Tolstoy he uses; *Hind Swaraj*, p. 120.
146. Derrida argues that the Tower of Babel, and the consequent necessity of translation, figures 'the irreducible multiplicity of tongues', and also exhibits the 'impossibility of finishing, of totalizing' (Derrida, 'Des Tours de Babel', p. 156).
147. Taylor, *Fallacy of Speed*, p. 21.
148. Ibid., p. 10.

8

A Reluctant Admission of the Reality of the Self

In Chapters 4–7, I considered aspects of Nehru’s and Gandhi’s notions of the self, as articulated in their autobiographies. In this chapter I develop my analysis of Iqbal’s notion of the self further by considering how its metaphysics exemplifies those defining contradictions and tensions in his work which I have already touched upon.

I will discuss the work of two philosophers, the British Idealists F.H. Bradley (1846–1924)¹ and John McTaggart Ellis McTaggart (1866–1925),² in relation to Iqbal’s thought and poetry, with particular reference to aspects of the *Jāwīd Nāma* and *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*. I am not concerned specifically with the differences between Bradley and McTaggart (which are considerable, not least in the very style of their writings), except in so far as these differences are germane to my argument. There are a number of reasons why it is important to consider Iqbal’s relationship with Bradley and, in particular, with McTaggart, in parts of his work.

The nature of the *Jāwīd Nāma* ultimately stems from its attempt to fuse ecstatic love poetry in a Sufi mode with political and religious polemic. Most importantly, Iqbal was at pains to invert the idea that the goal of mystical experience was ‘fanā’ or annihilation in God.³ Schimmel has pointed out how Muslim modernists, and especially Iqbal, stressed that Muhammad was able to speak to God in a true I-and-Thou relationship. For Iqbal, this was a corrective to the doctrine of the Unity of Being,⁴ suggesting moreover that the individual self is not erased in the encounter which the mirā’j signifies. It is also for this reason that in the *Jāwīd Nāma* al-Hallaj is seen to be expressly countering those whose goal is annihilation [fanā].⁵ However, given Iqbal’s cosmopolitan eclecticism, his notion of selfhood is not just an intervention in a preceding Sufi discourse. It also involves an engagement with strands of European philosophy. Iqbal’s short essay ‘McTaggart’s philosophy’ (1932), in which reference is also made to Bradley, is indicative of the way in which Iqbal grappled with these strands of thought. In keeping with Iqbal’s cosmopolitan eclecticism, it is also in this essay that he compares McTaggart’s stress on ‘personal immortality even at the expense of

the transcendent God of Christian theology' with al-Hallaj's similar position 'at a time when Muslim scholastic thought was moving in a direction which tended to obscure the reality and destiny of the human ego'.⁶ Earlier, in *Development of Metaphysics*, Iqbal updates Bahaullah's⁷ scheme of a primal essence manifesting itself in centres of consciousness by referring to how, 'as Dr. McTaggart would say, [this] constitutes a further determination of the Absolute'.⁸ This comparison is embedded once again in Iqbal's cosmopolitan range of references; in the course of two pages, he brings together Bahaullah, McTaggart, Schopenhauer and Buddha to address the problem of the place of Love in the ultimate nature of reality.⁹

Iqbal's engagement with Bradley and McTaggart is also clear from his references to their philosophies in *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, where he tries to extract a 'reluctant admission' of the reality of the self from Bradley's work.¹⁰ The condensed and abbreviated form of Iqbal's article on McTaggart, and its drawing together of thinkers of different traditions to no clear purpose or conclusion, is characteristic of Iqbal's mode of thinking as a whole. This mode of thinking is very much in evidence in the *Reconstruction*, whose most striking feature, as we have seen, is the contrast between the depth and range of its eclecticism, and its paucity of any clearly articulated conclusions. Iqbal comments on Sufism that 'while it concentrates its interest chiefly on a *life* of self-denial, it allows free play to the speculative tendency'.¹¹ We might say that Iqbal's work is a combination of the endorsement of selfhood rather than its denial, with a free-playing speculation.

McTaggart taught Iqbal philosophy at Cambridge, where Iqbal was based from 1905 to 1908. Iqbal wrote of how he met McTaggart frequently in Trinity College, and how the philosopher's 'powerful logic often silenced me but never succeeded in convincing me'.¹² We will have recourse to this revealing remark about Iqbal's relationship with McTaggart when we touch upon the nature of Iqbal's encounter as a whole with the philosopher's work. Moreover, the systematic nature of Bradley's and McTaggart's thought, and their conceptions of the task of metaphysics, throw into strong relief the nature of Iqbal's own thinking as a poet. The contrasts between their work helps us to identify some of the contradictions and tensions in Iqbal's thought, especially his notions of the self and God, and also to understand the role these contradictions play in forming the character of his poetry. Furthermore, the relationships in parts of Iqbal's poetry between doubt and knowledge, desire and complacency, can also be illuminated by considering Bradley's and McTaggart's philosophical reflections on these notions. The contrasts between Bradley's and McTaggart's ways of thinking and their conclusions and Iqbal's own mode of thought help us to understand why some of the contradictions in Iqbal's work remain unresolved, and also how they are related to the character of his thinking and his creativity as an artist.

This approach to Iqbal's can also help to bring to the fore the conflicting strands in his work, in part at least, responsible for his appeal to Muslims

from a wide variety of backgrounds, who often try to appropriate his work for their own visions of Islam. Schimmel has pointed out some of these strands in Iqbal's work, and his status as a 'talisman' in Pakistan.¹³ The wide appeal of Iqbal's work has much to do with the manner in which he combined a variety of positions which offered the prospects of a rebellion bearing a close relationship with complacency. In fact, the characteristic tone of some of Iqbal's poetry is a combination of protest and acquiescence.

I have already commented upon the interrogative tone of the *Jāwīd Nāma*. The poem's love for open questions and hidden answers is reinforced by the poet's expression of his own doubts. In the sphere of Venus the poet contrasts his loneliness with the generality of men who are ignorant [bi-khabar] of the conflict between unbelief and faith [kufr o dīn].¹⁴ As he cautiously negotiates the lunar landscape in the sphere of the moon, he describes how he is assailed by doubts [vahm u shak].¹⁵ The expression of self-doubt by the poet is linked to his emphasis on desire as the motive force behind the poem, as well as the driving force behind creativity.¹⁶ Both the self-doubt and desire spring from a recognition of a lack of completeness and wholeness on the part of the poet. The passionate desire which forms a large part of the *Jāwīd Nāma* is in part an intense longing for the Beloved, an image which Iqbal uses in the Sufi sense of the Divine reality.¹⁷ It is in relation to this image of the Beloved that Schimmel points to Iqbal's stress on the dynamic character of love,¹⁸ in which he was influenced by Rumi.¹⁹ The dynamism of desire and love as the driving force behind creativity is related to the exhortations to seize and grasp new worlds of meaning,²⁰ and it also figures in recurring images of drowning and intoxication, as when the poet is exhorted to 'be a partner to the ring of wine-imbibing debauchees' [sharīk-e ḥalqa-e rindān-e bāda paima bāsh].²¹

The concept of a mystical love is also to be found in McTaggart's work, which Iqbal described as original in raising the 'great problem of love'.²² In *Some Dogmas of Religion* (1906), McTaggart had himself upbraided philosophy for 'underrating' the fact of love, the only serious exception to this negligence among philosophers being Hegel.²³ He argued that the non-existence of God leaves it as possible as before that love should be the 'central fact of all reality',²⁴ and love was to play a central role in his magnum opus, *The Nature of Existence* (1927), which argued that the universe was in reality a harmonious system of selves, which formed its primary parts, and whose whole content consisted in their loving perceptions of themselves and of each other.²⁵ As McTaggart put it in a letter to Iqbal:

For my own part I adhere to my own belief that selves are the ultimate Reality, but as to their true content and their true good my position is, as it was, that it is to be found in Eternity and not in time, and in love rather than action.²⁶

Whilst Iqbal's work cannot in any sense be reduced to McTaggart's metaphysics (nor would it be appropriate to do so), McTaggart's reflections on the nature of love and desire, and its relationship to complacency, are of some relevance to the part these notions play in the *Jāvid Nāma*, especially given Iqbal's comments on the central role of love in McTaggart's metaphysics.

