# COLONIAL INDIA IN CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

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# Introduction
## Children's Literature and Colonial India

> A naked white child kneeled by the side of the boat, and stooping over, must needs try to trail his hands in the river. It is a pretty thing to see how a child loves running water. I had fed all day, but still there was a little unfilled space within me. Still, it was for sport and not for food that I rose at the child's hand. They were so clear a mark that I did not even look when I closed; but they were so small that though my jaws rang true—I am sure of that—the child drew them up swiftly, unhurt. They must have passed between tooth and tooth—those small white hands.
>
> Rudyard Kipling, "The Undertakers," 249

> The two Englishmen hurried down from the bridge and across the sandbar, where they stood admiring the length of the Mugger. Then a native with an axe cut off the big head, and four men dragged it across the spit.
>
> "The last time I had my hand in a Mugger's mouth," said one of the Englishmen, stooping down (he was the man who had built the bridge), "it was when I was about five years old—coming down the river by boat to Monghyr. I was a Mutiny baby, as they called it."
>
> Rudyard Kipling, "The Undertakers," 254

In Rudyard Kipling's "The Undertakers" (1895), a *mugger* (crocodile) proudly recounts to a crane and a jackal how his reputation as "murderer, man-eater, and local fetish" (237) was established among the local population of an Indian village. However, the Mugger of Mugger-Ghaut acknowledges that his reputation as "the demon of the ford" (237) had taken a severe beating once a railway bridge had been built across the river by the British. He was unable to prey on people crossing the river by boat because most of them now used the gleaming new bridge. As the Mugger says: "Since the railway bridge was built my people at my village have ceased to love me; and that is breaking my heart" (238). The only other regret the Mugger has is the fact that as a young crocodile he had

allowed a small English boy, who was fleeing the horrors of the Indian Mutiny on a boat, to slip through his teeth. When asked by the crane, "What does the Mugger of Mugger-Ghaut need more?" he replies, "That little white child which I did not get . . . He was very small, but I have not forgotten. I am aged now, but before I die it is my desire to try one new thing" (252).

In "The Undertakers," not only does the little English boy escape the terrors of the Mutiny of 1857 and the jaws of a wily crocodile unscathed, but he also grows up to become a bridge-builder and ends up killing the Mugger of Mugger-Ghaut, the very same crocodile that he was in danger of being swallowed up by as a child. As he tells a fellow-Englishman while hunting down the Mugger: "He [the Mugger] took about fifteen of my best coolies while the bridge was building, and it's time he was put an end to" (253). The English child is, therefore, able not only to overcome and triumph over all the dangers that India holds out for him, but also to grow up and subdue all the hostile elements that had posed a threat to him. In this story, the English boy has the potential to thwart the crafty crocodile's greatest wish, bring modernity and progress to India, and save the unprotected natives of an Indian village from being devoured by a ravenous beast. Thus, this young child becomes a location of tremendous agency and the instrument by which destructive or harmful elements are wiped out in colonial India.

The image of the child's frail hand entering the wide-open mouth of a dangerous *mugger* and simultaneously evading its sharp teeth just in time is suggestive and powerful. The tale allegorically invokes the idea that the child's hand intervenes in and overcomes, as it were, a mutinous moment in colonial Indian history. The Mutiny—embodied in the prodigious, man-eating *mugger*—is unable to demolish the young English child. Instead, the "Mutiny baby" is able to save himself from being swallowed up and grows up to violently destroy a symbol of insurrection and insurgency. As Kipling writes: "One of them [the bullets] struck just behind the Mugger's neck, a hand's breath to the left of the backbone, while the other burst a little lower down, at the beginning of the tail. . . . the Mugger of Mugger-Ghaut was literally broken into three pieces. He hardly moved his head before the life went out of him" (253–54). Thus, instead of India annihilating the English colonist, the English colonist (in this case, a child grown up) is able to overcome and subdue India. The English child, embedded in a moment of historical trauma, successfully survives it to become a bridge-builder, a protector, and triumphant agent of British modernization and technological advancement in the colonies.

