# Transgressing Bodies in Postcolonial Fiction

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> Thus because of the "Indian Wonders" the eyes and imagination of medieval man were accustomed to grotesque body. Both in literature and pictorial art, the body of mixed parts and the strangest anatomical fantasies, the free play with the human limbs and interior organs were unfolded before him. The transgression of the limits dividing the body from the world also became customary. (Bakhtin 347)

Issues of control and transgression are central to the question of social praxis. That "deviant" sex and the grotesque body are the preferred symbols of transgression is "natural", given the attempts to legislate both through legal and normative means. Cultural critics have underscored the usage of deviancy (variously defined, but commonly against an assumed homogeneous bourgeois norm) in contemporary film and music to protest middle-class values. Similarly, literary critics have made salient the figure of the sexual/class/gender/racial transgressor in literature by focusing on the marginal and the grotesque. My focus in this paper is on the inappropriate use of the body and sexuality as symbols of transgression in postcolonial fiction. Through a case study of Mulk Raj Anand's first novel *Untouchable* and his latest novel *The Bubble*, I ask for a more considered approach to the use of the transgressive body in critiques of postcolonial texts. The western trained literary critic interested in exploring issues of the body and transgression in postcolonial literatures1 , all too often, hastily and mistakenly transfers the equation of "grotesque is to creative texts as protest is to complacency" to a context where historical circumstances make it foolish at worse and inconsequential at best. I suppose I could claim that such a manoeuvre brings with it a new version of the West's colonial impulse but that would be to employ one of contemporary criticism's more unworthy tropes.

Much contemporary critical thought calls for the use of the Bakhtinian grotesque body as a sign of transgression against a socio-political order, but in much early postcolonial fiction, and certainly in Anand's *Untouchable*, this function is served by the classical body. I make use of 'grotesque' and 'classical' bodies following Stallybrass and Paton's use of Bakhtin's concepts of the grotesque and the classically beautiful body.

> The classical statue has no openings or orifices whereas grotesque costume and masks emphasize the gaping mouth, the protuberant belly and

> buttocks, the feet and the genitals. In this way the grotesque body stands in opposition to the bourgeois individualist conception of the body, which finds *its* image and legitimation in the classical. The grotesque body is emphasized as a mobile, split, multiple self, a subject of pleasure in processes of exchange; and it is never closed off from either its social or ecosystemic context. The classical body on the other hand keeps its distance. In a sense it is disembodied, for it appears indifferent to a body which is 'beautiful', but which is taken for granted. (Stallybrass 22)

Where Stallybrass and Paton use Bakhtin's grotesque and classical bodies to analyze bourgeois anxieties, I use them to denote postcolonial ones. Postcolonial critics such as Derek Wright, Elleke Boehmer, Stephen Slemon, and Jean M. Kane have pointed out that the body in pre-independence postcolonial fiction is constructed as a whole, unified body, whereas, the body in post-independence postcolonial fiction is fragmented (the bodies they refer to as 'whole' or 'unified', I refer to as classically beautiful, and the bodies they refer to as 'fragmented,' I refer to as grotesque, or, as Bakhtin puts it, grotesque images are "ugly, monstrous, hideous from the point of view of 'classic' aesthetics, that is, the aesthetics of the ready-made and the completed") (Bakhtin 25). Various explanations are offered for the dichotomous representation of the body, but most postcolonial critics agree that the classically beautiful body is constructed in keeping with the nationalist project of creating a reversal of the colonizer's construction of the native as a grotesque; the fragmented body is used in order to show that "sectarian conflict, inequities of the class and gender, and neocolonial politics hobble the promise of independence as the commencement of a utopian wholeness" (Kane 95). The transgressive use of the grotesque body against the national politics of a post-independence India can be found in the works of younger writers such as Salman Rushdie and Amitav Ghosh.

