Writing Nation / Translating Nation: Contextualising the Politics of Erasure and Foregrounding in Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's *Anandamath*

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Abstract

Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's *Anandamath,* has been an immensely significant piece of work in the socio-cultural and political history of India. The fact that ''Vande Mataram'' which is officially the ''national song'' of India, is taken from this book, immediately inscribes it in the discursive narrative of nationalist imagination vis-à-vis its colonial past and its post independent future as a fledging nation state. Indeed right from its first publication as a book in 1882, Anandamath gripped the national imaginary leading to several translations in the various Indian languages indicating a pan-Indian appeal. Indeed, the original Bengali novel too has as many as five editions with slight changes made by the author in every successive edition. The English translations of *Ananadamath,* all engage with the last i.e. the fifth book edition of the novel which Lipner calls "the standard edition." The present paper seeks to engage with four different English translations of the novel, undertaken over a period of some hundred years and problematize the politics of translation whereby the same text activates diverse, if not mutually incompatible, subtexts when translated at different junctures of the trajectory of nation building/nationalist politics. In effect the paper attempts to investigate how the act of translation is also an act of selective foregrounding/erasure mediated by an overarching narrative of intent originating from the prevalent logic/register of national self-fashioning. The four translations that will be taken up by this paper as sites of entry into this textual/ hermeneutic politics are the ones by i) Nares Chandra Sen-Gupta (1906), ii) Aurobindo Ghosh and Barindra Kumar Ghosh (1909-11), iii) Bansanta Koomar Roy (1941) and iv) Julius Lipner (2005). It is significant that even the title of the four translations differ indicating the politics of overt foregrounding and concurrent political gaps/silences.

Keywords: *Anandamath*, translation, erasure, foregrounding, nation building

Introduction

A literary text is inevitably the product of an age shaped and crafted by the *zeitgiest*. It is equally inevitable that in some ways the literary text also shapes the age in which it is produced. This influence of the text on the contemporary age and subsequent times may

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be infinitesimally small or it may be hugely momentous giving birth to a totally new discursive domain in public and national life. *Anandamath*, written by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee undoubtedly falls in the latter category for it is a novel that has not yet exhausted itself in the collective consciousness of the nation right from its first serialised publication some 140 years ago in 1881-82 in the monthly "Bangadarshan." Indeed, Lipner indicates that it is a novel of "seminal import historically, for assessing India's birth as a nation" (Re-translating 60). The fact that "Vande Mataram" which is officially the "national song" of India, is taken from this book, immediately inscribes it in the discursive narrative of nationalist imagination vis-à-vis the nation's colonial past and her post independent future as a fledging nation state. Needless to say, that right from its first publication *Anandamath* has seen umpteen translations both in regional languages as well as in English. The thrust of the present paper is to engage with various English translations of the *Anandamath* undertaken over a period of some hundred years and problematize the politics of translation whereby the same text activates diverse, if not mutually incompatible, subtexts when translated at different junctures of the trajectory of nation building/nationalist politics. Hence the attempt is to locate the act of translation in a deliberately crafted web of selective foregrounding/erasure originating from an overarching narrative of the prevalent discourses of national self-fashioning. However, such an engagement is well-nigh impossible without contextualising the history of the novel along all its registers — right from publication details to historical background and changing political impact/inscription.