Looking to explore the links between children's literature and colonial Indian history, this book is about the intersections of British, Anglo-Indian, and Bengali children's books and defining historical moments in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century India. More specifically, I will examine children's texts in the context of five key historical events in colonial India: the missionary debates leading up to the Charter Act of 1813, the defeat of Tipu Sultan, the Mutiny of 1857, the birth of Indian nationalism, and the *Swadeshi* movement

resulting from the partition of Bengal in 1905. I will argue that just as the child's hand intervenes in and ultimately overcomes a traumatic historical moment, similarly, nineteenth-century British and Anglo-Indian children's literature and early twentieth-century Bengali children's literature attempt to represent, control, and evade momentous historical events in colonial India.[1] Thus, like the child's hand of the bridge-builder, these texts not only intervene in colonial history through the medium of childhood agency—whereby fictional children are shown to be able to effectively exert their will upon their environment—but also attempt to reconcile, and even enlist, young readers to the colonial or the anti-colonial enterprise in India. Further, by exploring the connections between colonial Indian history and children's literature, my aim will also be to examine the ways in which British, Anglo-Indian, and Bengali children's literature of empire not only engage in political activism, but also seek to empower children (both real and fictional) by celebrating them as active colonial and anti-colonial agents.

In *The Hidden Adult*, Perry Nodelman usefully defines the distinctive features of children's literature and presents us with an indisputable fact: that "its production and consumption—is so overwhelmingly occupied by adults" (207). Does this imply that children—both inside and outside the text—have been disempowered and silenced completely because of this undeniable feature of children's literature? As Nodelman himself warns, one must not underestimate or be dismissive of the maturity and sophistication displayed by real and imagined children. In fact, in the last three decades, our perceptions of childhood agency (or the ability of children to exercise their will and possess a voice) have shifted from notions of powerlessness attributed to fictional children and (real and intended) young readers—which have included comparisons with colonized 'others'—to exploring and understanding the ways in which they are able to assert agency and power despite being subjected to hegemonic historical forces and adult impulses. In her pioneering work, *The Case of Peter Pan: or, The Impossibility of Children's Fiction,* Jacqueline Rose has argued that children's fiction is rarely about children or for children, since it is constituted by adults and tends to reflect their social and sexual preoccupations, a view which is echoed by Karín Lesnik-Oberstein in *Children's Literature: Criticism and the Fictional Child*. Nodelman, in his seminal essay, "The Other: Orientalism, Colonialism, and Children's Literature," has suggested that adults, like colonizers, dominate over children and represent them in a manner that leaves them with no authority and power. In *Inventing the Child: Culture, Ideology, and the Story of Childhood*, Joseph Zornado has similarly suggested that the main agenda behind all (Western) children's stories is to make children submissive to adult authority. More recently, however, in *Reading Race: Aboriginality in Australian Children's Literature* and in *Unsettling Narratives: Postcolonial Readings of Children's Literature*, Clare Bradford has persuasively argued that children, when they are privileged by race (or whiteness), can hardly be regarded as powerless and submissive, and calls for

a more historicized and non-homogenous approach to analyzing the positions children assume both inside and outside the text. In *Artful Dodgers: Reconceiving the Golden Age of Children's Literature*, Marah Gubar has also convincingly made the case for nuanced and savvy fictional children and socially alert young readers who resist "unthinking compliance with adult desires" (43).

Although Bradford and Gubar have reframed the conversation about childhood agency, the former by arguing that children who are historically privileged by race are not subalternized, and cannot be regarded as colonized 'others,' there still continues to be little analysis of the ways in which colonized children, for instance, are able to exercise their will in and through children's literature. This book attempts to examine the notion of empowered childhoods from both sides—from the point of view of colonist children as well as colonized children—and suggests that British, Anglo-Indian, *and* Bengali children's literature of empire celebrate children and their ability to become transformative agents of change. In the texts I examine, children are shown to exhibit tremendous agency and transformative power over the politically volatile environment of colonial India. In fact, children seem to demonstrate a greater resilience in surviving culturally fraught occasions than adults, who are often rendered impotent and powerless in the face of historical trauma. In nineteenth-century British and Anglo-Indian texts, children seem to have a greater influence on their alien environment than adults, who are often debased or corrupted by their experience in the colonies. Further, these children are not only the spokespersons for British colonialism, but are also central to the process of consolidating power in India. They are active agents who are able to rescue the Orientalized Englishman and simultaneously attempt to redeem the vast population of India. Early twentieth-century Bengali children's literature, on the other hand, foregrounds the ability of subaltern Bengali children to successfully undermine all forms of colonial and official authority. Bengali children are, therefore, far more capable of subverting empire and challenging the laws of the land than Bengali adults, who are often enfeebled or emasculated by colonization. Thus, while English and Anglo-Indian children are deployed in these narratives as tools to both confute native insurgency and glorify imperial conquest, Bengali children are positioned as resistors who are able to sabotage Britain's imperial agenda in India.

