



The “Other” Conflicts: Borders in Saradindu Bandyopadhyay’s Bengali Detective Fiction

Shreya Das

Abstract. The article examines the response of popular Bengali literary works to the Partition of 1947 in India, which brought about a mass migration across the borders of Punjab and Bengal. It focuses on Saradindu Bandyopadhyay’s Byomkesh series, one of the most popular Bengali detective series.

The Independence of India in 1947 came at a high price. As the magnitude of violence and brutality shattered the entire nation and a painful Partition became the only way to buffer the communal hatred and bloodshed, the two provinces of Punjab and Bengal had to bear the consequences of a large-scale migration between the newly created borders, complicating the sociopolitical situation further. Hence, it came as no surprise that the intelligentsia of these two provinces reacted more passionately to this national crisis than in any other province of India. Even the popular “potboiler” literature of the period registered the impact of this turbulent time. The novellas from the Byomkesh series appeared at this crucial juncture.

THE HISTORY OF BENGALI DETECTIVE FICTION

In the 1840s, American Edgar Allan Poe introduced a prototype of a detective character in English-language literature through his portrayal of C. Auguste Dupin in “The Murders in the Rue Morgue” (1841), a cultural milestone that was followed by the first full-length English

Shreya Das is a guest lecturer in the English Department of the Sanskrit College and University in Kolkata, India. She holds degrees in English literature from Calcutta University and Delhi University.

CLUES • A Journal of Detection / Volume 41, Number 1 / Spring 2023 / pp. 62–73 /
ISSN 0742-4248 / eISBN 978-1-4766-5163-7 / © 2023 McFarland & Company, Inc.