In keeping with conventional critical understanding, once colonial rule with its binary that sees the native as grotesque passes so, too, does the use of the classical body as the symbol of transgression. Unfortunately, the scheme is far too reductive. It cannot, for example, make sense of the post-independence postcolonial text that uses a classical body as the symbol of transgression such as Emecehta's *The Joys of Motherhood* or David Malouf's *Remembering Babylon*, or more problematically, a text such as Erna Brodber's *Myal* in which both the classical and the grotesque body are used as symbols of transgression.

> The post- colonial in literature and critical discourse essentially consists of the cultural representation of the destabilization of the fixities and bounded structures of the age of empire and colony under British and European world hegemony. (Jeyifo 52)

One important force of destabilization has been the various nationalist movements. As the former colonies have sought and achieved independence their nationalist movements have brought about a re-construction of the configuration of power in their territories. Given the central place of nationalism in the independence struggles of countries such as India, Nigeria, Kenya, it is not all surprising that literature from such areas foregrounds nationalism. 'Nationalism', in the case of the formerly colonized seeking decolonization, is identified with the anti-fascist, anti-imperial, leftist vocabulary of European socialism. After 1945, mostly, 'nationalism' is increasingly identified with the political state that seeks to either expand its territories or stabilize its base against internal dissidents; it is often seen as being repressive itself (Hobsbawm 120-162).

The texts I'd like to examine, Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchable* (1935) and *The Bubble* (1984), seem to perfectly embody the critical frame I wish to criticize. In the pre-independence *Untouchable*, Anand's first novel, control of the body indicates self-control, discipline and courage. In the post-independence *The Bubble*, Anand's latest novel, control of the body is viewed as repression. The body's sexual freedom, primarily, is seen at the outset of the novel as the pre-condition of a new way of being in the world -- a more honest and direct way. However, by the end of the novel the narrator sees that false freedoms offered by such a view for what they are and proposes a greater self-discipline. The crucial difference between control of body as represssion and control of body as self-control is the intent of the control. The intent of self-control at the end of the latest novel is for honest self-respect and respect for others.

From *Untouchable* to *The Bubble*, Anand explores the conditions of being in relation to the cultural dynamics and political structure of India. Anand has never been apologetic about his political and social concerns:

> I immersed myself in the subworld of the poor, the insulted and the injured, through continuous pilgrimages to the villages, the small town and the big *bastis* of our country. I had to journey away from the Bloomsbury literary consciousness to the non-literary worlds, whose denizens have always been considered 'vulgar' and unfit for respectable worlds.' (*Conversations* 16)

Anand's journey away from the Bloomsbury group is, however, a return journey. His mid-career novel, *Private Life of an Indian Prince*, is a careful blend of the social and the personal and his later semi-autobiographical novels (of which *The Bubble* is the latest) literally take him from India to Bloomsbury.

Anand's project in *Untouchable* is no less than the extension of full human status

to the lowest rung in the caste hierarchy of orthodox Hindu India, the untouchable caste. As such, his dual target is the sensibility of upper-caste Indians, and of readers outside India. Anand was not alone in the 1930s in his protests against the injustices and atrocities visited upon the Untouchables. Many Indians, including Brahmins, urged reforms of Hindu cultural practices but Anand was the first to do so in English and for an English literary audience. I use the phrase "extension of full human status" advisedly since Anand saw his writing as an intervention.[2]

In the early 1930s, Indian nationalism made use of current thinking both inside and outside India. Both Rabindranath Tagore and Ernst Renan saw nationalism as a temporary necessity a stage toward an internationalist brotherhood. Contrasting the Turkish policy of equating nationality and religion with France's policy of sectarian citizenry, Renan finds value in France's selective erasure of the past:

> Yet the essence of a nation is that all individuals have many things in common, and also that they have forgotten many things. No French citizen knows whether he is a Burgundian, an Alan, a Taifale, or a Visigoth, yet every French citizen has to have forgotten the massacre of Saint Bartholomew [1572] – thousands of Huguenots were killed] or the massacres that took place in the Midi in the thirteenth century. (Renan 11)