In a century that simultaneously witnessed the rise of the British Raj and the development of children's literature, it is hardly surprising that children's texts were not only implicated in British colonialism, but also actively negotiating the idea of a British empire in India. In "The White Man's Burden" (1899), Kipling outlines the duty of a colonial nation towards its colonial subjects. He writes: "Take up the White Man's burden—/ . . . To serve your captives' need;" (221). In British and Anglo-Indian children's literature, the young English and Anglo-Indian child cheerfully bears "the White Man's burden" and is, arguably, more successful in his or her attempts to civilize the childlike natives of India than the grown up Englishman or Englishwoman

is. In a sense, one can argue that the little child in colonial narratives signifies all that is noble about England (a little country) and is designated to carry out the uplifting mission of enlightening the colonized population of a large country. One can certainly attempt an allegorical reading of why the child has the ability to effect a spiritual and attitudinal change in the colonized peoples of India. Just as the little one has the power to redeem misguided adults (especially if they are natives), a geographically diminutive (but morally superior) England has the power to rescue a big (but morally deficient) India. Thus the English and Anglo-Indian child in nineteenth-century British and Anglo-Indian children's literature represents an unprecedented location of power when he or she is deployed to do ideological work for the British imperial project in India. In fact, I argue that British and Anglo-Indian children's literature is burdened with the important mission of preparing children to do their duty and become ideal imperial citizens who work tirelessly for the greater good of an Indian empire. In my reading, Mary Sherwood (1775–1851), Barbara Hofland (1770–1844), Sara Jeanette Duncan (1861–1922), and Rudyard Kipling (1865–1936) write children's books that serve as preparatory guides on how to conduct oneself in India and propagate the notion that the British Raj is in dire need of youthful British intervention.

While it is acknowledged that nineteenth- and early twentieth-century children's literature has been deeply influenced by empire, this phenomenon has almost always been analyzed in the context of British children's texts, and children's books written by colonized non-British authors have yet to be examined in a similar context. This study seeks to open up the canon by looking at early twentieth-century Bengali children's texts of empire that not only draw literary inspiration from nineteenth-century British children's literature, but whose themes and discourses are equally shaped by the British Raj. In *The Location of Culture*, Homi Bhabha has famously argued that there was tremendous anxiety at the heart of the colonial project since there were subversive tools available to the colonized to unsettle, disrupt, and displace the seemingly watertight and impenetrable power structures. What is of particular interest is Bhabha's formulation of mimicry as a seditious gesture of colonial resistance. Bhabha argues that "mimicry emerges as one of the most elusive and effective strategies of colonial power and knowledge" (122) and that its effect on "the authority of colonial discourse is profound and disturbing" (123). According to Bhabha, the "reforming, civilizing mission is threatened by the displacing gaze of its disciplinary double" and, resultantly, mimicry becomes "at once [a] resemblance and [a] menace" (123). Thus, in Bhabha's opinion, the very act of appropriating the behavior and speech of the colonial masters causes a slippage or a gap as the process of replication is never complete or flawless, and this enables the colonized to subvert the master-discourse.

The menacing and subversive power of mimicry described by Bhabha can certainly be applied to Bengali children's literature that effectively mimics

British literary traditions in order to interrogate imperial rule. In fact, the earliest Bengali children's authors, Upendrakishore Ray (1863–1915) and Sukumar Ray (1887–1923), are products of a colonial educational policy conceptualized by Thomas Babington Macaulay in 1835 to preclude the issue of religious interference in India. Macaulay laid down the governing principles of an educational system that was to introduce a small group of Indians to Western thought and literature, and they in turn would become the link between the British and the masses they governed. These cultural middlemen were essentially going to learn and appropriate the language, habits, and customs of the British, and become the bridge between two vastly different cultures. What Macaulay had not accounted for, when he framed his "Minute" on Indian education, was that his "minutemen" (*Moor's Last Sigh* 165), to borrow Salman Rushdie's term, would not only end up questioning the foundations of British rule in India, but would also write children's literature with a nationalistic agenda which successfully combined British and Bengali literary traditions to mockingly debunk the colonial mission. Although there was a rich pre-existing oral tradition of storytelling and rhymes in Bengali, ultimately, it was the middle-class Western-educated intelligentsia of Bengal, inspired in part by British literature, who gave Bengali children their very own written literature. If British literature was, as Gauri Viswanathan has persuasively argued, a pedagogic mask of conquest used to culturally colonize Indians, ironically, it also paved the way for resistance and defiance.

