Critiques of Colonial Education in Krupabai Satthianadhan's Fiction

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Postcolonial critiques have made us more keenly aware in recent years of the imperial ideologies which shaped education in the colonies. At an obvious level these shaping ideologies included the control and management of the imperial domain, and the rendering of the colonial subject as a civilized being. Yet, we have become more alert in recent years to the complex and often conflicting roles of the state proponents, native elites, missionaries and educationalists in the delivery of colonial education through its various agencies. Within India, the largest and most prized of Britain's colonies, educational institutions could be discriminated on the basis of being "Anglicist" or "Orientalist," technical or liberal, government- or missionary-run, urban- or 'mofussil'-based, etc., and educational subjects were discriminated in terms of regional, caste and gender biases. Within these ideological parameters it is possible to distinguish a great variety of discussion and debate on issues of education in India.

In her book, *Outside the Fold*, Gauri Viswanathan has drawn attention to the seriously disruptive nature of religious conversion and the ways in which it could call into question some of the secular verities of empire. While missionary educationalists were broadly aligned with the imperial objective of achieving civility for the nation, it was often unclear as to which nation state was implied: the ruling imperial state or the anticipated independent state of India.[1] At a fundamental level, while secular and commercial versions of imperialism sought the enhancement of the imperial state and the metropolitan centre, missionary efforts were directed to a transcendental cause which lay beyond earthly powers. And though western models of educational reform were practiced on a wide scale by missionaries their aims in inculcating them often remained aloof from the state imperatives of empire. Native elites, who were educated in English and, more rarely, converted to Christianity, were frequently far from comfortably aligned with imperial prerogatives and even with their own religious mentors within the European ranks of the missionary fold. The celebrated case of Pandita Ramabai has been productively analysed in this light by Viswanathan (118-52).

While the voluminous missionary records of Christian education and conversion in India have been amply archived and studied,[2] the few native voices recording their subjective experiences of these processes have received comparatively little attention. This paper will focus on two novels by Krupabai Satthianathan (1862-94), a south-Indian woman, whose Brahmin father, Haripunt, had converted to Christianity, resulting in the ostracism of his family. The early death of Haripunt placed a considerable strain on his young Christian family which included his widow, Radhabai Khisty and several young children, Krupabai being the thirteenth of fourteen children in the family. Krupabai quickly displayed signs of her intellectual brilliance and went on be one of the earliest female medical students in India later acquiring fame as an active social campaigner for women's rights during her brief life. Her first novel, *Saguna: The Story of Native Christian Life,* which was first published serially in the *Madras Christian College Magazine* between 1887-88, is largely autobiographical, telling the story of her early education by an elder brother followed by missionary women educators. Her second novel *Kamala: A Story of Hindu Life* (1894), serialised in the same magazine, tells the story of a young Hindu woman whose educational development and career are blighted by the petty jealousies of the Hindu joint family and an early widowhood. Following a reissue of these novels in scholarly editions by Chandini Lokugé, Satthianadhan's fictional writings have gained critical attention for their distinction in being the earliest Indian fictional and autobiographical works in English by a woman. Her

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native perspectives on Christianity in relation to Hindu culture have also proved an invaluable addition and corrective to European missionary accounts.[3]