Renan's use of forgetfulness may be seen as a plea rather than a description of what actually happens; nations may officially 'forget', but the continued existence of local loyalties suggests a tribal memory that never truly relinquishes its sense of itself. The crucial feature for Renan is the emphasis on the individual turned citizen. The convenient fiction of the citizen as the ideal inhabitant of the nation allows all who are granted citizenship equality. However, it is when France extends its geographical boundaries (a military and colonial extension that Renan lived through) to cover territories whose inhabitants are visibly different and extends to them membership in the state of France that the plea of a unifying forgetfulness meets its limit. The French-speaking Algerian, for example, who has now become a French citizen, and who fully expects the same rights and responsibilities as any French citizen, is not allowed to forget his/her ancestry by virtue of his/her visible difference; similarly, the untouchable in India is not allowed to forget his/her ancestry by virtue of cultural signifiers.

Colonization and nationalism have a cause and effect relationship in the histories of all postcolonial cultures, but that does not necessarily imply that only nationalists struggle for a new society, nor should it imply that all pre-independence struggle is against colonialism. Nationalism is one liberatory discourse among others. For example, Indians in the first half

of the twentieth century turned to reformist and revivalist movements through the Brahmo Samajists and the Arya Samajists as well as to a western-oriented nationalist movement; francophone Africans turned to the negritude of Senghor and Cesaire in addition to modernism.

One of Mulk Raj Anand's daunting tasks in *Untouchable* is to show a character who suffers unjustly under discrimination sanctioned by his native culture. The difficulty arises with indicting one aspect of a culture without arraigning it entrie: especially so with caste, which is imbricated in virtually every aspect of Hindu culture.

> The caste Hindu [has a heritage] which refuses to accept the fact that the untouchable is a human being, but insists on treating him like a subhuman creature, to be ignored or bullied or exploited as occasion demands. (*Untouchable* 29)

In choosing a boy of the untouchable *chamar* (sweeper) caste as his subject, Anand becomes the first author to consider such "unworthy" lives appropriate literary matter; indeed, *Untouchable* has been praised as much for its subject matter as for its aesthetic merits. Anand participates in the nationalist project of unifying the country by bringing forth an awareness of the injustices faced by a large segment of the population. Upper-caste Hindus certainly were aware of the sub-human status accorded to the Untouchables, and many worked diligently for reform, but until Anand's novel the lives of Untouchables did not exist in literature written in English. The story follows the young sweeper boy, Bakha, as he deals with the frustrations of an ordinary day in his life. Over the course of the day Bakha cleans toilets, plays field hockey, sweeps the streets of the town, and on this particular day defends his sister's honour against a hypocritical priest, attends the wedding of a childhood friend, and listens to Gandhi at a public rally. Each simple event reinforces Bakha's low place as an untouchable with its social and moral inequities.

In Bakha's consciousness the nation and nationalism are irrelevant. Surprisingly, it is the "oppressors," the ferungis (foreigners), who first look beyond Bakha's position and see *him*. The representation of Gandhi in the novel carries a nationalist resonance for some of the characters and for all the book's contemporary readers, but for Bakha it carries only the hope of alleviating the misery caused by other Indians. The binary depiction of colonizer/colonized relations in other postcolonial works, written at roughly the same time such as Raja Rao's *Kanthapura*, among others, is partly due to the focus on the arrival of nationalist anti-colonizer sentiments to a little village. In Anand's *Untouchable*, however, the colonizer is a benign military presence.

As Cowasjee points out, Anand's

hatred of imperialism [does] not blind him to some of the disgusting facets of Indian life: the cruelty and hypocrisy of feudalism; the web of castes, creeds, dead habits and customs which enslave nine-tenths of the Indian people. (23)

Anand faults, in his post-independence fiction, the citizen model of nationhood adopted by newly independent India; although India adopts universal adult suffrage, many of the illiterate poor are citizens in name only. The continued atrocities faced by the Untouchables in India can be located at the distinction between community and state. The state as a legal, abstract entity extends full membership to everyone, but the community follows its own cultural logic.[3] However, in 1935 (the publication date of *Untouchable*) India is not a sovereign country as yet, and thus in no position to grant anyone anything.

