The Resident Outsider: The Journal and Letters of Nalini Das

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Across various cultures of the world, with the development of technology in the mode of transportation, the culture of travel also changed and developed. Out of these transformations emerged various new categories of travellers as well—the tourist, for instance, being one of them. In India, the emergence of this category is linked primarily with the advent of the railways and the proliferation of travel as a result of it.

Each category of travellers—a pilgrim, a merchant, a tourist—is created, conditioned, and developed at the intersections of class, caste, gender, religion, nationality, and language to name only a few elements. While we may choose to focus on any one at a time, these categories are certainly not mutually exclusive. Rather, they are overlapping lines, creating new intersections and new perspectives through which to view the broader category of the traveller.

This article intends to investigate one such category which it will call the 'resident outsider'—a temporary inhabitant of a foreign land—occupying a twilight zone between the inside and out. To illustrate this category, this article has chosen the journal and letters of Nalini Das.[1] Das's journal contains an account of her voyage to England. The letters, written to her husband back home in Calcutta, narrate her experiences in England and various other parts of Europe to which she travelled and/or stayed.

This paper intends to situate Nalini Das within the larger framework of Hindu/Brahmo women's travel and travel writing in late nineteenth and twentieth century Bengal while keeping in mind the peculiar socio-political conditions that shaped their journeys and simultaneous or subsequent literary outputs regarding the same. The

primary focus of this article is to trace the development of the way in which women inscribe themselves into a wider world through their travels and travel writing.

BACKGROUND: NINETEENTH CENTURY

The history of voyages undertaken by Bengali *bhadramahilas* is now well-documented.[2] It begins with Rajkumari Banerji in 1871 who sailed to England with her husband and remained there for a number of years, even giving birth to her son Albion there.[3] Their families were not supportive of their journey abroad, reflecting the contemporary Hindu orthodox mindset that equated crossing the *kalapani* (literally 'black waters', referring to the sea) to a sort of fall from grace—in this case, the honour of their caste.[4]

About a decade after Rajkumari, Krishnabhabini Das and her husband faced similar ostracisation for travelling to England. While Rajkumari became a mother on British soil, Krishnabhabini was leaving behind a six year old daughter, who would be married off by the time she returned from her foreign sojourn eight years later. In fact, not only would Krishnabhabini bear the brunt of social ostracism, her daughter, feeling a sense of abandonment, would refuse to see her before she died an untimely death.[5]

For Rajkumari, who left no memoir or travelogue, and Krishnabhabini, who published her travelogue anonymously while she was still in England, motherhood seems to be inextricably linked to their journeys.

Most of the women who travelled to England in the nineteenth century were accompanied by their husbands. This probably would have been a rare—and possibly for many of these women, the first—instance of travelling such a long distance with their husbands alone. In the culture of travel, even in the second half of the nineteenth century, travelling for enjoyment would mean travelling with the entire family—a trend that would continue for years to come and

almost become synonymous with the image of the Bengali tourist.

Among those who did travel alone was Jnanadanandini Devi. In 1879 she boarded a ship to England with her children, while she was heavily pregnant, to visit her husband Satyendranath Tagore. Others who travelled to Europe in the nineteenth century include Swarnalata Ghosh, Hemangini Devi, Abala Basu, Kadambini Ganguly, Jamini Sen among others.[6]

The reasons for their journeys are quite varied. Rajkumari and Sasipada were invited to visit England by Mary Carpenter.[7] Krishnabhabini's husband Debendranath Das had gone to England for higher education and to appear for the ICS examination. His wife had stayed at home in India. Debendranath returned to India, but soon afterwards decided to move back to England, this time, with his wife.[8] Krishnabhabini, who was literate and educated herself, took an active interest in women's education and the position of women in British society. Through her book, she was "determined to enlighten her Bengali sisters", although in publishing her book anonymously, it appears that she is still apprehensive regarding her authority to do so.[9]

Kadambini Ganguly and Jamini Sen had gone to England for higher education. Kadambini Ganguly had enrolled at the Edinburgh Medical College in Scotland in 1893. Jamini Sen also went to study medicine, and together they constitute the very small and certainly elite group of young women who had, through far greater effort and overcoming far more obstacles than their male counterparts, won the opportunity to travel abroad to pursue higher education.[10] When, in the 1940s, Nalini Das makes her way to England with a group of other women on a fellowship provided by the Government, the situation seems to have improved.