McTaggart argued that desire is not necessarily directed towards change, and that, in fact, it is 'primarily acquiescence'. Whilst the word 'acquiescence' seems inappropriate for cases of 'passionate desire', none the less it is useful to employ it as a synonym, because 'it is universally admitted that acquiescence does not involve any relation to change, and we shall thus make it clear that no such relation is involved by desire'. McTaggart's view is that 'all desires accept something, though that which they accept is often itself of a negative nature'.²⁷ For McTaggart, the crux of the matter lies in acquiescence as active acceptance in the system of mutual perceptions between selves in reality. These perceptions would be loving because in ultimate reality, in regarding the mental states of those we love, there shall be no wish that they be other than what they are.²⁸ McTaggart also considers how love, in our present experience, is 'an essentially restful state' and also 'essentially a state of unrest'. It is the first because 'it presents itself as something which is sufficient in itself, which needs no justification, which is good unconditionally, whenever it does arise, whatever may be the circumstances in which it has arisen'. It is the second because 'in proportion as it becomes intense, we desire, more and more intensely, not indeed anything else but love, but love more intense and absorbing'. What love here can only long for is 'perfect rest' which comes from union with the beloved.²⁹ McTaggart's views on the nature of love and desire per se, cast some light on the combination of restlessness and restfulness, and of desire and acquiescence, which is characteristic of the *Jāvid Nāma*, as it weaves together the ecstatic love poetry characteristic of Sufism with political polemic.

The tone of acquiescence in the poem, intertwined with desire, in part stems from the sense that on one level the poet knows the answers to the questions it poses but cannot articulate these within the poem itself. To a certain extent, this can be attributed to the didactic strand in the *Jāvid Nāma*. The poem relieves for the reader the resolution of those questions which the poet is no longer grappling with, a strategy common in a number of religious and gnostic texts, such as Shabestari's *Gulshan-e Rāz* (composed 1317), a text whose form Iqbal's *Gulshan-e Rāz-e Jadīd* closely mirrored, as we have seen. Indeed, in its blending of the didactic and lyrical with narrative, the *Jāvid Nāma* was of a generic type with the great and long poems which played so influential a role in the formation of modern South Asian literature and its underpinning identities.³⁰ However, this sense that the poem already knows the answers to the questions it poses can also be explained in terms of the close relationship between doubt or ignorance, and knowledge, a relationship expressed by Bradley in his characteristic fashion:

You cannot speak of the absent and lacking unless you assume some field and some presence elsewhere. You cannot suggest your ignorance as a reason for judging knowledge incomplete, unless you have some knowledge already of an area which that ignorance hides.³¹

It is for this reason that within the region of the known and not outside it 'lies all the kingdom hidden by ignorance; and here is the object of all intelligent doubt'.³² Iqbal's *Jāwīd Nāma* embodies Bradley's insight into the relationship between ignorance and knowledge, which is partly why the poem reads as though it knows the answers already; the text only waits upon the proper occasions for these answers to be revealed in another poem. It simulates an interrogative tone from the perspective of one who has travelled beyond the questions it poses. This sense that the poet already knows the answers to the questions he asks, but does not realise it, is reinforced by the advice he receives, namely to look within for the answers to the questions which he already knows. When the earth is put to shame by heaven's rebuke for its miserable existence, a voice exhorts earth to 'look within your own heart' [andar zamir-e khud nigar].³³

It is this sense of coming to know what one already knows, but did not realise, that forms part of the major theme of the poem, and indeed of large parts of Iqbal's work as a whole. The ideal of selfhood lies in the 'increase of one's self-glow [tāb-e khud-rā]' and the 'test of one's self before the sun [kharshīd]'.³⁴ Iqbal quotes the passage from which this latter citation is taken at the very end of the *Reconstruction*, in order to illustrate his view that the self is deepened through the vital act of making and re-making the world it beholds. It is this which is the 'moment of supreme bliss and also a moment of the greatest trial for the ego'.³⁵ To substantiate his view of *khudī*, Iqbal uses a passage from the Qur'ān stating that on the day of Resurrection each shall come to God as an individual. Commenting on the passage, he expresses his conviction that 'It is with the irreplaceable singleness of his individuality that the finite ego will approach the infinite ego to see for himself the consequences of his past action and to judge the possibilities of his future'.³⁶ The closer one approaches God, the more perfect one's individuality becomes; as he puts it, 'In the higher Sufism of Islam unitive experience is not the finite ego effacing its own identity by some sort of absorption into the Infinite Ego; it is rather the Infinite passing into the loving embrace of the finite'.³⁷ In this Iqbal was in agreement with McTaggart, who noted that some thinkers, especially 'Oriental mystics', conclude that love only reaches its goal when the lover and the beloved become identical. But this would be 'suicidal', and 'love would be destroyed by it, since love depends on a relation between two persons'.³⁸ The 'truer' interpretation is that which looks for attainment 'when the lover knows the beloved' face to face, as he knows himself.³⁹ It is this relation between two selves as lover and Beloved which Iqbal seeks to maintain. Indeed, in the context of describing McTaggart's

philosophy as raising 'the great problem of the nature of Love', Iqbal added, 'Its secret lies in the pangs of separation, detachment, or as McTaggart would say, "differentiation".'⁴⁰ Hence the poet's declaration in the *Jāvid Nāma* that love reposes neither in separation, nor in union.⁴¹ Iqbal's belief in personal immortality as something to 'be achieved by personal effort' has to be placed in the context of this vision of degrees of reality according to degrees of 'egohood'.⁴² The picture painted in *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* of 'the emergence and multiplication of individualities, each fixing its gaze on the revelation of its own possibilities and seeking its own dominion',⁴³ is matched by the picture painted in the prelude to the *Jāvid Nāma*, where at the dawn of creation from the 'rapture of and yearning for the seizing of selfhood' [zauq ū shauq khud gīrī], the cry arose, 'I am another, you are yet another' [man digaram tū digarī].⁴⁴

The concern with the lover's *khudī* in the *Jāvid Nāma* accounts for the Promethean strand of a self-exaltation in the poem which sometimes approaches self-divinisation. It is from self that the 'quick succession of day and night derives',⁴⁵ and it is the sighs of the blessed man which cause the worlds to circle around him.⁴⁶ It is possible to see a parallel here between the poet as lover and McTaggart's argument of the lover's reverence for himself:

Since I love, I have value – supreme value, since I am possessing the highest good. And since I have value I shall regard myself with reverence. And if I reverence myself I shall regard my parts with a feeling of complacency analogous to that which I regard the parts of the persons whom I love.⁴⁷

The sense of complacency and acquiescence in the *Jāvid Nāma* has much to do with a lover's self-reverence, a self-reverence stemming from the nature of love itself as possessing supreme value.