Anand's decision to portray Bakha and his sister as sexual innocents rather than as asexual saints, a stance which was popularized by Gandhi as well as by a religious tradition that reveres ascetics, may have to do with his attempt to develop a biological identity between Untouchables and the twice-born castes. Bakha and Sohini are seen as beautiful physical specimens, whereas, the Brahmins are seen as physically and morally degenerate. Bakha is almost primal in his supple form; he stands out amongst the other Untouchables. Anand establishes a correspondence between morality and body: the good are strong and beautiful: the bad are weak and ugly, which means the good are born not made. They can be found in any caste.

Sohini, Bakha's sister, is an innocent and therefore in Anand's view also beautiful. Like Bakha, she too does not seem fit to be an Untouchable. Anand describes her in terms of an *apsara*: "full-bodied within the limits of her graceful frame, well rounded on the hips. With an arched narrow waist ... above which were her full, round, globular breasts ..." (22). Bakhtin's classical body is Greco-Roman; this is an Indian classical body. The description of her body might seem exotic and slightly pornographic for an English reader but she is given the features of a classic Indian beauty. Sohini's form is that of idealised temple dancers and semi-divine beings.

Her figure could have vied with the sculptured images of Konark and Khajuraho, but she has been condemned by birth to walk the path of the outcastes and to suffer their mortification. (Cowasjee 29)

In the critical frame I'm arguing against, Bakha and Sohini's classical beauty would be seen as a postcolonial counter to the sexualized objectification of the native by Orientalist discourse, but there is more to the matter than that. Bakha and Sohini's beautiful bodies counter a Brahminical conception of the grotesque untouchable body within the novel, and unfortunately outside the novel as well. The point with *Untouchable*, the novel, is that the

grotesque native body is the conception the orthodox native Brahmin has of a fellow native, and *not* the colonizer's conception. If anything, Bakha's beautiful body is rendered by Anand in terms similar to the punkha-wallah in E.M. Forster's *A Passage to India*.

As Anand has pointed out in various essays, he sees British ideas including nationalism as necessary catalysts for Hindu cultural reform. His successful characters manage to meld the best of modernity and tradition. Indian nationalism pursues a unity of identity in its pre-independence and early independence aspects, but in its post-independence aspect it seeks a unity of pluralities. In a speech in Innsbruck in 1974, Anand stated that "the first...assertion of Nationalism was not mainly political. It was cultural, in so far as it manifested itself in the search for personal identity" (Fisher 159). That may be, but the Japanese defeat of Russia in 1905 so spurred the militant activities of revivalist and reformist terrorists that "for the first time since 1857 [the year of the Indian Mutiny or Rebellion] the [British] government [of India] was faced with political assassinations and acts of sabotage" (Embree 47). The struggles of all manner of revolutionaries, and perhaps especially, the leadership of Gandhi, in conjunction with a seriously weakened post-war Britain brought about Indian Independence in 1947.

The nationalism which had fostered, and even demanded, a national identity through a greater identification with the pan-ethnic nation rather than the region, now finds itself in the difficult position of having to honour a dream: the dream of personal fulfilment, the coming of *Ramaraj* (a new golden age) with *Swaraj* (self-rule). The challenge India has had to face with increasing frequency and urgency is that of maintaining a sovereign nation while simultaneously recognizing the differences among the distinct linguistic and religious ethnicities within it.