Anandamath: Publication History and Brief Outline of the Plot

Anandamath first appeared in a serialised form in the monthly journal "Bangadarshan" from the issue of March-April 1881 to May-June 1882. This serial publication was finally given the format of a book in December, 1882. This was the first edition of the book and there were some significant alterations from the serialised version of "Bangadarshan." The second edition, with further changes was brought out in July 1883 followed by a third in April 1886. The fourth edition appeared at the end of the same year in December, 1886. While not much changes can be discerned in the second, third and fourth editions, the final and the fifth edition had significant changes and was published in November 1892. Hence, over a period of ten years as many as five editions of the text was published and the print run of the different editions was between 1000 to 2000 copies. This is in addition to the serial version of the novel brought out in instalments for more than a year in 1881-82. All of this attests to the huge popularity of the novel. However, the cultural presence of the book was not limited only to Bengal as is evident from the myriad translations of the book in various Indian languages indicating a pan-Indian appeal. It is interesting to note that the book has seen more than one translation in some Indian languages. Writing in 1982, Meenakshi Mukherjee notes, "Some of the translations have appeared as late as the sixties of this century, testifying to the continuing popularity of the novel at a certain level" (903).

However, the action of the novel does not take place in the late nineteenth century when the novel actually became immensely popular and gripped the national imaginary leading to the publication of so many editions and translations of it. Instead, the novel is set a little more than a hundred years prior to its publication in the 1770's. Indeed the very first sentence of the novel firmly establishes this temporal reference by alluding to the Bengali year 1176: "It was a summer day of the Bengali year 1176. The glare and

heat of the sun lay very heavy on the village of Padachinha" (Ghosh 11). The spacio-temporal dimension of Bengal in the 1770's gives a historical backdrop to the novel along two allied registers: first, the great Bengal famine popularly known as "Chiẏāttôrermônnôntôr" and second, the Sanyasi rebellion against the ineffectual Muslim rulers and the officials of the British East India Company. In early 1770's Bengal had not yet come under the direct rule of the British. The British were charged with the responsibility of collecting taxes which they did ruthlessly, while the actual welfare of the people rested in the hands of the weak, incompetent and dissipated Muslim Nawabs. This historical background which Bankim Chandra provides for his novel allows him to revisit history without being steadfastly historical in any strict sense of the term. In the notice to the third edition he writes, "for a novel is a novel and not history" (Lipner 129). Hence it is not the authenticity but the "subliminal socio-political message of the story" (46) that is paramount. The dissemination of this message is facilitated by the portrayal of a background of "nightmarish misrule and…a countryside stalked by famine" (Mukherjee 903).

It is this famine and the prospect of inevitable starvation that persuades Mahendra Singha accompanied by his wife Kalyani and infant daughter Sukumari to leave their prosperous hearth and home in Padachinha village and travel to the city which promised greater chances of survival. Famine raged all around as a dark and ruthless leveller. Wealth is of no consequence where food is unavailable, "all production has ceased, all social intimacies have evaporated" (Sarkar 3964). As they travel onward through the heat and the glare they are waylaid by a band of starving bandits and Mahendra is estranged from his family. In due course all three are rescued by a band of rebel sanyasis who call themselves the children of the Mother or the "santans". These "santans" have renounced all material pleasures and possessions to redeem a patriotic mission of restoring the past glory of the country, a glory that is articulated in manifest Hindu iconography and religious traditions namely, the three forms of Shakti — Jaggadhtri, Durga and Kali. Guerrilla warfare is the forte of the "santans" and they amass both wealth and weapons for their fight against the oppressors. Finally, they score a decisive victory against the combined forces of the Muslims and the British in an open battle. Such an event is invalidated by recorded history and Bankim counters this effect by reading this victory in a highly nuanced symbolic and spiritual context of present degradation and future possibilities. In a moment of prophetic vision, the leader of the "santans", Satyanada Thakur is afforded an explanation of the inevitable sway of history whereby the Sanatan Dharma or the Eternal Code can be reinstated only after a period of British rule. Hence, the sacred and the profane are fused to compose "a new divine project as well as a politics of Hindu nationhood" (Sarkar 3959).