However, there is a contrary strand of self-effacement in both the *Reconstruction* and the *Jāvid Nāma*. In the former, the vocabulary of mastery and domination is matched by a vocabulary of supplication and humility; thus, prayer is described as a 'means of spiritual illumination . . . by which the little island of our personality suddenly discovers its situation in a larger whole of life'.⁴⁸ To a certain extent, the poem's vacillation between mastery and supplication is part of the frequent reversal of relations between terms which marks the text. This reversal of terms is figured in the recurring image of hunter and hunted. Towards the beginning of the poem, the question is posed as to whether the world [jahān] is 'the quarry and we the hunters'.⁴⁹ The same uncertainty of the hunter-quarry relationship is also evident later.⁵⁰ Furthermore, the poet is often firmly put in his place. Thus, Rumi says he named the poet Zinda Rūd [living stream] as a jest [shukh].⁵¹ Similarly, although al-Afghani treats the poet as if he is well placed to bring news of the world to him because he has the virtue of being 'clear sighted', he also describes the poet as a thing of dust [khākī].⁵² The combination of self-advancement and self-effacement is summed up when Rumi challenges the

poet to be a true lover, lost in a self-intoxication which would lift him from the world of dimensions. The crux of Love's power is described thus: 'When it becomes a supplicant for selfhood from God/The entire world becomes a mount, it becomes the rider.'⁵³

The supplicating of God for selfhood is the paradox that underlies Iqbal's doctrine of *khudī*. The influence of Nietzsche on Iqbal's notion of the Perfect Man [insān-e kāmīl] has been well documented and amply discussed by scholars. Indeed, some early commentators saw Iqbal's work as mainly an Islamic version of Nietzsche's philosophy. However, Schimmel has pointed out the major differences between the Nietzschean and the Iqbalian concepts of the Perfect Man, and shows how the influences of both Nietzsche and Abdulkarim Jili, a Muslim theosophist of the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, helped to form Iqbal's notion of the Perfect Man,⁵⁴ or what he calls the 'god-man' as the 'point where man-ness and God-ness become one'.⁵⁵ Iqbal devoted a chapter of his Ph.D. thesis to al-Jili,⁵⁶ and in his *Studies in Islamic Mysticism*, R.A. Nicholson cited Iqbal's chapter on Jili as a 'masterly sketch' which 'stands almost alone'.⁵⁷ In the *Jāwīd Nāma*, Muhammad is the type of the Perfect Man, for whom the loftier the stage of life he reaches, the more he becomes the slave of God.⁵⁸ It is Hallaj's song of God's servant which articulates this notion of the Perfect Man.⁵⁹

Whilst this explains the combination of subjugation and exaltation in Iqbal's notion of *khudī*, it does so only in part. Scholars have also commented upon Iqbal's interest in Goethe, and Schimmel has pointed out that whilst in Goethe's *Faust* the angels praise God, in the *Jāwīd Nāma* they praise man as God's rival, who will one day make the heart of God bleed.⁶⁰ It is clear that Iqbal's notion of *khudī* is more a trope or figure for self-advancement, rather than a philosophical concept that bears close analytical scrutiny. This figure derives much of its power from its inversion of the notion of *fanā*, or the annihilation of the soul through absorption into God. I have already commented upon the strategy of inversion in other parts of Iqbal's work. Nonetheless, whilst it would be inappropriate to treat a trope in a poetic discourse as a philosophical concept, the vacillation between self-assertion and self-effacement discussed above points to some problematic implications in Iqbal's notion of selfhood. That these implications cannot be ignored is partly due to Iqbal's professed aesthetic itself, which claimed to eschew stylistic elaboration in favour of making his medium as transparent as possible to the ideas contained in his message.⁶¹ The question of the extent to which Iqbal's poetry yielded to this aesthetic, and even the extent to which this aesthetic should be taken at face value, need not concern us here. Whether successful or not, Iqbal's self-professed adherence to such an aesthetic means that notions like *khudī* cannot always be viewed in rhetorical or political terms alone. This is further underlined by the fact that in significant parts of his work, especially in the *Reconstruction*, Iqbal took serious cognisance of metaphysics as a mode of philosophising. The

seriousness of his engagement with metaphysics is not always immediately evident because of the convoluted style of his English prose. His article on McTaggart, for example, is a classic case of how the abbreviated and disjointed style of his writing conceals a surer grasp of some of the issues he touches upon than is at first apparent, a fact only evident if the essay is read after a perusal of Bradley's and McTaggart's work. Furthermore, his convoluted style is also indicative of a deeper trait of his work as a whole. Both Bradley and McTaggart defined metaphysics in terms of a systematic account of the principles on which a conception of an 'ultimate' reality can be arrived at, in which what was real would be distinguished from what was appearance.⁶² Bradley argued that metaphysics, as a systematic attempt to arrive at first principles, was 'higher' than religion, which does not seek any such first principles.⁶³ This view was shared by McTaggart, who in *Some Dogmas of Religion* argued that in the past dogmas were arrived at through 'revelation' or metaphysics, but now 'fewer people appear willing to accept any system of asserted revelation as valid without support from metaphysics'; in matters of dogma we cannot dispense with proof, nor accept faith alone as a substitute for demonstration.⁶⁴ It is possible to see Iqbal's *Reconstruction* as stranded between metaphysics and faith; its convoluted and inconclusive nature may have much to do with the author's attempt to keep metaphysics, as conceived by Bradley and McTaggart, at a distance, whilst simultaneously seeking succour from metaphysics in order to strengthen faith. It is in the conflict between systematic metaphysics and faith in revelation that the problems surrounding *khudī* need to be explored.

It is because Iqbal played upon notions of metaphysical import in his poetry that the problematic implications of these notions for his work as a whole must be considered. In his perceptive study of Iqbal, M.S. Raschid has argued that Iqbal's notion of selfhood implies that the Deity is finite.⁶⁵ In so far as his position is consistent enough to be described, Raschid argues that Iqbal's position is panentheistic, that is, he believes God includes but transcends the world.⁶⁶ He also points to Iqbal's laboured attempts to argue that the deity is an ego, and to identify this ultimate ego with the conception of God in the Qur'ān, an equation which is incongruous since (according to Raschid) God is conceived of as infinite deity in the Qur'ān.⁶⁷ It is clear that one strand of the *Reconstruction* attempts to conceive of God as an ego.⁶⁸ However, in his masterly study of *kalām*, H.A. Wolfson has portrayed the positions of theological schools in early Islam on the issue of whether God's unity was absolute or relative.⁶⁹ The debate about this crystallised around the question of God's attributes, and was influenced by the pronouncements of the Church Fathers regarding the properties and characteristics of the three persons of the Trinity.⁷⁰ In other words, the earliest theological schools in Islam explicitly considered the question of whether God's unity is relative or absolute, and hence whether the divine nature can admit internal plurality. The conception of God in the Qur'ān was not seen to be self-evidently that of

an infinite deity whose unity was absolute. This might suggest that the really problematic area in Iqbal's work is his concept of selfhood and its relation to any conception of a creative God as infinite, rather than his concept of God and its relation to the Qur'ānic conception of the deity in particular. This problematic area in Iqbal's work can be elucidated in the context of Bradley's and McTaggart's metaphysics, which spelt out the implications of the sort of notions Iqbal grappled with.