Satthianadhan's own life and career were in many ways deeply involved with education. Her parents were of the Brahmin caste traditionally associated with learning, though its priestly and educational functions in relation to Hindu society were normatively associated with men rather than women. Following her marriage in 1881 to an Indian Christian – her husband Samuel Satthianadhan was the Headmaster of Breeks Memorial School in Ootachamund - she launched on a promising educational and literary career, teaching in missionary girls' schools and *zenanas*, and writing in magazines and newspapers on topics such as "Female Education" and "Hindu Social Customs."[4] In these pieces Satthianadhan identifies herself as a liberal voice on the vexed question of education for women, and a strong critic of Hindu social customs. Her role as an educationalist has been characterised by Lokugé as "an integral part of an evolving, albeit conservative, Indian feminism" (*Kamala* xii). This paper purports to extend recent critical interest in Satthianadhan's work by examining her fiction in the light of her educational interests with two main objects in view: firstly to locate her work within the discursive boundaries of educational debates regarding women,[5] and secondly, within these boundaries, to indicate the ways in which her work evokes a counter-narrative in this regard to those of the missionary records.[6] The subtitle of Satthianadhan's first novel, *Saguna: The Story of Native Christian Life*, calls attention by its adjectival qualification to its indigenisation of what might otherwise be a typical Christian life-story. Saguna, the eponymous heroine of the novel, introduces her narrative as "a faithful picture of the experiences and thoughts of a simple Indian girl, whose life has been highly influenced by a new order of things." She is "one of a family of fourteen children, [her] father and mother being Brahmin converts to Christianity" (*Saguna* 19). Being of the priestly and educated caste of Brahmins – a form of identity that is never fully repudiated despite the family's conversion and ostracism from orthodox Hindu society - it is unsurprising that education forms a central aspect of the narrative of this family; what proves particularly challenging though is the inclusion of the young girl, Saguna, whose desire for education surpasses social, traditional, and familial objections.

From the start, Saguna's education, as she portrays it, is subjected to a gendered notion of social mores dictated by Hindu practices which constrain her natural bent for education. What she describes as the "infant education" of the younger children of the family – Saguna and four brothers "more or less of [her] own age" – was provided by an older sister who imparted to them a form of folk learning based on oral renderings of the Christian scriptures:

> In her sweet and simple manner she would tell us of the star of Bethlehem, about the wise men of the East, and many other incidents related in the Scripture. These simple Scripture stories she clothed in beautiful imagery of thought and language, so that each scene rose vividly before our infant minds; and we would sit spell-bound, gazing with wonder, as impression after impression stamped itself on our minds, while evening shadows closed around us. (*Saguna* 19)

The carefully controlled nostalgia of the account, "while evening shadows closed around us," recall the narrative conventions of many an idealised Victorian Christian childhood[7] though these are immediately contested by the gender discriminations which are the result, it appears, of orthodox Hindu educational practices. Whereas her older sister (who was content not to have received an education) is evoked in idyllic terms as "a sweet womanly picture, [...] full of gentleness, dignity, and love," Saguna resists the gendered implications of her family's expectations. While the boys were sent to school, Saguna was called to "help with the cooking, which I did not at all like." However she was instructed by her mother that "A girl's training school is near the *chool* (the fire over which everything is cooked), and however learned a girl may be she must come to the *chool*" (*Saguna* 21). Her mother, who is described as "orthodox" despite her conversion to Christianity, was "still full of Hindu notions of things" (*Saguna* 19). Saguna's self-driven acquisition of education amidst brothers who were given the advantages of formal study is fraught with difficulties:

> I found myself growing older in the midst of brothers more or less of my own age, sharing their boisterous games and trying to learn what they were learning at school [....]. This was a hard time for me, for unless I could do exactly as my brothers did I was no good and would be sent away disgraced. (*Saguna* 20)

Yet she sometimes had her revenge on the boys for "I often knew more than they did, so that when they stumbled at a word or a sum I used to put them right at once to their great disgust" (*Saguna* 21).

Yet if patriarchal notions seem to circumscribe her educational aspirations, paradoxically it is her father and her eldest brother, the very figures associated with Hindu patriarchy, who seem most ready to challenge such ideas. Her father Harichandra's influence however is only achieved through the memory of his being since his death

occurred early in the child's life. Harichandra's conversion narrative, reconstructed by his daughter, offers an object lesson in the abilities and limitations of individual intellect and aspiration to break the bounds of tradition. His acceptance of Christianity had not come easily to him. Drawn to the study of religion, he initially considered Christianity "beneath his notice. It was a religion to which he had a natural aversion. It was the religion of the *mlechas"* (*Saguna* 49). His Brahminical sensibility was repulsed by the outcaste associations of Christianity. Possessed of an enquiring philosophical mind, he discovered that the many branches of Hindu thinking corresponded to his changing intellectual convictions. Passing through pantheism and radical scepticism he found sublime expression for such beliefs in the *Vedas* and *Shastras* of Hinduism. One lacuna however presented itself to him; this was the notion of a personal God, "one whom we can look upon in the relation of a father" (*Saguna* 50), which seemed to him unavailable in any Hindu philosophy. Becoming gradually uneasy with the "many-sidedness of the Hindu religion, which he so much admired before," and oddly impressed by the sight of a native Christian congregation at prayer in the American chapel in Devaghar, he turned at last to a study of the Gospels. Familiar as he was with the Hindu doctrine of incarnation the corresponding Christian idea was not a stumbling block. It offered as well the idea of a personal relationship between God and his creatures which was additionally comforting to him.