In the last thirty years or so, there have been several important inquiries into the intersections of British imperialism and children's literature. Among the early scholarly explorations, *Imperialism and Juvenile Literature*, a collection of essays edited by Jeffrey Richards, makes excellent connections between imperialism and juvenile literature, and its goal is to illustrate how imperialism produced certain types of juvenile literature in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Britain. Further, to argue that the adventure tradition in juvenile literature was fuelled by voracious colonial expansion has been another point of entry for literary critics who make connections between colonialism and juvenile literature. The popular juvenile fiction written in the mid- to late nineteenth century in relation to imperialism has been discussed at some length, most significantly by Martin Green and Joseph Bristow. In *Dreams of Adventure, Deeds of Empire*, Green proposes that the colonies are an ideal space for adventure, and that adventure is predominantly a male-dominated exercise in virility and strength, and instigates imaginative identifications with real and imagined (fictional) adventure-heroes. In *Empire Boys: Adventures in a Man's World*, Bristow looks at late nineteenth-century writers of juvenile literature, and explores the ways in which they invent and perpetuate British masculinity of a kind that could only be the product of aggressive imperialism.

In spite of the pioneering scholarship mentioned above, Peter Hunt and Karen Sands rightly pointed out (in an article published in 2000) that one of the reasons why British children's literature is "undertheorized" in terms

of colonialism is that "the historical and cultural importance of the Empire to British . . . children's literature is taken as a truism by children's literature historians" and that the "extent and nature value" of how children's books "wittingly or unwittingly" reflected and diffused imperial views has yet to be thoroughly analyzed, "precisely because it is so apparently obvious" (40). In the last decade or so, however, this omission has been redressed by some exceptional studies in which British children's texts have been viewed through the lens of empire, most notably by Kathryn Castle, Mawuena Kossi Logan, M. Daphne Kutzer, Rashna B. Singh, Troy Boone, and Karen Sands-O'Connor. Castle focuses on images of Indians, Africans, and Chinese in history textbooks and children's periodicals in the period before and after World War I in order to explore how notions of race and nationalism became integral to the process of British self-identification. Through a study of G. A. Henty's fiction, Logan examines the role of nineteenth-century literature both in perpetuating African stereotypes (which continue to circulate even today) and in indoctrinating young adults in imperialist ideologies. Kutzer examines canonical British children's books from the late nineteenth century to the beginnings of World War II for the ways in which they encouraged children to uncritically accept the values that sustained the British Empire. Singh explores how British children's literature builds 'character' and becomes an instrument of early indoctrination into the hegemonic discourses of British colonialism, while also foraying into imperialism in the context of American literature and film for children. Boone focuses on representations of English working-class children in Victorian and Edwardian children's literature, and examines how this body of literature sought to recruit working-class children for the British imperial project. Most recently, Sands-O'Connor looks at the history of contact between Britain and the West Indies, and focuses on representations of West Indian people and culture in British children's literature.

Although these interventions in the field of children's literature and imperialism have been extremely significant and timely, with a few exceptions, imperialism has been interpreted rather loosely as 'Britain's conquest of the colonies,' and these critical studies have focused almost exclusively on British children's literature.[2] The varied and checkered history of colonial (and later imperial) expansion in different regions of the globe continues to be largely undocumented, particularly in the context of children's texts written by non-British authors.[3] In fact, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's definition of a subaltern as underrepresented, marginalized, and unspoken for can be used to characterize nineteenth-century Anglo-Indian and early twentieth-century Bengali children's literature, especially in light of its links to colonial Indian history. This study, then, is the first to suggest that British, Anglo-Indian, *and* Bengali children's literature's dense connections to the political, military, and social history of India in the nineteenth and early twentieth century is a previously unexplored and rich area of inquiry. It is my intention to look at literary representations of certain historical figures and events in these texts in an

attempt to relate textual analysis to social and political forces that propelled and complicated the colonial project in India. I propose that a closer reading of a substantial body of texts that are written predominantly for children and adolescents will reveal that their themes not only intersect, but also grapple overtly with the social, political, and military history of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century India. In other words, the materiality and disruptive potential of actual wars, debates, laws, and insurgencies in the colonies that are inevitably suppressed in the celebratory narratives of the colonial project, erupt into these texts in interesting and unexpected ways. There is not only a surprisingly long and rich tradition of political activism in these children's texts, but they also draw on a lively cast of characters from colonial Indian history which include missionaries, mutineers, bogeymen, mimic men, and rule breakers.