In his essay on McTaggart, Iqbal correctly described Bradley's criterion for Reality as 'coherence and freedom from contradiction'.⁷¹ This is a point Bradley stresses frequently in *Appearance and Reality*, where his assumptions are that 'anything the meaning of which is inconsistent and unintelligible is appearance, and not reality' and 'Ultimate reality is such that it does not contradict itself'.⁷² He sees the purpose of metaphysics as being 'to find a way of thinking about facts in general which is free from contradiction'.⁷³ Much of Bradley's argument regarding the nature of appearances relies on a view of relation as contradictory. Anything which is 'caught in, and is dissipated by, the old illusory play of relations and qualities' cannot be ultimate reality.⁷⁴ The 'play' of relations and qualities is illusory because relation presupposes quality, and quality presupposes relation, and 'each can be something neither together with, nor apart from, the other'. The 'vicious circle in which they turn' is the circle in which anything finite turns.⁷⁵ It is the 'unresting circle' in which two terms imply and presuppose each other that is 'the mark of appearance'.⁷⁶ The nature of the finite is 'to slide beyond the limits of its existence',⁷⁷ to set itself up as self-existing whilst depending on what is beyond itself.⁷⁸ For Bradley the concept of God cannot escape from this vicious circle. Central to religious experience is the relation between man and God; all relations are self-contradictory since they always imply 'two terms which are finite and which claim independence'.⁷⁹ Man is a finite subject and God a finite object in this relation. 'Sundered from those relations which qualify him, God is inconsistent emptiness', and 'qualified by his relation to an Other, he is distracted finitude'.⁸⁰ Religious consciousness is therefore a 'ceaseless oscillation' in which man and God are at once a unity, and at once 'opposite terms with a relation between them'.⁸¹ It attempts to balance itself between the 'rival abysses' of these two 'unreduced opposites'.⁸² For Bradley, 'short of the Absolute, God cannot rest, and having reached that goal, he is lost and religion with him'.⁸³

Thus, much of Bradley's argument regarding the nature of appearances relies on a concept of relation as inherently unstable, since terms which are related both presuppose and imply each other. In some ways, the *Jāvid Nāma* attempts to beat relations at their own game; it tries to overcome relations whilst gathering them up into itself, in much the same way as the poem's structure contains, whilst not being dissipated by, the overwhelming experiences it figures. Hence the notion of the self's substance as both inside and outside bonds [band].⁸⁴ It has already been mentioned that the reversal

of relations is a motif in the poem, and much of the poem is about the instability of relations, as well as the tightly knit matrices which weave things together. But much of the tone of the poem is also aimed at the transformation of these matrixes and the breaking free from relations, in particular those which constitute space and time.⁸⁵ The poem seizes upon those moments when the world of dimensions yields to the text's onslaught in order to smuggle in a figure of its own, namely a mode of being where a mastery and knowledge of relations can be had without implication in those very relations.⁸⁶

This play with relations in the *Jāvīd Nāma* is part of a larger problem facing Iqbal, namely how he was to save God, and therefore the self as the other term of the relation which constituted God, from Bradley's Absolute, without falling into the 'empty transcendence' and 'shallow pantheism' which Bradley argued his work was a 'sustained polemic' against.⁸⁷ The concern to save the selfhood of *khudī* from Bradley's Absolute is also apparent in the *Reconstruction*, where Iqbal tries to extract from Bradley's work a 'reluctant admission' of the reality of the self.⁸⁸ In this he felt in league with McTaggart, who in *The Nature of Existence* spoke in almost identical terms of admitting the reality of the self.⁸⁹ Iqbal cited a passage of a letter from McTaggart, addressed to him, dated December 1919:

I agree with you, as you know, in regarding quite untenable the view that finite beings are adjectives of the Absolute. Whatever they are, it is quite certain to me that they are not that.⁹⁰

The reference here is to Bradley's contention that thinking, and in particular judgements, add 'an adjective to reality', this addition of an adjective being part of predication.⁹¹ Bradley's argument that the body and the soul are 'constructions'⁹² can be placed in the context of his general discussion of the nature of predication in terms of the 'looseness' of content from existence.⁹³ Iqbal argued that McTaggart's view of the self as a 'real substance', and not a 'mere predicate of the absolute', amounted to a 'dismissal of the Hegelian Absolute'.⁹⁴ Whilst 'dismissal' might have been a little strong, Iqbal was pointing to one important difference between Hegel and McTaggart in terms of their methodologies, namely that for Hegel only the previous categories acted as premises in his triadic dialectic, whilst for McTaggart's argument it was also other previous stages in his argument which acted as premises.⁹⁵ In Hegel's 'Absolute Idea' lower categories are synthesised and transcended, and as a result do not form a set of parts of the 'Absolute'.⁹⁶ This is not the case with McTaggart's argument, which seeks to define how such 'lower' categories can form a set of parts of an ultimate reality.⁹⁷

Iqbal also rightly characterised McTaggart's view of the universe as 'a system of real selves which cannot be regarded as mere predicates or adjectives of the Absolute'.⁹⁸ This was certainly in direct contrast to Bradley's view

that the absolute could not 'consist' of souls, partly because things there are 'transmuted' and so lose their individual natures.⁹⁹ For McTaggart, on the other hand, 'the Absolute has further determinations, i.e. the egos of actual experience which participate . . . in eternity'.¹⁰⁰ We have seen how one of McTaggart's aims was to show how 'lower' categories could form a set of parts of an ultimate reality, without, as in the Hegelian dialectic, being synthesised in it. Part of McTaggart's work is devoted to showing how the mere fact that a series is infinite is no reason for condemning it as vicious.¹⁰¹ In order to do this, it was necessary for him to counter Bradley's rejection of the validity of the conceptions of quality and relation. This he claimed to have done in the context of his hypothesis that the nature of a substance is a 'compound quality with an infinite number of parts', an infinity which forms a series that is not vicious.¹⁰² Indeed, McTaggart saw the larger part of his work as a deduction of the consequences following from the claim that there are no simple substances.¹⁰³ McTaggart outlines his 'theory of determining correspondence'¹⁰⁴ as the basis of his argument that substances can be infinitely divisible without this divisibility forming a series that would be vicious,¹⁰⁵ and that selves form the 'primary parts' of the universe.¹⁰⁶

We have seen how in Iqbal's scheme of *khudī* the individuality of the self is not effaced in any absorption into 'the infinite ego' which is God. We have also seen that Iqbal was in agreement with McTaggart, when the latter described the union of lover and beloved, which some believed to be the goal of all love, as 'suicidal'. Iqbal perhaps exaggerated a little when he remarked that McTaggart had 'a positive dislike for the transcendent God of Western theology',¹⁰⁷ but McTaggart's metaphysics was clearly atheist. He argued on the basis of his conclusion that selves form the 'primary parts' of the universe, that the notions of God as omnipotent, as identical with all that exists and as a creator are all unsound.¹⁰⁸ One of the reasons why there could not be a God who was a creator of all that exists is that it is not possible to combine 'this co-equal primacy of the selves with such predominance of one self as would be involved in creation'.¹⁰⁹ This 'co-equal primacy' is also premised on the 'ultimate certainty' that the inclusion in any self of another self, or part of another self, is impossible; it is on this basis that McTaggart rejects the view that the universe could be a self, of which we would form parts.¹¹⁰ Furthermore, on the basis of his argument on the unreality of time, McTaggart also concludes that, *sub specie temporis*, the first moments of the existence of all selves must be taken as 'simultaneous'; this would also discount the possibility of a creative God who was temporally prior to the rest of the universe.¹¹¹