The conclusion to be drawn from this brief survey is that from available accounts, it appears that Europe in general or England in particular had not yet emerged as a tourist destination, even for the more affluent sections of Bengali society. The most common

occurrence was for the men to go abroad to either sit for the Civil Service Examination or to study Law and they took their wives along with them. Kadambini and Jamini are certainly exceptions that only prove the rule at this stage.

Interestingly enough, even while public debates raged in Bengal regarding the voyage across the dreaded *kalapani*, women remained largely absent from that discourse even as subjects, let alone as commentators.[11] The primary fear surrounding the sea voyage was the free inter-mingling of various castes aboard the vessel—a space where such hierarchical categories would temporarily have to be suspended. Hindu women were ascribed a caste at birth based on the caste of their father. A woman's body would often have to bear the burden of preserving caste honour. However, she was not a true Brahmin. It was a privilege that could only be accorded to those who had attained *dwijatva*—reserved exclusively for men, the only bearers of the sacred thread. A woman's caste depended upon the men who were endowed with her responsibility—the father and then the husband. Thus, it is not so much the question of invisibility of women travellers, although that is a factor, but also the invisibility of women within the very structures of Brahminical patriarchy that removed them from this public discourse on travel.

And yet they travelled.

Abala Basu, for instance, was a prolific traveller. With her husband, the scientist Jagadish Chandra Basu, she had not only travelled extensively within India, but had also been abroad on numerous occasions including England, Italy, America, and Japan. Her first voyage to England was with her husband in 1896. She published an account of her travels in a series of short articles in the Bengali juvenile periodical *Mukul*.[12]

NALINI DAS

Nalini Das was born in 1916 to Punyalata and Arun Nath

Chakrabarti. Her mother was the daughter of Upendrakishore Raychaudhuri. She was educated at Brahmo Balika Bidyalay and St. John's Diocesan School in Calcutta and later went on to study at Scottish Church College for her Bachelor's Degree and at the University of Calcutta for her Master's. She was the first in her class in both her undergraduate and postgraduate examinations. Nalini Das then embarked on a career of teaching which eventually led to her trip to England in 1945. The Bengal government wanted to establish a Teachers' Training College. With this aim in mind, they provided scholarships to some women to receive training in England. Nalini Das was a part of that group. The journal to be discussed in this article describes this voyage to England. As a part of their training programme, the author and her fellow students visited other countries in Europe as well including France and Switzerland. From these places, and from England while she lived there, the author wrote letters to her husband—Ashokananda Das—who was the younger brother of the renowned Bengali poet Jibanananda Das. These letters were first published posthumously in *Sandesh*—the Bengali juvenile periodical established by Upendrakishore, almost fifty years after they were written, between 1993 and 1997. It is curious that letters addressed to her husband found their place in a periodical for children, albeit in an edited form.[13]

Despite its popularity ever since it began to be published, the path of this periodical was not without its ups and downs. Upendrakishore passed away soon after *Sandesh* began publication in 1913 and the editorial mantle was taken up by his son Sukumar Ray. The periodical continued to be published without interruption till 1925. After a four year hiatus, it was revived in 1929, only to be discontinued again in 1934.

It was after almost thirty years that the periodical was revived under Satyajit Ray in 1961. From the 1960s, Nalini Das was involved with the periodical as an editor—an association that was to continue until her death in 1993.[14]

Nalini Das herself, of course, was a prolific children's author, following in the footsteps of her maternal family. She is most remembered as the creator of 'Goyenda Gondalu'—an all girls' group of young detectives. Many of her short stories were published in *Sandesh*.