It is worth pointing out that while Harichandra's conversion fits precisely with missionary arguments regarding the ease and indeed inevitability of intellectual progress from Hinduism to Christianity,[8] his case was of course neither typical of missionary conversions in India (which tended to attract far greater numbers of lower-caste persons, and were rarely so fully rationalised in intellectual terms), nor was it a first-person narrative, being instead a second-generation memory of the conversion process and a fictionalised version at that. While missionary efforts were often directed to the Brahmins as being intellectual and spiritual leaders of their people who might draw in their wake many more conversions to the fold of Christianity, in actual fact there were few such conversions, nor did they instigate mass conversions as was hoped. Many if not all were accompanied by subtle adjustments with and interrogations of the missionary position. Furthermore, while many aspects of Harichandra's story seem to fit conventional missionary trajectories of conversion, other aspects stand out within his daughter's (fictionalised) account as being oppositional to a simply hierarchical model of European intellectual and theological supremacy. His conversion is countered in a typically intellectual way by his community:

> It was thought that learning had made him mad, and his mother in wild distraction summoned the *shastris*, pundits, and wise men of the town to argue the new mania away. The discussions led to nothing. Some of those with whom he argued could not but acknowledge that Christianity had in it, in a more highly developed form, truths which were only dimly outlined in the Hindu *shastras*. (*Saguna* 55)

Yet these arguments were evidently more political than theological: "their objection [...] was that it was a foreign religion, the religion of the conquerors, and that it was, therefore, very unpatriotic for an orthodox Hindu to exchange his own faith for that of the foreigners" (*Saguna* 55).

We should remind ourselves that *Saguna* was published in serialised form from 1887, just two years after the formation of the Indian National Congress, when, certainly, explicit forms of nationalism were already available to Indian sensibilities. In all probability the daughter's narrative of her father's conversion some decades earlier adds a political dimension to the arguments that were less fully developed in their original manifestations than in their later fictionalised forms. Yet we should not conclude that these were invented by her. We may fruitfully remember instead what Partha Chatterjee has suggested about Indian nationalism, that it "declares the domain of the spiritual its sovereign territory and refuses to allow the colonial power to intervene in that domain" (6). In this case however the spiritual domain, Christianity, was associated with colonial power, producing a further intellectual battle to be waged over the question of whether national claims can be made upon the spiritual domain.

This brings us to the heart of the contested nature of Christianity in *Saguna*. Harichandra's arguments against the pundits of his own community turn out to be a two-edged sword which could cut both ways. "Patriotism which sacrificed truth to blind sentiment was, he said, no true patriotism" (*Saguna* 55). His conversion could be effected, he suggests, without the sacrifice of his patriotism which is not only held onto, but is also revealed logically as a truer form of patriotism, not being sacrificed to blind sentiment. Yet, Harichandra's theological victories are revealed to be only partial even within his own domestic sphere. His wife, Saguna's mother, is forced into acceptance of Christianity by virtue of her own codes of wifely obedience which do not legally allow her to leave her husband despite her early

discomfort with his religious beliefs. Despite her reluctant acceptance of Christianity simply on account of her husband's will, she repudiated all attempts at western book-centred education on the part of the missionary ladies who now began to visit her: "she never would have anything to do with reading. 'Those are magic letters,' she would say, shaking her head, 'and Christianity is *tied in the books*'" (*Saguna* 61). While her accession to Christianity by virtue of her husband's choice is grudgingly accepted by her, her own somewhat fuller acceptance of the faith is more gradually achieved by her husband's love, and the kindness and patience of the missionary ladies who continue to visit her despite her early rebuffs. Harichandra's fully intellectual and spiritual conversion however qualifies him for a far higher role as a native Christian missionary: "The proud Brahmin was to preach to the *Mahars*, and to live with the lowest of the low" (*Saguna* 64). His career as a "pastor and evangelist" is described in obviously idealised terms befitting his memory, his mission enacted in a series of tableaux:

> Now we find him in the midst of an excited multitude, standing up from the rights of Christians as men who held equal rights with Hindus to the water that was given for all. [...] There he was in the very midst of the infuriated multitude, lowering the first vessel himself, nothing daunted by the abuses, curses, and stones that were hurled at him [...] Now he was to be seen sitting in the temple yard, because an ordinary inn was denied to Christians. [...] Now we see him alone in the desolate jungle [...] alone because none cared to stay with him, and he would not travel on a Sunday. (*Saguna* 65)

Harichandra's conversion is the prelude to Saguna's explorations of her own identity. Although her relationship with the brothers of her age was one of intellectual rivalry, Saguna's older siblings were far more favourably inclined to her education. In particular it was one of her elder brothers, Bhaskar, who acted as her first intellectual mentor, "He began to direct my thoughts to learning, showed me what books to read, infused new ideas into me and told me about great men, heroes, patriots and philosophers, and about Greece and Rome" (*Saguna* 20). At Bhaskar's college convocation, Saguna is the only Indian woman present, and he encourages her to be "the first lady to distinguish [herself]" with a Bachelor's degree. One of her elder sisters too encouraged her to "learn as much as you like" along with her brothers (*Saguna* 76). Such notions of Indian women being allowed to take a legitimate and equal place in the arena of public higher education were certainly new for their time. Earlier missionary efforts had focussed on educating women within the *zenana*, or the domestic spaces of their homes. Such education was notably gendered and did not admit women on an equal plane with regard to higher education and scientific pursuits. *Zenana* education was now giving way to education for girls in schools run by European missionary women. Miss Roberts's school was one such day institution which Saguna began to attend thanks to the encouragement of her sister. Miss Roberts however is taken aback, and not entirely with delight, by the young girl's easy familiarity with classical history, English poetry, and other areas of knowledge. She constantly chastises Saguna for her forwardness in her manners as in her intellectual abilities. "Girls in England never sit at the table with their elders"; "Girls in England don't eat these things" (*Saguna* 144). Miss Roberts's fellow missionary colleague however was less censorious, and helped the girl to come to terms with Miss Roberts's impetuous ways by explaining conspiratorially, "She is Irish and means nothing" (*Saguna* 116).[9]

Miss Roberts's comically overstated insistence on Englishness as a measure of correctness, despite her own not very well concealed Irishness, leads us to a comparison with many other native mimics of Englishness in India. The native Christian community to which they belonged was partially anglicized, including native Tamil elements alongside "English songs" in their worship. Repeatedly, *Saguna* draws attention to the incongruent mixture of English and native habits, in clothing, manners and language, which could be observed in the nascent Christian community, though Satthianadhan carefully adds that this was "a characteristic not only of native Christians, but of Hindus as well" (*Saguna* 80). By the 1880s it is clear that Macaulay's model of English education, filtered through its Indian interpreters, is the prevalent one available to the youth of Saguna's generation. The utilitarian logic of colonial education is evidently internalised by the woman, even as she repudiates English claims to represent a higher civilization:

> It is not because the manners and customs are English that they are unconsciously imitated, but because they are looked upon as necessary concomitants of a higher stage of civilization. (*Saguna* 80)

Saguna's first friend, an Indian girl named Prema, is clearly the victim of an overly anglicized education in a European school which leaves her speaking English as her mother tongue and imitating English customs including the mores of unmediated courtship which leave her tragically abandoned by her playboy Indian lover by the end of the novel.