However, McTaggart argued that it is possible that there might be a being who 'appeared, as a phenomenon *bene fundatum*, to be a controlling God', although there is no reason to believe that such a person does exist.¹¹² In his essay on McTaggart, Iqbal cites from a letter which the philosopher wrote to him in 1920 in which the latter, having read R.A. Nicholson's translation

of Iqbal's *Asrār-e Khudī* or 'Secrets of the Self' (1915), expresses surprise at the poet's change of position, since 'Surely in the days when we used to talk philosophy together, you were more of a pantheist and mystic.'¹¹³ This seems to suggest that Iqbal had moved away from pantheism towards a perspective in which selves were irreducible parts of reality, which could not be synthesised or transmuted in a 'higher' reality. Certainly, the view of the self in Iqbal's scheme of *khudī*, in which the self becomes more clearly defined the closer it approaches God, would seem to lend credence to McTaggart's comment. In fact, Iqbal's scheme appears to be close to McTaggart's view of a universe of primary selves, one of whom appeared to be a controlling, but not a creative, God. Indeed, Iqbal described as the 'crucial point' and 'real difficulty' in McTaggart's metaphysics the question of whether or not an 'all-inclusive Self' could exist.¹¹⁴ His own view is to admit that 'Perhaps it is not possible to conceive this ultimate unity as an all-embracing self.'¹¹⁵ However, whilst it seems clear that Iqbal was not a pantheist, he was nonetheless anxious to assert the possibility that such a self could exist; or as he put it, that an individual ego could itself be a 'colony of egos', but this would be a matter of faith and not of demonstration through discursive argument.¹¹⁶

The tentativeness and uncertainty of Iqbal's tone in his comments on this 'crucial point' of whether or not an 'all-inclusive Self' could exist points to his unease at the possible atheistic implications of his scheme of *khudī*. McTaggart's work as a whole spelt out these implications, but it is his essay on Mysticism in his *Philosophical Studies* which affords us some final clues as to the character of Iqbal's work regarding these metaphysical problems. Here McTaggart wrote of mysticism as 'one of the great forces of the world's history', but he also pointed to its 'troubled' course in the three 'great monotheistic religions', that is, Judaism, Christianity and Islam.¹¹⁷ This is because mysticism, 'when carried far . . . has a tendency adverse to theistic orthodoxy'.¹¹⁸ McTaggart defines the two essential characteristics of mysticism as 'the affirmation of a unity [in the universe] greater than that which is usually acknowledged', and 'the affirmation that it is possible to be conscious of this unity in some manner which brings the knower into closer and more direct relation with what is known than can be done in ordinary discursive thought'.¹¹⁹ Indeed, McTaggart argues that mystical systems could be classified by reference to the degree and kind of unity asserted.¹²⁰ The more developed or extreme form of mysticism, for example, is that which asserts a mystic unity to exist between all the parts of the universe, a unity which does not admit of any differentiation at all.¹²¹ Such a unity inevitably ends in atheism, since if the mystical unity of the universe does not admit of any differentiation then there can be no God who is distinguishable from the universe, still less any differentiation within God himself.¹²² It is for this reason that within the three monotheistic religions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam 'while mysticism continually springs up, it is continually checked

again', and that so many stop at 'the brink of extreme mysticism', prevented from advancing by their theistic beliefs, but urged on by the fascination of that undifferentiated unity in which man, God, and all else merge.¹²³ In illustration of this tendency in mysticism, McTaggart cites some verses from Edward Fitzgerald's translation of Farid-uddin Attar's *Mantik ut-Tair*¹²⁴ as an example of a type of mystical teaching in which God is simply the name for a mystical unity of which 'all finite things are illusive emanations'.¹²⁵ In his introduction to his essay on Mysticism, McTaggart had specifically pointed to Islam as a religion 'absolutely unmystical' in its original form, but yet the home of 'some of the most daring mystical thought'.¹²⁶ It seems that *Mantik ut-Tair* struck McTaggart as one such example of daring mystical thought within Islam. It would have further appealed to him as a fable illustrating how a personal God, as the object of a longing for union, was in fact a distorted reflection of a harmonious system of eternal selves, which are ourselves as we really are, rather than as we now appear to be.¹²⁷

McTaggart argued that all 'enthusiastic mysticism' tends to develop in such a direction unless the mystic is prepared to accept the Hegelian principle that 'greater unity is not only compatible with greater differentiation, but actually involves it'.¹²⁸ It is this principle which McTaggart points to as an important result of Hegel's dialectic, namely the principle that unity and differentiation are so intimately connected, that the closeness of a unity is in proportion to the clarity of the differentiation of its parts.¹²⁹ However, adopting this principle need not involve theism either; it is possible to conceive a mystic unity as existing only between spirits like ourselves, without a God.¹³⁰ Furthermore, this principle can lead to conclusions which are not easily acceptable to theists, such as the view that man's and God's natures are fundamentally similar, or the view that God can only exist in so far as He is united with man, a conclusion that 'has not generally recommended itself to theists'.¹³¹

At first glance, it seems that Iqbal's scheme of *khudī* is adverse to what McTaggart called 'enthusiastic mysticism'. As he put it in his essay on McTaggart, 'the possibility of ego-differentiation merging again into a perfection transcending time and change, must be counteracted however remote it may be'.¹³² However, the Hegelian route which McTaggart took could lead to results adverse to theism as well, hence Iqbal's makeshift claim that, whilst no self could be part of another self, the individual self was itself a 'colony of egos'. It was only with this bland assertion that Iqbal could conceive of God as an individual self, and remain faithful to his scheme of *khudī*, in which selves were irreducible and uneffaceable.

It is this makeshift escape, in which God is both independent of and includes all other selves which at all times maintain their individuality, that is responsible for much of the confusion in Iqbal's position which Raschid has observed. But by trying to save a faith in a significant notion of God, and the relationship between God and selves, Iqbal paid the price which Bradley spelt out: 'to keep your soul, you must remain fixed in a posture of

inconsistency'.¹³³ It is this posture of inconsistency which is implicit in the *Jāvid Nāma* and *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*. The *Jāvid Nāma* laments the fate of the people [millat] who loosened the bonds of other nations and then fell into the 'bondage' of relations itself: 'The people who loosened the bonds [band] of every other people/Its sovereignty [mulk] and religion fell from its own station [maqām-e khud].'¹³⁴ So, too, the *Jāvid Nāma* falls into the play of relations that Bradley argued characterised finitude. It vacillates between a union, which would be suicidal, and a separation which it longs to overcome: 'tarsam az viṣāl va ba-nālam az firāq'.¹³⁵ The self in the *Jāvid Nāma* is characterised by the 'ceaseless oscillation' between the two 'rival abysses' of union and separation which Bradley argued were the characteristics of the self as a finite subject in its relation with God. Like all finite things, it is caught in the same vicious circle of relations. As a result it is also, like the self in the *Jāvid Nāma*, torn between self-assertion and self-abnegation.¹³⁶ Its essential nature is 'equally to assert and, at the same time, to pass beyond itself'; hence 'the objects of self-sacrifice and self-advancement are each equally' its own.¹³⁷ Bradley also argues that an act of self-denial includes an element of self-assertion;¹³⁸ Iqbal echoes this argument when he argues in the *Reconstruction* that 'the ego asserts itself in the very moment of self-negation'.¹³⁹ The self, Bradley also asserts, tries to 'swallow up and own every element from which it is distinguished',¹⁴⁰ whilst simultaneously asserting its independence from the play of relations in which it is caught. As the poet wonders in the *Jāvid Nāma*: 'andarūn ast in ki bīrūn ast? chīst?'¹⁴¹