The travelogue as a literary genre is interesting for the sense of immediacy it often seeks to invoke. In the second half of the nineteenth century, when the culture of travelling for leisure was still at a nascent stage, the travelogue could provide for its readers a sense of 'being there' without moving. As works intending to record India's glorious past, the sense of being present was an act of witnessing history, thus claiming historical accuracy based on direct observation or experience.[15] In other words, it sought to provide the readers with an experience they could not have, and therefore, was filled in 'thick description' with details about the journey as well as the landscape. This was especially true of journeys abroad, for even if the reader, young or old, had an opportunity to travel to other parts of India, especially with the advent of the railways, a trip to Europe in general or England in particular would be unaffordable for most. There is also a sense often in these travelogues of the experience being unique even in the life of the traveller (with certain privileged exceptions such as Abala Basu perhaps). Therefore, it may be argued, that recording the minutiae of the journey and subsequent travels was as much a record for them as it was for the absent readers. The journal and letters of Nalini Das display both tendencies of documentation. That she could take photographs would have added another dimension to the reader(s) of her letters.[16]

THE JOURNEY

Nalini Das's journal traces her journey from Bombay to Liverpool in 1945—a voyage of twenty days.

Travel accounts from the late nineteenth century and beyond began typically with a description of the voyage across the sea. And this began with a description of the ship. Once the prohibition on Hindu sea voyages was finally abolished in 1894, "the ship indeed became the harbinger of a new age and vehicle for transition from 'medievalism' to 'modernity'."[17]

In 1945, the ship Nalini Das had boarded would have followed the well-known route to England from Bombay—passing Ceylon, Aden, the Red Sea, crossing the Suez Canal, and reaching Europe. Like her predecessors, Nalini Das describes her first sight of the ship and the general hustle and bustle that surrounds the port.

> We had no idea that travelling on a ship was such a great matter! A few thousand people have gathered below a shed with their luggage. It is as hot as it is crowded. And equally chaotic. No one tells you what to do step by step. One has to stand in one queue after another! Once they say, medical examin [sic], or they ask for the passport, or they ask for the cabin number. Thomas Cook almost stopped me from going abroad. They had misplaced two of my big suitcases and one of Ranu's![18]

An initial sense of chaos gives way to a sense of discipline aboard the ship—a quality associated with the British race venerated by those who had sailed before her. Das writes almost grudgingly of their efficiency, "Their organization must be praised. We can barely feel the presence of so many persons. Everything functions like clockwork."[19]

WOMEN AND THE WORLD

As has been previously mentioned, the author was travelling to England to receive teacher's training with a group of women

who had all received the same scholarship. While it is not clear exactly how many women were a part of this group, she refers on numerous occasions to one Bachchu *di* (Amita Dutta), Layla (Khan), Rabeya, and Ranu. These women were her companions during her travels in England and the Continent as well. In this context, Nalini Das's travelogue stands apart from the accounts of her predecessors, even those who travelled, as she did, for the purpose of educational training. The world of associations Nalini Das introduced her readers to, is a world populated by women. This has important implications in understanding the culture of travel at this time, the position of women within it and their experience of travelling.

The very fact of the presence of so many women within this world that Das creates is indicative of a changing culture of travel in the twentieth century which sees more women in it. This is certainly not to suggest, and throughout this article the contrary has been argued, that women did not travel before. Women from Bengal were travelling around India and to foreign lands even though their journeys often remained uncharted and undocumented. However, the numbers would certainly have increased in the twentieth century, especially of women travelling alone.

Aboard the ship, for instance, Das meets Devaki Pannikar and Santosh Kashyap. In Das's words:

> On the bunk below me is Devaki Pannikar—a South Indian girl, typical Indian style, her face is quite sweet. She is on her way to Oxford to study Philosophy, Economics, and Politics. Santosh Kashyap—Kashmiri, tall, slim, she has bright, intelligent features. The girl has brains—she's going to study journalism.
>
> Miss Biswas, Benjamin et al. five Indians are on their way to study nursing.[20]

Travel accounts by women have been read as explorations of the Self beyond the domestic world. For Krishnabhabini, who published her work anonymously, it was important perhaps to posit herself as a 'Bengali Lady' in the title of her work in order to connect more closely to her 'Bengali sisters' back home whom she addresses specifically in the Prelude to her work,

> My female readers! I was also cloistered in a house like you; I had no relationship with my country or the world. [. . .] Maybe like me, many of you are curious to know about England and to fulfill that desire I am dedicating this book, *A Bengali Lady in England*, to you.[21]

The question, then, is not only of self-exploration, but of creating a larger community of women, bringing them into focus even while they remain 'invisible'—"cloistered in a house". By addressing her female readers (one wonders how many of Krishnabhabini's 'Bengali sisters' had read her work when it was first published), Krishnabhabini is able to inscribe them into a larger world.