Despite Saguna's educational aspirations based on

putatively western notions of egalitarianism and sexual equality it is important to recognize that she is by no means uncritical of the western missionaries who are the agents of change. Misunderstandings, condescension and underestimation of the Indians on the part of the missionaries haunt the narrative throughout. Equally, Saguna too brings her Brahminical elitism to bear on the missionaries. Mortified by Miss Roberts's suggestion that she receives one of her friends, another Brahmin convert turned missionary, in the kitchen, as she was in Miss Roberts's view "no better than a servant," Saguna retorts angrily, "We are the real aristocrats of this place [...] you are middle-class people. She is a Brahmin and only takes money from the mission because she is poor. She is no servant. In your country you are no Brahmins. You are *Sudras*" (*Saguna* 115). The misunderstanding however is overcome by tears on the part of Saguna and kisses from the impetuous Miss Roberts. The evidently insulting reference to lower-caste persons must also be placed in the context of several other more positive depictions of lower-caste Indians in the novel.

The novel ends with Saguna's admittance to a medical college, its first female student, just as the author Satthianadhan had been at the Madras Medical College. Her entry to the college is greeted with amazement by the male students: "I heard the students whisper: I say, 'a live Zenana,' 'Orthodox Brahminee,' 'Gosh a woman'" (*Saguna* 153). Like the author Satthianathan herself, Saguna discovers at the end of the year that she had stood first in the college examinations. Despite objections from her fellow Indian students and even the missionaries who had earlier supported her, she seems destined to travel to England, to continue her education abroad. However the strain of her studies tells on her health and she is left partially invalid by the end of the novel, cherishing her dreams of England even as she falls in love with an eminently suitable man, a well-educated Indian Christian who is evidently keen to encourage her studies. In real life however Satthianadhan was unable to complete her education; it was not found feasible for her to travel to England for her studies, and despite a triumphant first year at the Madras Medical College, her health did not permit her to continue there either. Although she enjoyed success as a missionary teacher and writer in India, her life and career were curtailed by her historical circumstances and early death at the age of 32. Although her second novel *Kamala: A Story of Hindu Life* written in the last year of her life has been regarded as a less complex work and a "fictional withdrawal into tradition" on the author's part, I will argue that in fact it complements and fulfils the educational vision of *Saguna*, its subtitle providing a clear antithesis to "the story of native Christian life" narrated by her earlier novel.[10] Furthermore, the evident similarities between the acute sensibilities of both heroines who lose a parent while young and have to rely on familial and institutional structures while growing up suggest that the novels might be read in precisely this way: *Kamala* is thus a Hindu version of *Saguna*'s "native Christian" story, though both are deeply permeated by the Brahminical culture familiar to Satthianadhan. Both involve authorial subjectivity to a high degree: while *Saguna* is a thinly fictionalised version of Satthianadhan the author, *Kamala* is yet another version of her "but for the grace of God."

In terms of the educational focus of this paper there is indeed rather less to analyse in *Kamala* than in *Saguna*, as Kamala receives far less educational input than her Christian counterpart. However this is integral to the social critique which the novel levels, as Kamala's lack of educational opportunity is continually highlighted. If Saguna's opportunities were sorely limited by the patriarchy of her culture, then it could be said that Kamala's were almost non-existent. However, Satthianadhan's text draws attention to the incipient education that Kamala receives from her father, a *sanyasi*:

> She would nestle by his side and listen to his learned talk; for he was a recluse and a scholar. Brought up in this way, unlike other girls of her own age, she was shy, retiring and innocent *(Kamala* 24).

True, her husband, Ganesh, was of a "learned family" of *shastris*, and, being a son, he was duly educated, receiving his schooling in English in keeping with the times. Ganesh's education is depicted in highly ambivalent terms by Satthianadhan in relation to his family's Brahminical heritage and its ambitions to maintain its eminence in the newly reconstituted field of educational learning typical of nineteenth-century colonial India:

> His father and his grandfather were *shastris*, noted for their learning and their bigotry. But in these days Sanskrit learning is not appreciated, and those old days have gone when young men of high descent congregated in groves and temples and sat at the feet of learned *shastris* and *pundits*, wearing the mendicant's garb, begging their meals and spending their days in chanting hymns to the gods. The groves are no more the resort of the wise and the good. Sanskrit learning is despised and English learning is all in all, for it pays best. So much against his will the old *shastri* of Sivagunga sent his only son Ganesh to an English school. The old man in his inmost heart had the greatest contempt for English learning, which he regarded as not only superficial but also as antagonistic to the Hindu religion. But he was forced to yield to the influences of the times, and he felt no doubt some satisfaction at the success of his son,

though he had his own misgivings as to the influence the new training would have on the young man's religious belief and conduct. *(Kamala* 53)

