

Jogendra singh's nur jahan: the romance of an

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jogendra singh's nur jahan: the romance of an indian queen (1909), svarna kumari ghosal's the fatal garland (1915) and A. Madhvia's sclarinda (1915).

The historical periods covered vary greatly from tamil times (a dive for death) to maratha history while the locale ranges from the south to agra and delhi and to the fifteenth century of bengal. True to the saying that there is material for at least one novel in the life of every person, some of this early fiction is palpably autobiographical. Krupabai sathianadhan's kamala: a story of hindu life (1895) and saguna: a story of native christian life (1895) are frankly autobiographical in fictional form. Even in toru dutt's Bianca (1876), an unfinished love story set in the nineteenth century england, the heroine who is of spanish parentage, appears to large extent, to be a self- portrait, in view of her " dark colour" " dark colour brown eyes...

large and full" and her " long black curls" . k. s.

ramamurthi maintains that the early indian english novelists " were by no means ' imitators'` but conscious experimentors who adopted an alien form and medium to socio-cultural situations which are specifically indian". This claim is hardly tenable. If, as already noted, the strong element of fantasy in some of this fiction establishes its links with the ancient sanskrit fictional tradition, there are clear indications of its debt to scott, bulwer-lytton and also G. W. M. Reynolds- a fabricator of gaudy melodrama who does not even find a place in a standard literary history of england but who, as T.

W. Clark has pointed out, enjoyed great opportunity among indian youth of the early twentieth century. It is also possible to suggest that the sentimental

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romances of Mrs. Henry Wood (1814-87) the author of the much admired *East Lynne* (1861) and Mary Elizabeth Braddon (1837-1915), who wrote *Lady Audley's Secret* (1862) and numerous other highly successful novels of the circulating library fiction type could very well have influenced early Indian-English social novelists, for their work generally shows the same appetite for a world in which issues are generally simplified, with innocence meekly suffering to triumph in the end, while vice flourishing for a time, meets its deserts.

The only possible evidence of experimentation in this early fiction is to be found in Rajmohan's *Wife*, which uses Indian words liberally in the descriptive passages. But it is pertinent to note that Chatterjee's use of Indianisms is generally limited to pointing objects alone.