Krishnabhabini's more explicit concern is the condition of women and how it is to be improved. In a chapter titled 'English Lady', Krishnabhabini describes the labour, leisure, appearance, and lifestyle of English women, occasionally drawing parallels with Indian Hindu women back home. The description is not uncritical, but praise and focus remain on the virtues of independence and the drawbacks of the Indian male who is too weak to lead Indian women to the path of liberation gradually. Michael Fischer, in his Foreword to Somdatta Mondal's translation of Krishnabhabini's work has pointed out that of the two central dilemmas the text grapples with, one is how Krishnabhabini and her compatriots can preserve their own culture and values while simultaneously being Anglicised.[22] This

chapter ends with a verse that addresses the 'sisters of Bengal' and reflects some of this dilemma. Krishnabhabini writes:

XIII

I've cut off the shackles, even then sister
I cannot feel happiness without you
So I see your tearful and desolate figure
Day in and out.

XIV

If you can taste a little happiness
Of independence in your captive lives
You will not want to stay in this prison
Or cover your face with a veil.

XV

It is true there's no shame to cover our faces
It's only our heart's delusion.
So I say, rise up quickly again
Don't spend time in false fear.[23]

Half a decade later, Durgabati's "rationalised, comparative assessment of the condition of women in Bengal and in England displays her critique of Euro-centric perceptions through an analysis of alternative cultural traditions."[24]

If Krishnabhabini and Durgabati's works, separated by half a decade, are placed alongside each other, there are certain developments we shall be able to trace which will be relevant to our reading of Das's journal and letters as well. In doing so, this article does not seek to address the relationship between travel and nationalism in the colonial context. It suffices to say here that within the discourse of nationalism, the changing role of women, their active participation in the public world and public discourse was reflected in their accounts of travel.

Durgabati Ghosh was born circa 1905. Her father was the renowned psychoanalyst Girindrashekhar Basu. She travelled to England and parts of Europe in 1932 with her husband. *Paschimjatriki*—her travelogue—was published as a book in 1936. Durgabati Ghosh's journey to Europe appears to be a leisure trip. She is travelling with her husband, following an itinerary designed by Thomas Cook.[25]

Durgabati, like Krishnabhabini before her, seems to be standing at a distance when she describes the life of the English women she witnesses. Krishnabhabini is aware that her sartorial choices may be looked upon with scorn and defends herself against her adoption of English customs:

> It has been several months since I came to England. I have started eating and dressing like the English; maybe, if a native person saw me now, he would make fun of me as a 'pucca memsahib' [...] But again, we have to see that just changing external clothes and other things does not change the mind; wearing foreign clothes does not mean you have lost all love for your country.[26]

Thus, even though she has spent a considerable time in England, Krishnabhabini projects herself as someone who is still on the outside, whatever her external appearances may suggest. Her chapter on the English Lady too places her as someone physically on the outside, looking in to the lives of 'Others', while using a comparative lens.

It has been pointed out that a peculiarity of women's accounts of travel is the inversion of the traveller's gaze.[27] Even as they gaze at the world around them, they become objects of the world's gaze. Durgabati Ghosh seems to be quite disgruntled with the attention she receives in Italy:

> One evening when we sat down for dinner, I suddenly noticed an Italian lady calling me. At first I thought that I had fallen

> victim to another uncivilised woman and there were reasons behind this belief. There have been several instances in the streets of Italy when women called me and when I went closer, they made uncouth gestures with their hands. But this lady was not of that kind [. . .] From my sari she had recognised me as an Indian lady . . .[28]

Nalini Das and her companions also become subjects of interest on the streets of Paris. Instead of being annoyed, she appears to have found it amusing:

> A really funny thing happened when all of us went to the opera together. It's difficult to say if the people paid more attention to us or to the opera. Of course, when they see us all roaming around in our saris, people of all countries stare at us. [. . .] Wherever we go, [in Paris] a crowd gathers on the street. They look at us and say, 'What lovely clothes,' and call to others to come and look. There's no end to the number of people who photographed us. Some ask for permission, some don't. An artist even made Bachchu di sit for a portrait, then he made a sketch of Bani. Another photographed Irene next to a Greek statue. It's not as though they gape at us. They look at our clothes with the gaze of an artist.[29]

Durgabati posits herself in a location similar to Krishnabhabini's and uses the tool of comparison. She seems to be more acutely aware, as Gupta has pointed out, of cultural differences that make it difficult and perhaps even unrealistic for Indian women to adopt the British lifestyle. She writes,

> People who returned to India after staying in England often commented that the English women were much more hard

> working than our women at home. [...] but once I was here I realised that English women, if they were to work like us, they would never have been able to compete with us.[30]

Why?

The traditional Indian meal involved grinding spices, chopping vegetables; it mandated washing hands if someone touched meat or fish or eggs. In a joint family, meals were prepared according to the convenience of others. In England, the convenience of the person cooking was of primary importance. Such inherent differences, notes Durgabati, makes the adoption of English customs almost impossible in an Indian (Hindu) context.[31] She notes another fundamental difference between the two cultures,

> Both men and women here understand the need for taking care of their health and so work as well as enjoy themselves accordingly. How many people in our country have such a comprehensive understanding?[32]

In Nalini Das, we notice a change in the position of the observer. Her location is what this article has called the location of the 'resident outsider'. Unlike Krishnabhabini and Durgabati, who are clearly standing at a distance, Nalini Das, in forging new friendships in foreign lands, often situates herself within this world, and yet, must also always be outside of it—a position she herself also seems to be aware of. This is reflected in her interactions with her friend Polly Ann Garner, affectionately referred to as 'Paglee' (a mad woman).

The first mention of Polly is in a letter dated 27, December, 1945. Das writes,

> The girls from the college have sent so many postcards that my mantelpiece is quite full. Some have sent presents. Paglee

> has sent a large parcel. Apples from the tree, home-made cake, sweets, and pie—various kinds of lucky charms and knickknacks (40).

Das had arrived in England in October. It seems as though she has already struck up a close friendship with Polly within two months. We also get a glimpse of life in a country home in the letter Das writes from Gosberton, Spalding dated 24 February, 1946.

> Gosberton is a small village. But it cannot be compared to the villages of our country. Here they have electricity, underground drain, paved roads—everything. Their house is small but beautiful, clean, the bathroom and kitchen are tiled and sparkling. They have no servants. They only have farm-hands—domestic chores are all performed by the mistress of the house, the girls also help out. But they're not letting us do anything at all.[33]

Das uses no tools of comparison here with regards to the life led by the women of the household. When she does, it is in context of the landscape and the abject condition of the working classes. In her letters, the life of young English women—working, travelling, or spending time in leisure—is linked in a way to her own life abroad. They are a part of her life as she is of theirs.

In Bude, she befriends Miss Simpson, a missionary woman who is their landlady.

> There's no end to what she did for us. The white-haired old woman waked around with us and showed us all the sights. She lives in Digo. Because she couldn't invite us home, she treated us to coffee in a café.[34]

In her travels in the Continent, Das mentions befriending a Swiss

girl named Helen, a Czechoslav [sic] girl, and a Polish woman named Madame Janowska.[35]

Most importantly, however, Das offers her unintended readers the story of travelling with women. In the works of Krishnabhabini, Abala Basu, Durgabati Ghosh, and many others, even though they are travelling with someone else, and even though they use a collective pronoun in Bengali, the sense they convey is of a singularity. Nalini Das's letters possibly present to us the beginnings of a kind of travel writing that takes the collective experience into account. Unintended for publication, the letters are spontaneous even after surviving the editor's pen. Thus, they express not only the joy of travelling together, but also the pain—often making for humorous moments, very often generated at the cost of the author's patience.