The learning of the Brahmins, in Satthianadhan's portrait of the community, needs to be balanced against their bigotry. The nostalgic evocation of the good "old days" of groves and temples yields inexorably to the utilitarian commercialism of payments and success associated with "English learning." The old man's satisfaction at his son's success is weighed down by misgivings regarding the influence of English education on his religious belief and conduct.

This modern influence is revealed in Ganesh's early attempts to educate Kamala through books – an impulse that emerges from romantic love which is opposed in this case to the duty-bound strictures of the joint family. A pilgrimage which releases the young couple from the confines of the family home results in the blossoming of their love:

Ganesh saw much of Kamala during this journey, for there was not then the same fettered relation between him and his wife as there was in the house. Many were the stolen conversations he had with her, and he daily became more and more enamoured of her. [...] He found her, moreover, eager to get information about everything, and wonderfully quick of comprehension, and with the English idea he had imbibed regarding women's love and education he thought of striking out a new line and developing Kamala's mind and so training her to be a real companion to him. *(Kamala* 73)

These early hopes of a companionate marriage are dashed however as Ganesh succumbs to the pressures of his family and leaves off Kamala's education.

The novel ends on a note of unfulfilled promise as Ganesh dies, and Kamala finds the "widow's blight" (153) visited on her. The only remaining comforts she knows lie in the upbringing of an adopted child – given to her by her friend Kashi as a consolation for her loss – and in the works of charity. A late proposal from Ramchunder, a devoted disciple of her father's, sworn to her life-long protection is unhappily rejected in the final chapter of the novel, as Kamala turns away from the possibility of love to the embracement of duty. This conclusion, representing Kamala's "failure to surmount orthodoxy," has been criticised by the editor Chandini Lokugé as "a flying leap back into the traditions from which she so compassionately attempts to extricate her heroine" *(Kamala* 14). However I would argue that far from being an aesthetic failure, it represents precisely the limited nature of Kamala's partial education and the incompletion of the spiritual progress represented by her father who, like Harichandra in *Saguna*, is clearly a crucial determinant of the action. While Harichandra's spiritual quest had culminated in his conversion to Christianity, Kamala's father Narayen, on the other hand, does not complete the journey but dies troubled by his doubts:

but now, as the gates of death opened, a dread fear overwhelmed him. Had he after all been deceived? Nirvana – the absorption of the individual into the Deity – this was the spiritual goal he had all along been aspiring to, but what if the end should prove to be the complete loss of consciousness and the annihilation of thought? In that case what would become of all his abstract meditations, all his fastings and prayers, his suppression of passions and all promptings of self? (148)

The consequences of the incompletion of his spiritual journey are reflected in Ramchunder's attitude as he confesses to Kamala: "I am tired – tired to death of all the meaningless mummeries of a devotee's life. I have been trying to get at the kernel of truth, at the essence of things, and I have found it not" (154). His proposal to Kamala suggests that he turns to romantic love as a substitute for religion while unable to relinquish attitudes of ownership and patriarchal privilege associated with Hindu practices: "You were mine before you were born. You were promised to me by your mother" (154). Kamala's rejection of him, invoking the recommended attitudes to widows laid down by Manu, is equally unable to relinquish tradition: "Did we wives not die on the funeral pyre in days of old? [...] Look not on my face. I am the accursed among women. There is something wrong in my nature, and that is why the gods have disgraced me" (155). Kamala's failure to accept the proposal is thus both a correct decision on her part in relation to the nature of the proposal received, but also an implied critique of traditional practices of Hindu society denying agency and understanding to women.