From the mid-eighteenth century onward, as the Mughal Empire spiraled into a decline, the East India Company became a major political player in India as it began to consolidate its position and authority by interfering in the local affairs of regional powers, particularly in the east and south. The desire for territorial possessions—largely spurred on by the Company's trading interests—resulted in almost all of India being under its control by 1857, the year of the Indian Mutiny. The first hundred years of Company rule in India have been often characterized by historians as a phenomenon that just fell into place, starting with J.R. Seeley, who famously argued that Britain's empire in India was gained in a fit of absent-mindedness, to Ronald Hyam's more recent claim that there was no conscious or consistent policy that drove the conquest of India. In the last three decades or so, however, there has been a greater emphasis by Indian historians such as Ranajit Guha on the idea that the colonization of India was fraught with anxiety and that the British—especially those who actually lived in India—were deeply conscious of the fragility of empire.[4] Thus, historical events such as the fierce resistance put up by Tipu Sultan during the Anglo-Mysore Wars in the closing years of the eighteenth century, Warren Hastings's bizarre saga of corruption and greed in India, and the early missionary attempts to Christianize India (despite resistance from the East India Company and Indians) contributed greatly to the feeling of insecurity experienced by the British. These anxieties, I argue, filter into early nineteenth-century British and Anglo-Indian children's texts written by Sherwood and Hofland. The Mutiny of 1857—a crucial moment in colonial history that ended Company rule in India by handing over control to the British Crown—and the burgeoning Indian national movement also become key themes in children's literature written by Duncan and Kipling in the closing years of the nineteenth century. As the twentieth century dawned, the national movement entered an increasingly anti-colonial phase due to 'divide and rule' policies, such as the partition of Bengal in 1905, adopted by the British Raj. The *Swadeshi* (of our country) movement—largely a reaction to the partition—not only inspired Bengalis to boycott British goods and

institutions, but also ignited a sense of pride in the local and the home-made. Bengali children's literature written by the Rays in the first two decades of the twentieth century can clearly be traced back to this moment of patriotic fervor and colonial resistance.

While it is well documented that a large number of children's texts written in the nineteenth and early twentieth century focus on Britain's colonial endeavors, scholars of children's literature have yet to explore just how many of these children's texts touch on a major historical crisis in colonial India. In fact, I propose that there is a conversation between British, Anglo-Indian, and Bengali children's literature of empire and particular historical moments in the Indian subcontinent. And, while the British and Anglo-Indian texts are written to consolidate empire against the threat of native resistance at a particular historical moment, the Bengali texts are written to assert the impermanence and absurdness of the oppressive colonial machinery. In the first chapter of this book, I examine how Sherwood's *The History of Little Henry and His Bearer* (1814) responds to the debates over missionary activity in India in the early part of the nineteenth century. The English child is faced with the threat of paganism in *Little Henry*, and the conversion debates that threatened to fracture colonial authority in Bengal circulate in the text in interesting and unexpected ways. In chapter two, I show how Hofland's *The Captives in India; a tale* (1834) responds to the fact of Indian resistance as the memory of the colonial encounter with Tipu Sultan of Mysore is invoked, and the narrative demonizes him as a fearful resistor and sexually potent Oriental tyrant. In *Captives in India*, a pair of English cousins is not only placed in captivity by Tipu's agents, but also has to resist the native ruler's potential to mentally and physically undermine their definition of themselves as British subjects. In chapter three, I argue that Duncan's *The Story of Sonny Sahib* (1894) responds to the post-Mutiny unease experienced by the British in India as it reconstructs the events of the Revolt of 1857. Duncan narrates the potency of armed resistance and insurgency during the Mutiny of 1857, and presents the Anglo-Indian child as the ideal post-Mutiny survivor. In chapter four, I discuss how Kipling's *The Jungle Books* (1894 and 1895) responds to the rise of Indian nationalism, and how Kipling's desire to legislate all aspects of jungle life in the Mowgli stories can be traced back to his rejection of the Indian National Congress. In *The Jungle Books*, there is a desire to curb the potency of native activism as the animals that are most vocal and threatening to the law of the jungle and to the Anglo-Indian child are ruthlessly ignored or suppressed. In chapter five, I turn to Bengali texts of response and resistance: I analyze how U. Ray's *Tuntunir Boi* [*Tuntuni's Book*] (1910) and *Goopy Gyne Bagha Byne* (1914), and S. Ray's *Ha-Ja-Ba-Ra-La* [*A Topsy-Turvy Tale*] (1922) and *Abol Tabol* [*Rhymes Without Reason*] (1923) are shaped by the *Swadeshi* movement which was set in motion by the partition of Bengal in 1905. The unpopular attempt by Lord Curzon, viceroy of India from 1898 to 1905, to rearrange the political landscape of colonial Bengal resulted in