Thus, the vacillation between self-assertion and self-effacement that characterises Iqbal's scheme of *khudī* can be elucidated in the context of Bradley's and McTaggart's metaphysics. In order to save God and the self from the fate of Bradley's 'Absolute', Iqbal appeared to espouse a view in which selves were irreducible and uneffaceable. However, such a view was too close to McTaggart's atheistical conclusions for Iqbal's comfort. As a result, he stood on the brink of an extreme mysticism, in which he neither developed a sense of mystical unity as undifferentiated, nor openly espoused the view of mystical unity as consisting in a system of eternal selves, as McTaggart had done in his magnum opus. The result is that the persona of the self in his work bears all the marks of what Bradley characterised as 'finitude' as it oscillates between self-assertion and self-effacement, whilst the persona of God now dwindles to finitude, now expands to something resembling a powerful, although rarely an omnipotent, deity. It is because Iqbal stood on the brink of extreme mysticism, stopped by his theistic beliefs, yet urged on by his self-intoxicated mysticism, that the contradictions in his work remain unresolved. It is interesting that Iqbal attributes just such vacillating positions to al-Ghazali, arguing that al-Ghazali realised the pantheistic drift of his own inquiry and so maintained 'silence as to the ultimate nature of the soul', aware that his conception of the soul would 'sweep away all

difference between God and the individual soul'. Iqbal goes on to say that 'while the dialectic of Rationalism destroyed the personality of God, and reduced divinity to a bare indefinable universality, the antirationalist movement, though it preserved the dogma of personality, destroyed the external reality of nature'.¹⁴² Schimmel has suggested that the title of Iqbal's work *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* owes something to the title of al-Ghazali's text, *Vivification of the Science of Religion*.¹⁴³ Not only, therefore, did Iqbal develop these vacillating positions through his own cosmopolitan eclecticism, that eclecticism also left these positions more deeply unresolved, in keeping with the interrogative character of his work as a whole.

However, these contradictions did not just spring from the safe-guarding of Iqbal's theistic beliefs. They were also important to his sense of creativity as an artist. Indeed, there is a sense in which Iqbal gave some licence to these unresolved tensions as an integral part of creativity. In his article on McTaggart he expresses his conviction that 'Man is a candidate for immortal life' and that this involves 'a ceaseless struggle in maintaining the tension of the Ego'.¹⁴⁴ The *Jāwīd Nāma* attempts to maintain that tension; it celebrates differentiation or 'separation' as the stuff of life: 'jān-e mā-rā sāzgār āyad firāq'.¹⁴⁵ In a sense, the resolution of the contradictions in Iqbal's work would have meant not just the erasure of his faith, but the undermining of his creativity as an artist. Much of his poetry is born of the same posture of inconsistency which is implicit in his other works such as *Reconstruction* and his essay on McTaggart. It is this necessary posture of inconsistency which both grounds and renders impossible his politics and metaphysics of transcendence, and it is out of this grounding impossibility that his poetry emerges.

Notes

1. F.H. Bradley (1846–1924), a British Hegelian philosopher whose key works were *Ethical Studies* (1876) and *Appearance and Reality* (1893).
2. For a brief biographical note of McTaggart, see Ch. 5, note 96.
3. Schimmel defines fanā as 'the nullification of the mystic in the divine presence'; Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, p. 144. See also p. 44, p. 47, p. 123, pp. 142–6, p. 184.
4. Schimmel, *Muhammad*, p. 164.
5. JN 133/4, Arberry 101/2403–6.
6. Muhammad Iqbal, 'McTaggart's philosophy', in A.R. Tariq (ed.), *Speeches and Statements of Iqbal* (Lahore: Sheikh Ghulam, 1973), pp. 140–51, pp. 147–8.
7. Bahaullah, otherwise known as Mirza Hussain Ali Nuri, was the founder of the Bahai faith in the mid-nineteenth century. Bahais believe Bahaullah to be the latest of a series of past and future manifestations of the divine which include Jesus, Muhammad, Zoroaster and Buddha.
8. Iqbal, *Metaphysics*, p. 145.

9. Ibid, pp. 145–6.
10. Iqbal, *Reconstruction*, p. 79.
11. Iqbal, *Metaphysics*, p. 83.
12. Iqbal, 'McTaggart's philosophy' (1932), in A.R. Tariq (ed.), *Speeches and Statements of Iqbal* (Lahore: Sheikh Ghulam Ali, 1973), p. 148.
13. Schimmel, *Gabriel's Wing*, p. 377, pp. 385–6.
14. JN 88/3, Arberry 72/1570.
15. JN 33/9, Arberry 39/533–34.
16. JN 191/3, Arberry 138/3555–6. Arberry translates 'mushtāq' as 'vehement'; it may be more accurate to stress its primary meaning of 'being full of desire'.
17. For a commentary on the range of terms referring to and describing parts of the Beloved in Sufism, see Javad Nurbaksh, *Sufi Symbolism*, 5 vols (London: Kaniqahi-Nimatullah Publications, 1984), vol. 1 'The Esoteric Symbolism of the Parts of the Beloved's Body', and vol. 2, pp. 34–5 on *maḥbūb* and *ma'shūq*. For images of lover and beloved in Sufi thought and poetry, see also Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, p. 5, p. 21, pp. 130–48.
18. Schimmel, 'Iqbal's Persian poetry', p. 427.
19. Schimmel, *Gabriel's Wing*, pp. 353–61. For one study of the role of love in Rumi, see Khalifa Abdul Hakim, *The Metaphysics of Rumi. A Critical and Historical Sketch* (Lahore: Institute of Islamic Culture, 1965), pp. 43–62.
20. JN 88/9–10, Arberry 73/1581–84.
21. JN 117/8, Arberry 91/2155. For an exposition of images of intoxication in Sufi contexts, see Javad Nurbaksh, *Sufi Symbolism*, pp. 209–10, p. 212.
22. Iqbal, 'McTaggart's philosophy', pp. 150–1; see also pp. 148–9.
23. J.McT.E. McTaggart, *Some Dogmas of Religion* (London: Edward Arnold, 1906), p. 121 and footnote. McTaggart is here discussing what he calls the 'doctrine of the plurality of lives', and how this might explain more satisfactorily than other dogmas certain features of our lives, such as the experience of falling in love (ibid., pp. 120–1, p. 134).
24. Ibid., p. 290.
25. McTaggart, *Philosophical Studies*, p. 284. For a discussion of this, see P.T. Geach, *Truth, Love, and Immortality. An Introduction to McTaggart's Philosophy* (London: Hutchinson, 1979), Ch. 12. McTaggart's *The Nature of Existence* is an attempt to deduce this concept of the nature of reality on a priori grounds; see also his *Some Dogmas of Religion*, p. 112, p. 292, on the need to establish a 'complete system of metaphysics' to prove the proposition that ultimate reality is a harmonious system of selves.
26. Cited by Iqbal in 'McTaggart's philosophy', p. 142.
27. McTaggart, *The Nature of Existence* (1927; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 2 vols., 2: pp. 137–9.
28. Geach, pp. 169–70; for McTaggart's theory of 'determining correspondence', on the basis of which he argues that selves form the 'primary parts' of the universe, see below.
29. McTaggart, *Nature of Existence*, ibid., 2: p. 157.
30. C. Shackle, 'A Sikh spiritual epic: Vir Singh's *Rana Surat Singh*', unpublished paper, p. 15. I am indebted to Professor Shackle for making this paper available to me.
31. F.H. Bradley, *Appearance and Reality. A Metaphysical Essay* (1893; London: Swan Sonnenschein, 1902), p. 516.
32. Ibid., p. 516.