Seeing the small rooms, kerosene lamps, and no attached bath at the Youth Hostel in Exeter, Layla, the author's companion, was quite annoyed. "She was grumbling so much," writes Das, "that we almost had a quarrel!"[36]

In a letter from Bude dated 9 April, 1946, the author describes an "amusing" incident that took place while they were changing trains.

> I was pulling Layla's gigantic suitcase. Suddenly, its handle remained in my grasp and the box landed on the other side. I don't know what we'll do if it can't be fixed at Bude. They go on tours with large tins of 'Cow and Gate', 'Ovaltine', 'Radio Malt'. In huge boxes they have threads and needles, toiletries and other make-up. Yet I had repeatedly said to them that we won't get someone to carry our luggage everywhere—be prepared to carry your own luggage. Don't bring too many things.[37]

Das's letters also introduce us to a world of travel where small trips are spent in youth hostels and cheap guest houses—'budget tours'—to use a more modern phrase.

The letters show that Das and her companions travelled quite prolifically. Thus it will not be possible to discuss each of their trips, unique though they are in their own right in their landscape and the experience the author and her companions had there. But it is worthwhile to provide a list of the places she visited to understand the full extent of the travels she undertook. These are the places she travelled to after arriving in England. The list includes her travels in the Continent.

1 England—Cambridge, Oxford, Spalding (Lincolnshire), Granchester, Bournemouth, Exeter, Bude, Gloucester, Chester, Lake Districts.
2 Wales—Harlech, Snowdon, Carnarvon.
3 France—Paris, Fountainebleau
4 Switzerland—Saint Maurice, Geneva
5 Denmark—Elsinore
6 Sweden—Lund, Halsinborg.
7 Scotland

According to the editor of her journal and letters, the author had probably toured the north of England towards the end of her stay. Amita Dutta, Polly Ann Garner, and Nalini Das were most enthusiastic travellers and had gone hiking in the Lake Districts and Scotland. Unfortunately, the author did not describe these experiences in her letters.[38]

A second feature about the landscapes worth mentioning at this point is that in her letters, Nalini Das often compares the rural landscape of England and the wild natural beauty of Wales to landscapes back home. The ruins of Tintern Abbey brings back memories of Ajanta and Ellora.[39] A small hostel in a village in Exeter reminds her of Ranchi or Hazaribagh.[40] She finds herself thinking of Birbhum when she sees the red soil of Bournemouth.[41] Such reminiscences not only indicate that she has been a prolific

traveller back home, it also reminds us that 'home' is ever present in travelogues—in objects, in landscapes, in memories, and in conversations.

CONCLUSION

Travelling and writing in the 1940s, Nalini Das has left behind a home on the threshold of independence and travelled to a war-ravaged continent. Her letters, especially, reveal her political concerns, and offer us a unique glimpse into the rapidly changing condition of India as her husband sends her clippings from newspapers in Calcutta.

In the letter dated 23 December, 1945, she complains about the distorted news about India that British papers print and expresses her desire to receive news of her country.[42] Two months later, she mentions that headlines are using words such as 'Riot', 'Hooligans', and 'Mob Violence' to describe the condition of India.[43] In August, 1946, she writes from Switzerland:

> At least we would get newspapers in England—'India and Burma News Summary'. It's very difficult to get English newspapers here. I've heard from others that a civil war has broken out in Calcutta. I do not know if this is the truth or a lie. But it made me very sad.[44]

Her interactions with her new acquaintances in England and other parts of the Continent centre largely around India where a division between 'Us' and 'Them' emerges more explicitly, bringing her identity as an 'outsider' back into focus. In Cambridge, she is invited to tea at the home of a Professor of Botany whose octogenarian mother who had spent thirty years in Bombay tells her, "I love India very much. When I was there, we co-existed quite peacefully. Why are you quarrelling with us now?"[45]

Others are more sympathetic. Polly's father, a Socialist, the author thinks, is of the opinion that India should immediately be given its independence and that its continued subjugation will only benefit a handful of big businessmen in England.[46] Miss Simpson tells her she feels proud to walk around with them in Bude.[47]