> It appeared, in fact, during 1982-84 that the old problem of Indian unity was approaching a new period of crisis concerning those old and new unresolved problems. The flash-points were, of course, Assam and Punjab primarily, but there were indications of problems to come in Kashmir as well. (Brass 169)

Anand's semi-autobiographical novel *The Bubble*, though written in the late 1970s and published in 1984, is set in the same time period as *Untouchable*, i.e., a post-independence novel set in pre-independence times. *Untouchable* springs from the material unearthed in the growth of the hero of *The Bubble*, Krishan Chander Azad, Anand's alter ego. In his other post-independence novels Anand has pointed to the failure of the citizen-state of India to ensure a fair and equal status for all its citizens, that is, to treat all of its inhabitants as citizens. In *The Bubble*, Anand re-examines nationalist discourse in colonial times and shows the less than cohesive state of nationalist ideology.

The events that constitute the matter of the novel follow the pattern of the traditional *Bildungsroman* as a twenty-year old Krishan comes (runs away) to London in order to pursue his doctorate in philosophy. The novel chronicles the two years Krishan spends in London, Wales, Paris, and Dublin, as he learns that he wants to pursue the life of a writer, falls in love with Irene (an Irish revolutionary), strengthens his conviction that humanism is the best way to live in the world, and yokes his desire for Indian independence with making the voices of the Indian masses heard.

Krishan protests against the middle-class sexual mores that have been drummed into him by his Arya Samajist uncles, and by Gandhi's writings and speeches which are summarized in the dictum that every Hindu youth should repress all sexual urges until his arranged marriage. Such a repression of the body produces, Krishan feels, perversions such as: "homosexuality, rape of Untouchable girls, masturbation, prostitution..." (*The Bubble* 220). Krishan reaches the conclusion that Indian society has sublimated sexuality into religion and morality, and that he will rescue his body from such a state.

Because *The Bubble* takes part in the long romantic history of representing the body as a term of opposition (the seat of desire, irrationality, transgression) to reason, order, and the capitalist way, and thus shares both postmodern and postcolonial concerns, the eurocentric critic might be tempted to apply only a postmodern frame to the next. One of the main uses postmodernism makes of the body is as a counter in the contest between desire and reason:

> The critique of reason as emancipation has resulted in an interest in the body, both as a source of opposition to instrumental reason and as the target of the colonization of the everyday world by the public arena of (male) reason. (Turner 8)

Such a use of the body is also an aspect of postcolonial critique, especially when combined with the notion of centre and margin. Barker's examination of the split between a self-possessed subject and that subject's body makes use of the colonial version of the centre-margin metaphor to illustrate the potentially subversive aspect of the erased body. According to Barker, the modern subject's body

> ...lingers just beyond the limits of discourse, in so far as the subject's speech is present to itself. It hovers outside the charmed circle of subjective self-possession, and from that boundary position continues to agitate the order within the perimeter... The discourse... arranged around as well as against the body, must therefore police the interior as well as the frontiers against its restless energy, its lack. (Barker 65)

The body, then, can oppose reason through desire, which in the colonialist thematic is as often identified with a culturally alien other as it is with males, and it can subvert attempts a subject may make to erase troubling reminders of a self outside the control of that subject. The body in *post* colonialism troubles not only subjective self-possession but also, significantly and politically, troubles objective possession of the self. As the colonized subject's self-image is contested by various "native" discourses and by the discourses of the colonizer, so too is the body. It would seem that under the rule of the colonizer, the body of the colonized has to either subject itself to a rebellious rule (albeit one still within the colonial thematic) or be subject to an alien discourse.

The rebellion that the young Krishan undertakes against the Gandhian dictates of being sexless is against someone who historically sought to negate the received colonialist image of the Indian, especially the 'non-martial' Hindu, as a degenerate sensualist. The perception of the young Krishan that Gandhi's sexuality is responsible for hypocritical repression is much more plausible in situating a character in that colonial milieu from the distance of a post-independence India. The colonial thematic requires that the native male subject see himself as either a weak sensualist or that he rebel by asserting an exaggerated aggressiveness.[4] Gandhi refuses to entertain such a thematic. Anand has Bakha, in the pre-independence *Untouchable*, adopt the eccentric (outside the colonial thematic) asexual stance that Gandhi proposes. Krishan, in the pre-independence *The Bubble*, seeks (with the assistance of a mature Anand who has lived through his country's struggle for independence and the significant failures, amid some spectacular successes, of the central vision that catalyzed that struggle) a sexuality that is as eccentric as Gandhi's asexuality but not as hypocritically repressive of the body.