Anandamath: Critical Interventions

Meenakshi Mukherjee looks upon *Anandamath* as the "first political novel written in India…significant for many extra-literary reasons, especially for the tremendous impact it had on subsequent nationalist movements in Bengal and in some other parts of India" (903). It is this aspect of the novel which invites critical scrutiny with respect to the various English translations that have been carried out over time. It is the "complexity and ambiguity contained in its political substratum" (905) that has allowed it be appropriated through translations in diverse ways responding to the prevalent mood and moment of nation building. In an act of critical extrapolation Tanika Sarkar goes so far

as to approach the text as a "historical event" in itself, a "novelistic vision (that) was destined to govern diverse and conflicted nationalist imaginaries for years to come" (3959). Indeed it is of great interest that a national imaginary organised along a nationalist/patriotic/militant register as detailed in the novel had not yet crystallised in the public sphere even when the novel was being published. Hence, this may be regarded as an anachronism in 1770's since ideas of nationalism could not have germinated by any chance. This is what makes the novel a "performative speech act" (Sarkar 3959) whereby the imaginative articulation and elaboration of a militant, nationalist project actually helped in the birth of the same. To that extent *Anandamath* is a text that interacted in complex ways with the idea of the nation right from the early days of organised nationalist inscription in the public consciousness till the present times.

From this it follows that the seminal position of *Anandamath* is secured "not only in the literary history of India but in its political history as well" (Chandran 299). Given this interface between literature and nationalist politics it would indeed be a rewarding exercise to engage with the various English translations of the text that have been published at critical junctures of the nation's collective imagination and its history. This is very pertinent as translations are not mere transfer of meanings from one language to another. The transfer across words is accompanied by "a transfer of meaning across worlds, and unless the requisite respect is shown to the relevant cultural paradigms on both sides of these divides, a successful semantic transaction cannot be effected" (Lipner 115). The translational act is a creative exercise in itself inscribed by the socio-political and cultural milieu in which it is obtained. Hence, fidelity is often subsumed in a larger purpose which has its own political nuances. Dispensing the yardstick of fidelity, Shanta Ramakrishna observes that translations need to be assessed against the "temper of their times and the translative projects that brought them into existence" (87). Consequently, what are the underlying "translative projects" that brought into existence the various English translations of *Anandamath* ? Was there a larger socio-political narrative in place that fuelled these translational projects? These are issues that invite critical engagement.

The Four English Translations of *Anandamath*

The earliest English translation of *Anandamath* was published in 1906 by Nares Chandra Sen-Gupta. He titled the translation as *The Abbey of Bliss* and published it in Calcutta. This was soon followed by Aurobindo Ghosh who started translating the book in 1909 some months after his release from the Cellular Jain in May, 1909. However, he did not complete the entire translation. According to Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library Vol. 30, "The prologue and the first thirteen chapters of Part I were translated by Sri Aurobindo, the rest by his brother Barindra. The parts translated by Sri Aurobindo first appeared in the Karmayogini, intermittently between August 7, 1909 and February 12, 1910" (Ghosh 1). This translation retained its original Bengali title ie., *Anandamath*. Another thirty years were to pass before another translation of the same book was published by Basanta Koomar Roy in 1941 from Washington later to be republished as *Anandamath* by Orient Paperbacks in India in 1992. After a gap of some sixty-five odd years the Oxford University Press came out with a scholarly publication of yet another translation of *Anandamath* in 2005 by Julius Lipner titled, *Anandamath or The Sacred Brotherhood*. It has an exhaustive introduction that runs into 124 pages, wherein the text is located within the rubric of translation and postcolonial studies. Such a comprehensive introduction is accompanied by a section that Lipner calls "Critical Apparatus" wherein a

wide-ranging culture specific glossary is incorporated along with details of various editorial/authorial emendations in the various editions of the book.