the deeply patriotic and defiantly anti-colonial *swadeshi* phase of the national movement that, I propose, provided the right milieu for Bengali children's literature to thrive. While *Goopy Gyne Bagha Byne* foregrounds the successes of two ordinary peasant boys who are able to (with humor and magical assistance) thwart the territorial ambitions of an authoritarian king, *Tuntunir Boi* presents us with characters such as Tuntuni, a clever little tailorbird, who also displays the ability to outwit a powerful king. S. Ray's *Abol Tabol* and *Ha-Ja-Ba-Ra-La*, inspired in part by Lewis Carroll's *Alice* books, caricature adult behavior and parody the laws of the land laid down by the British.

This book, then, attempts to analyze nineteenth-century British and Anglo-Indian children's literature as transparently pro-empire glorifications of British and Anglo-Indian children who are presented as active participants in the colonial enterprise, even as it seeks to understand the ways in which early twentieth-century Bengali children's literature resists empire by celebrating Bengali children who are able to subvert colonial authority. Not surprisingly, in British and Anglo-Indian children's literature—ostensibly simple tales of British bravery, adventure, heroism, charity, and chastity—persistent threats to British authority in India are invoked and demonized in an attempt to exorcise and sublimate their disruptive and anarchic potential. The reason for this can be traced back to the fact that the British Empire in India was consistently conceptualized as a youthful endeavor in the nineteenth century. On December 1, 1783, Edmund Burke delivered a speech in the British Parliament (in response to Fox's East India Bill) in which he noted the juvenile nature of British imperialism:

> Young men (boys almost) govern there [India], without society and without sympathy with the natives. They have no more social habits with the people than if they still resided in England—-nor, indeed, any species of intercourse, but that which is necessary to make a sudden fortune, with a view to a remote settlement. Animated with all the avarice of age and all the impetuosity of youth, they roll in one after another, wave after wave; and there is nothing before the eyes of the natives but an endless, hopeless prospect of new flights of birds of prey and passage, with appetites continually renewing for a food that is continually wasting. (*Portable Edmund Burke* 371–72)

In his opinion, the colonial project in India was being mismanaged by the young boys who joined the East India Company with the sole aim of amassing personal wealth. He went on to chastise them for their reckless behavior: "as the English youth in India drink the intoxicating draught of authority and dominion before their heads are able to bear it, and as they are full grown in fortune long before they are ripe in principle, neither Nature nor reason have any opportunity to exert themselves for the remedy of the excesses of their premature power" (*Portable Edmund Burke* 372). Although Burke's remarks are

derogatory, he is one of the earliest to characterize Britain's colonial endeavors in India terms of youth. This realization—that it was the youth of Britain who was going to mould Britain's empire in India—resulted, as I will argue, in a steady stream of children's texts in the nineteenth century seeking to represent colonial Indian history to young readers (and future rulers of India) in a manner which made it both controllable and accessible to them.

Furthermore, in *The Illusion of Permanence: British Imperialism in India*, Francis Hutchins argues that the Mutiny of 1857 was instrumental in creating a "new temper" (x) in colonial India. It is his contention that the "British response to the Mutiny gave a definite shape to Imperial attitudes" (Hutchins 79), which were remarkably different from attitudes displayed by the British in India in the first part of the nineteenth century. Thus, there is a shift in the way the British conceptualized their role and presence in India after the Mutiny. Prior to the Mutiny, the colonial enterprise was less codified and somewhat influenced by the belief that India was a despotic land in need of spiritual redemption. However, these attitudes changed after 1857 as the civilizing mission became intimately bound with technology, law, science, and a systematized consolidation of imperial power.[5] I propose that the British and Anglo-Indian children's texts reflect the two distinct moods in Britain's colonial enterprise in India in the nineteenth century. Sherwood and Hofland (writing before 1857) use the tropes of conversion and captivity as a means of awakening children to the dangers of India, whereas Duncan and Kipling shift the emphasis to martial prowess, discipline, adaptability, mental agility, and empirical knowledge as defining qualities in British and Anglo-Indian children.