33. JN 14/14, Arberry 26/150.
34. JN 20/5, Arberry 30/261–2.
35. Iqbal, *Reconstruction*, p. 157.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 93.
37. *Ibid.*, p. 88.
38. McTaggart, *Nature of Existence*, 2: p. 157.
39. *Ibid.*, 2: 157.
40. Iqbal, 'McTaggart's philosophy', pp. 150–1.
41. JN 187/2, Arberry 135/3459.
42. Iqbal, 'McTaggart's philosophy', p. 145.
43. Iqbal, *Reconstruction*, p. 70.
44. JN 13/3, Arberry 25/120.
45. JN 101/7, Arberry 81/1821.
46. JN 130/7, Arberry 100/2379.
47. McTaggart, *Nature of Existence*, 2: p. 164; see also *Some Dogmas of Religion*, p. 133, on the self-sufficiency of love.
48. Iqbal, *Reconstruction*, p. 72.
49. 'This world, is it the quarry and are we the hunters?' (JN 7/8, Arberry 21/15).
50. 'This riddle is unsolved/Am I the quarry or is he?' (*ibid.*, 189/15; Arberry 137/3526).
51. *Ibid.*, 61/8, Arberry 55/1020.
52. *Ibid.*, 61/10, Arberry 55/1023.
53. 'When it becomes a supplicator for selfhood from God/The entire world becomes a mount, it becomes the rider' (*ibid.*, 1/1).
54. Schimmel, *Gabriel's Wing*, p. 119.
55. Iqbal, *Metaphysics*, p. 129.
56. *Ibid.*, pp. 116–33.
57. R.A. Nicholson, *Studies in Islamic Mysticism* (1921; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. v.
58. Schimmel, *Gabriel's Wing*, p. 120.
59. JN, 128/7–129/9, Arberry 91/2141–56. For Hallaj's influence on Iqbal, see Annemarie Schimmel, 'Mystic Impact of Hallaj', in Hafeez Malik (ed.), *Iqbal. Poet–Philosopher of Pakistan* (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1971), pp. 310–24. For Iqbal's comparison of McTaggart with Hallaj, see 'McTaggart's philosophy', p. 148.
60. Schimmel, *Gabriel's Wing*, p. 204; JN 16/4, Arberry 27/182.
61. *Ibid.*, p. 61.
62. Bradley, *Appearance and Reality*, p. xi, p. 120, p. 359, p. 450; McTaggart, *Philosophical Studies*, p. 182, p. 273, *Some Dogmas of Religion*, p. 1, and *Nature of Existence*, 1: pp. 38–53, on the a priori determination of the characteristics of existence in an order whose necessity is logical. Bradley's and McTaggart's views of metaphysics were close to what G.E. Moore took to be the task of metaphysics or ontology, namely establishing the most important kinds of things that exist, and ascertaining their relationships to each other. P.F. Strawson has construed this task as the establishing of the most general concepts or categories with which we organise our thought about, and experience of, the world, and understanding how these categories are related in the total structure of our thinking. See his *Analysis and Metaphysics. An Introduction to Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 31, p. 35.
63. Bradley, *Appearance and Reality*, p. 450, p. 453.

64. McTaggart, *Some Dogmas of Religion*, p. 36, p. 70, p. 74.
65. M.S. Raschid, *Iqbal's Concept of God* (London: R.K. Paul, 1981), pp. 59–60.
66. *Ibid.*, p. 59, p. 62.
67. *Ibid.*, p. 59, p. 62.
68. Iqbal, *Reconstruction*, p. 50, p. 61.
69. H.A. Wolfson, *The Philosophy of the Kalam* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976), p. 139.
70. *Ibid.*, 120.
71. 'McTaggart's philosophy', p. 141; see also *Reconstruction*, p. 78.
72. Bradley, *Appearance and Reality*, p. 76, p. 136.
73. *Ibid.*, p. 120.
74. *Ibid.*, p. 112.
75. *Ibid.*, pp. 25–6.
76. *Ibid.*, p. 474.
77. *Ibid.*, p. 166.
78. *Ibid.*, p. 266, p. 456.
79. *Ibid.*, p. 76, p. 136.
80. *Ibid.*, p. 445.
81. *Ibid.*, p. 446, p. 443.
82. *Ibid.*, p. 443.
83. *Ibid.*, p. 447.
84. 'Its substance is not like any other object/It is inside bonds and not inside them' (JN 163/5, Arberry 119/2961–2).
85. 'Become a rider of space and time/Become free of the twistings of this girdle' (JN 23/7 Arberry 33/355–6).
86. 'Its nature is exempt from East and West/Even if from the aspect of relations it is East' (*ibid.*, 63/14, Arberry 1067–8).
87. Bradley, *Appearance and Reality*, p. 551.
88. Iqbal, *Reconstruction*, p. 79.
89. McTaggart, *Nature of Existence*, 2: p. 82.
90. Iqbal, 'McTaggart's philosophy', p. 141.
91. Bradley, *Appearance and Reality*, p. 164; see also p. 188 on the nature of error.
92. *Ibid.*, p. 336, p. 357.
93. *Ibid.*, pp. 164–5.
94. Iqbal, 'McTaggart's philosophy', p. 145.
95. McTaggart, *Nature of Existence*, 1: pp. 46–7.
96. *Ibid.*, 2: pp. 238–9.
97. This difference between Hegel's and his own methodology is further stressed by McTaggart in his argument that in his theory of the nature of reality all our perceptions are partly erroneous but not entirely so (*ibid.*, 2: p. 257). Any theory of reality, or what he calls the C series (*ibid.*, 2: pp. 29–31, pp. 208–55), has to comply with 12 conditions, one of which is that it must allow for both correct and erroneous perceptions (*ibid.*, 2: p. 257; see also 2: p. 197, p. 216, pp. 228–9, pp. 235–6, p. 245). In Hegel, however, the final synthesis in the 'Absolute Idea' is free from all error, since all the 'lower' categories have been successively synthesised and are so altered that they are no longer erroneous cognitions; according to McTaggart, it is in this that the 'whole spring of the dialectic' lies (*ibid.*, 2: pp. 238–9). This is not so with McTaggart's argument, which tries to show how such 'lower' categories could form a part of ultimate reality. For a succinct exposition of the varieties of error

which McTaggart's metaphysics requires to exist, see Geach, *Truth, Love and Immortality*, pp. 136–7.

98. Iqbal, 'McTaggart's philosophy', p. 141.
99. Bradley, *Appearance and Reality*, p. 529.
100. Iqbal, 'McTaggart's philosophy', p. 145.
101. McTaggart, *Nature of Existence*, 1: p. 68, pp. 191–2.
102. *Ibid.*, 1: pp. 88–9 and footnote.
103. *Ibid.*, 1: p. 179. See also Ch. 1, p. 183, pp. 192–204.
104. *Ibid.*, 1: p. 218; pp. 207–49.
105. *Ibid.*, 2: p. 97.
106. *Ibid.*, 2: p. 120. See also 2: pp. 66–7 (footnote) p. 86, p. 89, p. 98, p. 193.
107. Iqbal, 'McTaggart's philosophy', p. 148.
108. McTaggart, *Nature of Existence*, 2: pp. 178–85.
109. *Ibid.*, 2: p. 179. See also *Philosophical Studies*, p. 285.
110. *Ibid.*, 2: pp. 178–85. See also *Philosophical Studies*, pp. 93–6, and *Some Dogmas of Religion*, p. 220.
111. *Nature of Existence*, 2: p. 181, p. 182. See also *Philosophical Studies*, p. 285. Ch. 6 of *Some Dogmas of Religion* argues against the notion of an omnipotent God, but it does not do so on the basis of the unreality of time. For McTaggart's argument of the unreality of time, see Chs 5 and 6 of *Philosophical Studies*.
112. *Nature of Existence*, 2: p. 186; see also *Some Dogmas of Religion*, p. 249.
113. Iqbal, 'McTaggart's philosophy', p. 142.
114. *Ibid.*, p. 149.
115. *Ibid.*, p. 150.
116. *Ibid.*, p. 149.
117. McTaggart, *Philosophical Studies*, p. 46, p. 57.
118. *Ibid.*, p. 46.
119. *Ibid.*, p. 47.
120. *Ibid.*, p. 49.
121. *Ibid.*, pp. 50–1.
122. *Ibid.*, pp. 51–2.
123. *Ibid.*, p. 59, p. 57.
124. Farid uddin Attar, b. c. 1142, d. c. 1220, Persian poet and leading Muslim thinker and mystic. His best-known work is *Mantik ut Tair*, or 'The Conference of Birds'. This is an allegorical poem describing the quest of birds (i.e., Sufis) for the mythical Simorgh or Phoenix, which they wish to make their king. In the final scene, those who have survived the journey approach the throne contemplating their reflections in the mirror-like countenance of the Simorgh, only to realise that they and the Simorgh are one.
125. McTaggart, *Philosophical Studies*, p. 53. The text cited follows on pp. 54–5.
126. *Ibid.*, p. 46.
127. I am grateful to Professor Peter Geach for this suggestion, and also for pointing me in the direction of McTaggart's essay on mysticism.
128. Iqbal, *Philosophical Studies*, p. 56.
129. *Ibid.*, p. 201.
130. *Ibid.*, p. 57.
131. *Ibid.*, p. 58.
132. 'McTaggart's philosophy', p. 151.
133. Bradley, *Appearance and Reality*, p. 303.
134. JN 142/ 3, Arberry 106/2565–6.