Nalini Das returned to India in 1946. A few months later, Chitrita Devi travelled to England with her family on the first ship allowed to make this crossing after the end of the War. She had, in fact, had been present in the British Parliament on 3 June, 1947, when Atlee read out the White Paper on India declaring that India would be granted independence. She recorded her experiences in her travelogue *Anek Sagar Periye* [*Across Many Seas*].[48]

Nalini Das's journal and letters and Chitrita Devi's travelogue may be read as a culmination of almost a century of Bengali-Hindu women's travel accounts of journeying to the West. In many ways, their accounts still contain traces of their predecessors—in their description of the sea voyage or the picturesque quality of the English countryside. In other ways, they stand apart from some of the women who came before them—having found strength in their own voices, they had no need to hide their names or apologise for their words.

NOTES

1 The English translations from the journal and letters of Nalini Das are by this author.

2 See, for instance, Jayati Gupta, *Travel Writing, Travel Culture and Bengali Women 1870-1940* (Oxon and New York: Routledge, 2021); Somdatta Mandal, "Mapping the Female Gaze: Women's Travel Writing from Colonial Bengal", in *Indian Travel Narratives,* ed. Somdatta Mandal (Jaipur: Rawat Publications, 2010), 126-151.

3 Gupta, 25.

4 For more on this, see, Gupta, 21-24; Simonti Sen, *Travels to Europe: Self and Other in Bengali Travel Narratives, 1870–1910* (New Delhi: Orient Longman, 2005), 60.

5 Gupta, 24.
6 Mandal, 128-129.
7 Gupta, 25.
8 Somdatta Mandal, introduction to Krishnabhabini Das, *A Bengali Lady in England*, trans. Somdatta Mandal (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015), xviii.
9 Michael Fisher, foreword to *A Bengali Lady in England*, trans. Somdatta Mandal (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015), xi–xii.
10 See, Malavika Karlekar, "Anatomy of Change: Early Women Doctors", *India International Centre Quarterly 39*, no. 3/4 (2012-2013): 95-106; Sharmita Ray, "Women Doctors' Masterful Manoeuverings: Colonial Bengal, Late Nineteenth Century and Early Twentieth Centuries." *Social Scientist 42*, no. 3/4 (2014): 59-76.
11 Gupta, 23.
12 Gupta, 84-92.
13 *Amitananda Das, introduction to Europe er Chithhi*, ed. Amitananda Das (Kolkata: New Script, 2016).
14 Das, introduction.
15 Abala Basu's travelogues, for instance.
16 It remains outside the scope of this paper to discuss the impact and significance of photography on travel and travel writing. Nalini Das refers numerous times to photographs she has taken and sent, as well as failed attempts, and often about the lack of films in London shops.
17 Sen, 60.
18 Nalini Das, *Europe er Chithhi*, ed. Amitananda Das (Kolkata: New Script, 2016), 15.
19 Das, 20.
20 Das, 16.
21 Krishnabhabini, 1.
22 Fisher, xii.
23 Krishnabhabini, 85.
24 Gupta, 29.
25 Gupta, 93.
26 Krishnabhabini, 33.
27 Mandal, 147.
28 Durgabati Ghosh, *Westward Traveller,* trans. Somdatta Mandal (New Delhi: Orient Blackswan, 2010), 85-86.
29 Das, 86.
30 Ghosh, 47-48.
31 Ghosh, 48.
32 Ghosh, 48.

33 Das, 45.
34 Das, 62.
35 Das, 87.
36 Das, 58.
37 Das, 60.
38 Das, 117.
39 Das, 65
40 Das, 58.
41 Das, 60.
42 Das, 38.
43 Das, 46.
44 Das, 103.
45 Das, 42.
46 Das, 48.
47 Das, 61.
48 Chitrita Devi's travelogue, because of the period in which it is set, signals the sense of an ending of an era. For more, see, Nupur Chaudhuri, "Reactions of Two Bengali Women Travelers: Krishnobhabini Das and Chitrita Devi", in *Historic Engagements with Occidental Cultures, Religions, Powers: Perceptions from Europe and Asia*, eds. Anne. R. Richards and Iraj Omidvar (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 165-182; Mandal, 132.

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