In so far as translation is "the writing of the translator's reading of someone else's text" (Arrojo 73), and also because the translator inhabits a subjective position that is at once unique yet ideologically interpellated, each of the above translations activate a different discourse directly traceable to the historical and ideological configuration of the nation at that point in time. Further, such a response is shaped as much by contemporary events as by individual ideological moorings as is manifested in the difference between the tenor of the translations by Nares Chandra Sen-Gupta and the Ghosh brothers. The two translations are separated by just a few years and both inhabit the same socio-political milieu of the post partition Bengal. Yet they are poles apart in their intent. Sen-Gupta uses his preface almost as a manifesto of his intention. He starts off in a eulogistic vein asserting that Bankim Chandra more than anyone else is entitled to the title of the "Father of Bengali Prose" for he brought to light the "vast capabilities of the Bengali language" (i). However, this soon transforms into a critique of the didactic tone of *Anandamath* where Sen-Gupta feels that the overall tone of pontification overrides aesthetic concerns and tends to be too intrusive. Hence it is more in the nature of a parable of patriotism. However, this patriotism is marked by two features: provincialism and religion. Both these registers are problematic to say the least. Being particularly articulate on the second point, Sen-Gupta says, "He evidently thought the only nationality India was capable of was a religious nationality;… to say the least such an idea is absurd. We must have one Indian nation or no nation at all" (viii). This is indeed a strong statement coming immediately after the partition of Bengal in 1906. Hence, ideologically the translator looks upon the text to be significant enough to be translated but essentially flawed in terms of the ideational universe it inhabits. There is an unambiguous note of apology regarding the issue of manifest anti-Muslim sentiments that abound in the novel:

> But with all this, one cannot but regret the anti-Mussulman sentiments that our author has so freely introduced in the present work. Whatever poetic justice there might be for those expressions considering the situation of the people whose careers are depicted in the novel, every true son of India today would sincerely wish that they had not existed in the work. I would willingly have expunged those passages from the translation were it not for a desire that the author should be presented in the translation as no better or worse than he is. (x)

This paratextual apologetic strain informs the entire translation in nuanced ways. This is of particular significance as paratextual materials accompanying a translation helps to contextualise the work and also articulate the authorial intent.

In stark contrast to 1906 translation of Sen-Gupta is the translation by the Ghosh brothers taken up between 1909-11. While both translations are true to the original, the later foregrounds and celebrates the militant Hindu nationalism articulated by Bankim Chandra. Far from being apologetic, Aurobindo Ghosh and his brother espoused the message of a resurgent Hindu nation after centuries of oppression as one to be emulated and disseminated. Bankim Chandra's influence on Aurobindo went back long before he actually took up the task of translating *Anandamath*. The year after Aurobindo returned to India after his 14 years stay in England, he penned down 7 articles on Bankim Chandra in the months of July and August 1894. These articles covered all the major

aspects of Bankim Chandra from his college life to his official career. Of particular significance were the last two articles titled, "What he did for Bengal" (August 20) and "Our hope in the future" (August 27). Indeed, so great was the influence of Bankim Chandra and particularly *Anandamath* on Aurobindo that in 1905 he published an anonymous political pamphlet titled, "Bhabhani Mandir." Penned during the time of the Partition of Bengal, the pamphlet talked about the establishment of an order of monks who would be in the service of the goddess Bhabhani. The goddess is however identified with the idea of the nation and hence the resonances of *Anandamath* are too strident to be ignored. In an article titled "Rishi Bankim" published in 1907, he writes, "The Rishi is different from the Saint…He is not great by what he was himself, but by what he has expressed" (Ghosh 7).

Way back in 1894 Aurobindo found Bankim Chandra to be a "faultless artist." In 1907 under the direct influence of *Anandamath* and the song "Vande Mataram,"Aurobindo found in him his political guru. He even edited an English newspaper by the name of *Bande Mataram* which bore the provocative descriptor, "A Daily Organ of Indian Nationalism." It was the most effective voice of nationalist extremism of the times. Hence, Aurobindo's translation of *Anandamath* was a labour marked by ideological affiliation on one hand and an intense religious fervour and nationalist passion on the other. Indeed, in the years before his arrest in the Alipore Bomb Case, Aurobindo attempted to "translate" *Anandamath* into action. He was hugely involved with the extremist groups fighting against the British. Having failed in that endeavour he took up the textual translation hoping to disseminate a version of militant Hindu nationalism that he endorsed. Further the masculine power and rigour of the "santans" in *Anadamath* undercut the image of the weak, effeminate Bengali man incapable of heroic exploits. Aurobindo, whose Anushilan Samity connections are no secret rejoiced in this portrayal of valour and heroism of a pre-British past that could inspire resistance against present servitude.