Krishan's attempts to forge a new sexuality find their focus in Irene who starts out as a revolutionary-sensualist. Krishan tries to reconcile his feelings of jealousy of Irene's sexually free ways by understanding them as her "revolt against possession by any one person" (193), but Irene later tells him that she had treated her body as a separate material thing from her sense of herself. Irene's sexual deviance might be seen as her physical and psychological revolt against the colonial power of England, and in repudiating her particular form of transgression she seeks to make herself whole and unified. In a post-independence postcolonial text set in a pre-independence configuration of colonizer and colonized, Anand brings together both classical and grotesque bodies as symbols of transgression.

Irene's characterization of her earlier behaviour as sick, as the effect of an incoherent self-image ("But there was me and my body. The 'me' remained untouched. I felt contempt for my body when he had me") can be read as the revolutionary turning reactionary, but that would do an injustice to the attempts Irene and Krishan make at combining passion and love.

Krishan goes to prostitutes twice to make Irene feel as jealous of him as he is of her when she has sex with others, and fails both times to use them as a "degenerate sensualist" would. The first time, he runs away while the prostitute is in the bathroom getting ready. The second time, as a different prostitute washes his penis, Krishan is "fascinated by the ritualistic ablutions of [his] private parts, by which she was trying to end the distance between [his] body and hers, as her hard fingers became softer and caressed [his] penis playfully" (353).

The combination of ritual and sex, the prostitute's hardness becoming soft, the merging of their two bodies through her hand and his penis, all come together in boundary violations between religion and sex and bodies. Anand's focus on the lower material stratum (as Bakhtin would have it), the critique of religion through sex, and Irene's psychological fragmentation of her body, render the grotesque body a symbol of transgression against the colonizer and against the cultural response to the colonizer's construction of the self.

Transgression is used most often in terms of the critical theory of the Frankfurt School which sees in it a negation of instrumental reason. By disturbing the boundaries of official discourse, transgression opens the field of cultural discourse to the possibility of alternatives. The official discourse I'd like to open is that of nationalist-driven postcolonial discourse in which nationalism is the counter to the colonizer and the source of post-independence oppressions.

Currently, two opposing models of nation development, stage and hegemonic, are applied to "developing" or "Third World" nations. The stage model takes for granted that the nation is an expression of the people. It sees the nation-state as part of a master-narrative in which the West has a lead on the East in the linear development of that Western complex of capitalism and modernity known as the modern nation.[5] In this model the "Third World" will eventually become indistinguishable from the "First World." The hegemonic model sees the newly-independent nation as the rise to prominence of one class, the bourgeoisie, in a contest among classes. It sees the pursuit of nationhood by formerly colonized countries as a mistake for nationalism is a European idea and thus predicated on the existence of colonies. The developing nations cannot ever become like the European nations they seek to emulate because they have not grown organically into nationhood. They do not have the same power structure with lesser nations (colonies) that the European nations had with them; hence, these former colonies cannot have the same resources and the stability of the European nations.[6] Both stage and hegemonic models see contemporary nations as emulating the West, but in the former, the emulation is a laudatory and pre-ordained enterprise; whereas, in the latter, the emulation is the source of the mis-match, and consequent violence, between nativist visions and neo-colonialist bourgeois capitalist capitulations.[7] Although both stage and hegemonic models are deterministic, the latter has the virtue of keeping the fates in

abeyance until after the newly independent nation-state has made the choice of following the path of Western nationalism. In the hegemonic model it is possible to see nationalism in pre-independence colonies as one liberatory discourse among others.