Not surprisingly, far from questioning British rule in India, British and Anglo-Indian children's literature attempts to consolidate imperial authority in a direct and candid manner. All subversive elements in the text are, therefore, represented as dangerous and undesirable. Thus, as a genre, British and Anglo-Indian children's literature is conservative as it attempts to contain moments of historical and cultural trauma for the British in India. Events like the early nineteenth-century conversion debates leading up to the Charter Act of 1813, British defeats in the Anglo-Mysore wars, the Mutiny of 1857, and the rise of the Indian national movement in the late nineteenth century are sublimated and made more controllable in these narratives. As Karen Coats suggests: "The only way we come to make sense of the world is through the stories we are told. They pattern the world we have fallen into, effectively replacing its terrors and inconsistencies with structured images that assure us of its manageability. And in the process of structuring the world, stories structure us as beings in that world" (1). Thus, nineteenth-century British and Anglo-Indian children's literature frames, crystallizes, and simultaneously diffuses the historical trauma that is the inevitable outcome of British imperial aspirations in India. In the process it glorifies childhood agency and the English and Anglo-Indian child's ability to survive and overcome colonial insurrection.

Interestingly, early nineteenth-century women writers like Sherwood and Hofland, who played a significant role in introducing young readers to Britain's fledgling empire, have been largely overlooked in critical studies. While the efforts of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century children's authors, particularly male authors like Kipling, Rider Haggard, and Henty, in indoctrinating imperial ideologies in their youthful readers have received a great deal of critical attention, it is my contention that early children's authors like Sherwood and Hofland were equally successful in familiarizing their young readers with Britain's colonial concerns. It is only recently that the contributions of British and Anglo-Indian women to colonial Indian society have been seen in a positive light. In *In Their Own Words,* Rosemary Raza has persuasively demonstrated that, contrary to the widely held view that women were initially a hindrance to British rule in India, there were a significant number of British and Anglo-Indian women who lived in India and made important literary and social contributions to the colonial project in the subcontinent. It is in this spirit that my analysis of early nineteenth-century women's texts for children will attempt to redress the preoccupation with male authors and boys' adventure stories that have largely informed discussions of juvenility in the context of colonial India.

If British and Anglo-Indian children are spurred on by pro-empire literature to become ideal colonists, one can hardly underestimate the impact of anti-colonial Bengali children's literature on Bengali children. In the last three decades, postcolonial scholarship spearheaded by Bhabha, Guha, Dipesh Chakrabarty and others has changed our perceptions of Britain's empire by examining just how susceptible it was to Indian resistance. In this book, I propose that early twentieth-century Bengali children's literature is an excellent example of the power of Indian defiance—emerging from the most subaltern of sources—to counter colonial rule. Thus, Bengali children's texts make an important ideological contribution towards dismantling the colonial project. By casting the Bengali child as the designated protagonist who was able to unsettle colonial structures of power and authority, Bengali children's authors were able to free their young readers, at least temporarily, from the shackles of colonial rule. In *Abol Tabol*, for instance, S. Ray presents us with ravenous young children who are able to devour, as it were, British rule. If, by the early twentieth century, Indian nationalists were increasingly willing to challenge British rule with agitation, boycotts, picketing, and other acts of civil disobedience, it can be argued that the early Bengali children's authors like U. Ray and S. Ray contributed substantially towards fanning these flames of nationalism, particularly in their young readers.

To sum up, for all the attention colonial India has received in studies about empire, and for all the emphasis on the youthful nature of Britain's colonial enterprise and the importance of juvenile literature in fuelling imperial dreams, there has been little attempt to analyze the significance of colonial

India in the context of children's literature. This book, then, is an attempt to begin a dialogue between children's literature and colonial Indian history, a topic that has gone unnoticed by scholars of children's literature and colonial and postcolonial studies.