While the Partition of Bengal and the subsequent rise of extremism in nationalist politics form the discursive incubator of Aurobindo's translation, the secular discourses of nation building of the 1940's form the ideological backdrop of Basanta Koomar Roy's 1941 translation of the novel. Roy is acutely alive to the imminent independence of the country from almost 200 years of the British rule. Hence his translation is an attempt to inscribe the novel in the narrative of a secular, progressive nationalism which was the byword of the Gandhi-Nehru way of envisaging the future nation. In his translator's introduction, Roy tells us, "After centuries of political slavery, of social tyranny and of economic exploitation, the wheel of life in India is beginning to revolve again. And in the new awakening of a great nation, this prophetic novel from the pen of Bankim Chandra Chatterji has played a dynamic part" (17). However, Roy calls his work not "translation' *per se*but also an adaptation. This allows him the license to alter, modify and even remove ideas and incidents that do not serve his vision of a nation in the becoming. The anti-Muslim slant of the novel is all transmuted into an unambiguously anti-British one. In places where the narrative did not allow such an emendation, the entire section was expunged without so much of an explanation. In a tone of exasperation, Lipner draws our attention to the fact that Roy "has translated the Muslims out of the novel completely! It is like translating Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* without any reference to Shylock" (Re-translating 71).

Lipner's own translation published in 2005 in many ways militates against the "sanitised" version of the novel served up by Basanta Koomar Roy. He maintains as much fidelity to the narrative as is possible despite the inherent semantic in transmissibility and incommensurability that haunts the very act of translation. Being a scholarly edition informed by critical theories in the field of translation studies and postcolonial studies, the paratextual material serves to locate the ideological underpinnings of yet another translation. The exhaustive introduction is divided into five sections which contextualise the novel with respect to the times, the author, its publication history, its historical lives and afterlives and the politics of translation. Lipner's ideological underpinnings for the translation is widely different from the militant nationalism of Aurobindo or the secular, progressive nationalism of Basanta Koomar Roy. Being a part of a critically engaged academia, Lipner resorts to the liberating potential inherent in the act of translation to facilitate more informed communication based on a nuanced understanding of the issues at hand. The communally inflected Hindu-Muslim relations as portrayed in the novel need to be discoursed upon: "Nothing can be gained by sweeping the matter under the rug, and allowing innuendo, ignorance, misrepresentation and recrimination to hold sway (Lipner *Anandamath* 61). Hence for Lipner, a "critically-weighted translation" has the potential to "open up the text anew, to recontextualise its contents, and to encourage the possibility of a new dialogue between interested parties of goodwill" (119).