Bakhtin's notion of the novel as a field of contesting discourses provides an analogy for the nation-state. The novel is irrevocably plural, as is the nation-state, but particular discourses try to govern that plurality, to offer a single invariant reading. Regarding the nation-state as a field of contesting discourses allows other liberatory discourses to emerge from the shadow of nationalism, i.e., nationalism need not be seen as an uneasy amalgam of any and all formulations of dissent or even consent in a particular society. Thus some liberatory discourses call for a close identification with western models of modernism while others call for a return to tradition, and yet others seek a reformation. Contrary to the both Nationalist and anti-Nationalist historians and cultural critics, nationalism becomes one of the possible paths for a colonized people to Independence. and not necessarily a coercive one. In viewing nationalism as the discourse that emerged from the struggles for Independence as the new government, it becomes possible to recast the widening fractures in post-independence postcolonial societies as the continued struggle of liberatory discourses rather than only as a failure of nationalism to fulfil its utopian promises. The promises of a failed nationalism are no different than the promises of many of the other liberatory discourses.

The grotesque body in Kane's understanding, above, does protest against the failure of the promised nationalist utopia, but by regarding nationalism as the only discourse in postcolonial fiction she reduces important alternate visions within the cultural spaces of India into mere signs of discontent. Removing nationalism as the foundational term of colonial resistance to imperial schemes makes visible other structures of control which in turn brings into play other transgressions. The body can now be used as a symbol of transgression against not only a foreign imposition but against any repressive order. The particular formation of the body in a transgressive act can now be either grotesque or classically beautiful depending on the historical specificity of the controlling discourse.

## Notes

[1] The evangelical fervour of the "pilgrimages" has led some critics to charge Anand with creating superficial characters whose primary purpose is to serve as carriers of the author's ideologies. Arun Mukherjee, R.K. Kaushik, and S.C. Harrex are among those who, while admiring Anand's work in general, fault him for speaking for others or for focusing on the sociology of his characters at the expense of their psychology.

[2] Arun Mukherjee notes that Anand speaks on behalf of the Untouchables in *Untouchable* to an English audience, and she roundly criticizes Anand for romanticizing the Untouchables in the process.

[3] Partha Chatterjee goes further in asserting that the problems facing post-independent India are, in large part, the result of adopting Nationalism which he sees as a Western creation and thus unsuited for an Eastern country.

[4] I am increasingly uncomfortable in using a historical designation, colonialism, derived from the political

practices of the day to describe a complex of behaviours and beliefs that occurs in many other contexts. My unease rises from the inaccuracy of the label since the conceptual and practical behaviours it names occur elsewhere and at other times not at all colonial. The fundamentalist political parties in India, since at least the middle 1980s, have had recourse to the same paradigm as the pre-independence nationalists of the sexually degenerate Indian as the cause of the country's problems. The difference is that the pre-independence nationalists called for sexual self-control; whereas, the fundamentalists urge Indian males, Hindus or Muslims depending on the particular community doing the fomenting, to not be emasculated effeminate eunuchs, to prove their manhood by aggressively assaulting, often killing, the other.

See David C. Gordon's *Self-Determination* for a study based on this model.

The hegemonic model ignores studies of European nations which show that they too are made up of disparate components, and that their apparent stability comes from the consolidation of the interests of various power groups and the great amounts of time and energy spent in shoring their dominant fictions of themselves.

An exemplary study of the hegemonic model is Partha Chatterjee's *Nationalist Thought*. Although I do not pursue the differential understanding of nationalism in India between Muslims and Hindus, the carnage of the partition riots that marked the separation of the sub-continent into two states underscores the ethnic basis of Indian nationalism. See M.R.T's *Nationalism in Conflict in India*, Delhi: Muslim League Printing Press, 1942, for a defence of the two-nation theory.

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