Kamala was written while Satthianadhan was on her death-bed and appeared in book form shortly after the author's death in 1894. In many ways her novels articulate and criticise the collusive and co-optive tendencies of Indian elites in the context of missionary/English education. Yet Satthianadhan, as we have seen, was by no means uncritical of missionary educators, and hence the publication of her work within the pages of the Madras Christian College magazine suggests the possibilities of critical representation within the liberal spaces created by such missionary institutions. Both her novels were translated into Tamil in 1896 extending her influence to the growing vernacular sphere propelled by nationalist agendas in education. The interest of her novels, I would argue, lies not so much in the relative successes or failures of their protagonists, but in their hard-fought battles to achieve education within the

structures of traditional society, and to articulate at the same time the newly emerging language of national identity. Satthianadhan's fictional representations explore the nature of race, gender, and caste politics in the sphere of Indian education, critiquing both traditional and missionary ideologies, while attempting to forge a new subjectivity for India that would encompass both native and Christian forms of identity. Thus, Satthianadhan's fictions maintain the right of Indian Christians to the spiritual domain of the nation even as this domain was increasingly polarised by the growing divisions between colonialism and nationalism.

NOTES

1. While European missionaries were broadly aligned with the "civilizing" mission of empire, it should be noted that many supported nationalist aspirations as well (see Frykenberg, 339).
2. For example, Johnston's important study, while extensively treating women's education in India in relation to the missions, focuses on the records of the London Missionary Society.
3. Recent studies which cite Satthianadhan's work in the context of her Christian conversion and her criticisms of patriarchy include those by Anagol, Brinks, De Souza, Haggis and Allen, Jackson, Mukherjee, LokugÈ, and Parinitha. This paper seeks to extend that nascent scholarship by contextualising Satthianadhan's views on education in relation to contemporary discourses of education.
4. In her article on "Female Education" Satthianadhan comments feelingly on the "sad state of uneducated women in India" and recommends a "liberal education" as the remedy for this. Her remarks on women's education thus mark her as a critic of patriarchally-determined notions of "tradition" within the educational debates of the period (*Miscellaneous Writings* 21). Her fictional work, as I argue in this paper, constitutes an elaboration and, simultaneously, a more subtle, personal, and, at times, ambivalent exploration of her intellectual and cultural position regarding education.
5. In his chapter on "Gender and the Nation" Sanjay Seth has outlined the major debates on women's education in colonial India. As he demonstrates, such debates resulted in a "project of preservation-cum-transformation" of the role of women in society on the part of middle-class liberal nationalists (136). In this scheme of things "tradition" was to be preserved and yet refashioned to meet the demands of the modern nation.
6. For a comparable missionary-centred approach to the issue of education in the colonies, see the work by Etherington in the book edited by him, *Missions and Empire*.
7. In his *Autobiographic Sketches* (1854), for example, De Quincey wrote feelingly of his nursery experience of reading an illustrated Bible, its stories explained to the children by their nurse: "in long dark evenings, as my three sisters with myself sat by the firelight round the *guard* of our nursery, no book was so much in request amongst us. It ruled us and swayed us as mysteriously as music. Our younger nurse, whom we all loved, would sometimes, according to her simple powers, endeavour to explain what we found obscure" (10).
8. Christian missionaries argued that the central belief of Christianity, the incarnation, did not pose a doctrinal problem to Hindus on account of their belief in various divine incarnations, and that the Hindu "Trimurti" – the three forms of godhead represented by Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva – was akin to the notion of the "Trinity."
9. A comparable incident involving an Indian perception of Irish missionaries in the 1890s occurs in Sister Subbalakshmi's comments on a certain Mother Patrick from the Presentation convent in Madras: "It was the way that Mother Patrick talked, don't you know, that made me realise how much intolerance there was in the Christian religion. She would say to the Protestants, I would rather have these Hindus than you Proddies!" (Felton 70). Mother Patrick is portrayed as more opinionated and less discreet than the other the nuns in her convent, though she also evoked a good deal of affection from Sister Subbalakshmi (who went on to work for the uplift of Hindu widows without herself ever converting to Christianity).
10 .This parallelism has been partially obscured by the re-titling of the novel in the OUP edition as *Saguna: The First Autobiographical Novel in English by an Indian Woman*.

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