Translational Encounters: Erasures/Foregrounding

It is fruitful to bring these myriad translations into a conversation with each other to locate explicit erasures and concurrent foregroundings engendered by specific exigencies of the times as well as ideological concerns. Indeed the names that are given to the various translations are by themselves signifiers of a well thought out authorial intention. Nares Chandra Sen-Gupta calls his translation *The Abbey of Bliss*. "Math" in Bengali is a monastery or a place for spiritually inclined people who have renounced the material pleasures of the mundane world. In the novel this is strictly allied to a Hindu way of life. "Ananda" indicates happiness which may be allied with "bliss." However, the word "Abbey" inhabits a connotational field that is non-Hindu in its resonance. If this is taken into account, the title may be read as a polysemic way of undermining the predominantly Hindu/ anti-Muslim world view of the novel about which Sen-Gupta was clearly uncomfortable and apologetic. Lipner has a point in saying that the "ananda" of *Anandamath* has nothing to do with "bliss" whatsoever. Notwithstanding the fact these are ascetics who have renounced all for the Nation-mother, they do not live a "blissful" life. The "ananda" of the title refer to the initiated "santans" whose names all end with "ananda": Bhabhananda, Dhirananda, Jibaananda, Satyananda. Hence Lipner says, "They were thus, from the point of view of nomenclature, an elite of *anandas* who, by definition, lived in "a monastery of *anandas*". Hence *Anandamath*" (*Anandamath* 45). Consequently, Lipner foregrounds the shared bonding among these "anandas": a kind of a spiritual fraternity held together by shared self-imposed renunciation and an equally shared quest for the realisation of the Mother-to-be. Hence, he names his translation, *The Sacred Brotherhood*. Perhaps the most significant and suggestive title among the four translations under consideration is *Dawn Over India*. This is the title given by Basanta Koomar Roy to his translation. The first thing that needs to be noted is the complete secularisation of the title. It carries no religious connotation whatsoever despite the fact

that the Bengali word "math" inhabits a field dense with religious signifiers. Since the translation seeks to foreground the secular nationalist discourse of an India in the throes of The Quit India Movement, the "dawn" of the title links up with the idea of independence that was keenly awaited. The Ghosh brothers retained Bankim Chandra's original title of *Anandamath* for their translation too. Hence the names of the translations are a key to the overall tenor of the translation.

One of the most significant aspects of the translation of *Anandamath* is the representation of the Muslims in the novel. This is a tricky affair and Nares Chandra Sen-Gupta despite reservations included these sections as he felt that "the mischief is infact past undoing" (x). Here is a passage from Chapter VII of Part I of the novel which gives us the historical background of the times with the ineffectual Mirzafar as the ruler who did not deserve his throne. Aurobindo Ghosh translates it thus:

> In the Bengali year 1175 the province of Bengal had not become subject to British administration. The English were then the revenue officials of Bengal. They collected the taxes due to the treasury, but up to that time they had not taken upon themselves the burden of protecting the life and property of the Bengali people. The burden they had accepted was to take the country's money; the responsibility of protecting life and property lay upon that despicable traitor and disgrace to humanity, Mirzafar. Mirzafar was incapable of protecting even himself; it was not likely that he would or could protect the people of Bengal. Mirzafar took opium and slept; the English raked in the rupees and wrote despatches; as for the people of Bengal they wept and went to destruction. (24)

Lipner's version is this:

> In 1770 Bengal had not yet fallen under British sway. The British at the time were Bengal's tax collectors. All they did was collect the revenue; they took no responsibility for overseeing the lives and property of Bengalis. Their task was to collect the money, while the responsibility for life and property belonged to the evil Mir Jafar, a vile, treacherous blot on the human race. He was unable to look after himself, so how could he look after Bengal? Mir Jafar took opium and slept, the British took in the money and issued receipts, and the Bengali wept and went to ruin. So while Bengal's revenue belonged to the British, the burden of government fell on the nawab. (*Anandamath* 140)

However the same chapter is rendered in a totally different fashion it Basanta Koomar Roy's *Dawn Over India*:

> The British had long been expert in collecting revenue. At different centres they had their collectors who realised taxes and revenues to be shipped to the treasury of the East India Company in Calcutta. Thousands of men, women and children might die of starvation; yet there must be no cessation in the collection of taxes. This year's collection, however, fell short of expectations. If mother earth refused to yield wealth, humans could not create it. All that could be collected, however, was being shipped at once to the British treasuries in Calcutta.