135. 'I am fearful of union and I lament on account of separation' (JN 88/ 6, Arberry 73/1576).
136. Bradley, *Appearance and Reality*, pp. 414–5.
137. Ibid., p. 417.
138. Ibid., p. 423.
139. Iqbal, *Reconstruction*, p. 74.
140. Bradley, *Appearance and Reality*, p. 258.
141. 'Is this (the soul) inside or outside? Which is it?' (JN 89/ 5).
142. Iqbal, *Metaphysics*, pp. 60–1.
143. Schimmel, *Gabriel's Wing*, p. 49.
144. Iqbal, 'McTaggart's philosophy', p. 145.
145. 'Separation is consonant with our soul', (JN 120/ 11, Arberry 94/2214).

Conclusion

In this study of the autobiographies of Gandhi, Nehru and Iqbal, I have tried to show how they shaped their texts as travelling autobiographies, in which their self-conceptions as travellers was crucial to their definitions of selfhood. For Nehru and Gandhi these definitions and visions of individual selfhood grounded their notions of group identities. It is for this reason that their political thinking cannot be detached from their autobiographical projects. For both it is only through the adventure of interiority that a nationalist politics could get off the ground. While it is possible to see Gandhi's project as one of self-overcoming,¹ this study has suggested that Gandhi's autobiography sought to present and make his self as vulnerable as possible. For him, collective self-rule could not be a compensation for or a flight from such vulnerabilities of the self; on the contrary it had to be rooted in and empowered by those vulnerabilities. As we have seen, his vulnerable self is performed, and even celebrated, in the episodes of stage fright in his autobiography as a whole. It is also this vulnerable selfhood which is evoked in his sense of self-incompletion, which he paradoxically expressed as the attempt to reduce himself to zero. This self-incompletion is reflected in his notion of a 'Truth' which can never be fully grasped or enacted.

It was Gandhi's vulnerable selfhood which underpinned his quest for 'Truth', a 'Truth' which could never be finally arrived at, but only progressively enacted through his travels. Moreover, for Gandhi it was how you travelled which defined the nature of that 'Truth'. Travel is not a means to an end of discovering a fixed 'Truth', but an end in itself. This style of travel opened up his self to different forms of vulnerability, corporeal, sexual, emotional and intellectual. Similarly, 'Truth' could never be fully translated, but only instantiated through processes of translation, which by their very nature are always approximate and incomplete. These processes of translation resonate with Gandhi's own sense of his linguistic inadequacy and vulnerability as a translator in his travels.

I have not read Gandhi's autobiography as a textual whole, then, because this reflects his own sense of self-incompletion. Nehru, too, worked with a notion of travel as necessarily incomplete, as a narrative of adventure and exploration which opened up new spaces and horizons for an interiority that could not be foreclosed. In his autobiography Nehru sought to elaborate a selfhood which was conspicuous in its hesitations, confusions and doubts, as well as its cultural heterogeneity, to the extent that he acknowledged his opposition to British rule was tantamount to opposing a part of himself.

Unlike other Indian nationalists who sought to disavow their syncretistic selves in their autobiographies, for Nehru nationalism could not displace the internal divisions of a cosmopolitan self in disarray. For him, there could be no escape from such a self into the ready-made category of a homogenising nationalism. An Indian nationalism based on the fiction of a heroically integrated individuality would be a self-denying nationalism.

While Nehru returns to India to travel further within India, this study has argued that in Iqbal's *Jāwīd Nāma*, and his work as a whole, nationalism becomes a problem of return. For Iqbal, as we have seen, the self is, in a fundamental sense, a form of travel. But the more he empowers this travelling self within the framework of the metaphysical ascent in the *Jāwīd Nāma*, the more he renders problematic Indian Muslim separatism as a point of collective identification for that selfhood. As in the case of Nehru and Gandhi, Iqbal's autobiographical narrative, and his work as a whole, cannot be read as a textual whole. In his work, there are two Iqbals in play, one in his poetry and metaphysics, and the other in his politics, and as he himself noted, passing from the one to the other was fraught with danger and difficulty for him. In the end, Iqbal's travelling aesthetic was caught in a posture of necessary inconsistency and contradiction, which grounded his creativity as a thinker and poet. His incommensurable subject positions reflect his two defining contradictions, that of using a transnational and even anti-national pan-Islamic self to secure Indian Muslim separatism, and defining a selfhood through a visionary ascent in an extraterrestrial landscape while trying to secure a territorial base for a mundane nationalism. In the end, Iqbal the poet and thinker can be secured only at the expense of Iqbal the politician.

What all three figures have in common is not just their fusion of the form of a travelogue with the genre of autobiography, but their interiorisation of travel, to such an extent that in the case of Nehru and Iqbal, but for different reasons and in different locations and at different times, travel becomes independent of physical movement. In contrast, travel can never be an escape from the body for Gandhi; travel, interiority and intervening in the body as a situation are always configured together. Rejecting the modern technology of transport means grappling more fundamentally with the basic nature of embodiment. For Gandhi, the body politic of self-rule is precisely that, a body politic.² However, all three, in different ways in their autobiographies, enact processes of self-choice which involved critical self-direction and an attitude of reflexive distance from their ascribed origins and traditions.³ This attitude was exemplified in Gandhi's experiments with 'Truth', and in Iqbal's cosmopolitan eclecticism and Nehru's cosmopolitan self in disarray. For none of them was being an 'Indian', a 'Hindu' or a 'Muslim' a given. For each, these signs of identity had to be reconstructed through the autobiographical enactment of selfhood.

But all three figures reveal something else in their autobiographies, namely that to deny one's self as one embraces nationalism is to generate hatred

and violence towards Others within India. It is only by acknowledging their individual selves in all their complex vulnerabilities and heterogeneities that South Asians can begin to espouse and define an alternative nationalism to the violently levelling and homogenising forms it has taken in modern South Asia. In different ways, Gandhi, Nehru and Iqbal show how this might be done through these processes of self-authoring, without which nationalism can only ever be a form of repressive self-denial.

Notes

1. Alter, p. 52.
2. The best exposition of this body politic is to be found in Alter, *Gandhi's Body*.
3. For these aspects of self-choice, see Matustik, pp. 80–1, pp. 91–2.

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