Where has Mirzafar gone in the last translation? In an effort to expunge anything that may be construed as inimical to the secular narrative of national self-fashioning in the 1940's, Roy's translation often takes liberties that denature the original. True to the anti-

British nationalist discourse of the day, he substitutes the Muslims by the British wherever possible. For instance, in the last chapter of Book I the "santans" attack the city where their spiritual guru, Satyananda is held captive by Muslims. In the translation by the Ghosh brothers, Jnanananda cries out, "We have long contemplated breaking this nest of pernicious birds (Babui) totally destroying this Mussulman city and throwing it into the river" (65). In Lipner, Jnanananda's words take on a slightly altered edge, "For a long time we've been wanting to smash the nest of these weaver-birds, to raze the city of these Muslim foreigners and throw it into the river—to burn the enclosure of these swine and purify Mother Earth again!" (169). Interestingly Roy has no reference to the Muslims in his translation at all. They have all been substituted by the British as is evident in these lines from his translation spoken by Jiban: "For a long time we have been thinking of destroying with root and branch the British rule in India and then of drowning it in the depths of the seas and thus purifying Mother India from the pollution of this alien domination" (81). As Lipner says in his introduction to *Anandamath*, "To banish all trace of Muslims in one's translation is not to solve a problem but to defer it, if not to exacerbate it" (122).

Such deliberate omissions in Basant Koomar Roy's translation make it the most divergent text among the four translations. Roy's text totally excises the last chapter of the novel which is crucial to the overall meaning and structure of the novel. In the last chapter, Satyananda, the spiritual leader of the "santans' is instructed by the Healer, a mysterious spiritual presence to stop the war as the Muslim rule is destroyed and the establishment of the Eternal Code or the Sanatan Dharma can be achieved only through an intervening period of British rule. This is the translation of Aurobindo:

> The true Hindu religion is based on knowledge, not on action. That knowledge is of two kinds; — secular or external and spiritual or internal. The inner spiritual knowledge is the chief part of true religion. But unless secular knowledge about the outside world comes the other knowledge about the inner world cannot grow. Unless one knows what the gross is, one cannot arrive at the knowledge pertaining to the subtle. For a long time this esoteric knowledge has been lost in this country — so the true eternal religion is also lost. In order to restore the eternal religion, at the outset knowledge of the material world must be preached. There is not much material knowledge in the country now, there is none capable of teaching it…The English are past masters in the knowledge pertaining to the material world. They are adepts in the art of teaching. So we shall make the British our rulers. (161)

Despite the fact that Bankim Chandra has come under a lot of criticism due to this passage to the extent of being accused of intellectual dishonesty for narrow self-advancement, this thought forms a major strain of Bankim Chandra's understanding of the East-West civilizational dialectic. He reiterates this position in other polemical writings of his too, most notably in the *Dharmatattwa*. For Basanta Koomar Roy, such an ending brings the entire edifice his secular, anti-British translation crashing down. On one hand it talks of the destruction of the Muslim rule and the other a necessity of British rule for long term national and spiritual advancement. Hence, he chose to erase the entire chapter. This deletion is mentioned in the preface to Roy's translation written by Dr. William J. Jackson: "The following translation of *Anandamath* … was first published in 1941, during a critical period of India's history when the independence movement had to

take a decisive stance rejecting foreign rule. Hence, the mysterious physician's suggestion was deleted" (8).

Conclusion

The act of translation is paradoxically both a limiting as well as an enabling act. In its enabling avatar, the translator is in many ways a creator, an involved reader who assimilates the source text and filters it though his individual consciousness which may be inscribed by divergent socio-cultural, political and obviously linguistic registers. Such an interaction becomes all the more intense in the case of texts like *Anandamath* that has been inextricably associated with the genesis and evolution of the idea of the Indian nation for the past 150 years. Further, as the translations have taken place in certain years that were crucial in the trajectory of the nation's history the subtexts activated have necessarily been divergent and indicative of the larger national narrative in the public sphere. To conclude, an analysis of the politics of translation operational in the many translations (both in English and regional languages) of *Anandamath* can give us a fairly nuanced idea of the trajectory of Indian nationalism in the public consciousness.

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