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5

Masculinity and Mimicry Ranas and Gurkhas

Sanjeev Uprety



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Introduction¹

In this paper, I study the constructions of the masculinity of Gurkha soldiers in British representations and compare such constructions with representations of the masculinities of the two most powerful and influential Rana prime ministers, Jung Bahadur Rana and his 20th-century successor, Chandra Shumsher Rana, both of whom visited England, in 1850-1 and 1908, respectively. Arguing that the pre-modern oriental masculinity of Jung Bahadur and the imperial, anglicised masculinity of Chandra Shumsher were defined against the effeminacy of the Indians as well as the Shah kings of Nepal (as also the 'boy scout' young adult masculinity of the Gurkha soldiers), I contend that an analysis of the masculinities of these Rana rulers allows us to understand the cultural shifts that shaped the constructions of Nepali masculinities in the first half of the 20th century. In particular, I analyse the representations of Jung Bahadur's manhood in the 1982 translation of *Jung Bahadur ko Belait Yatra* (Jung Bahadur's Travel to Britain) by John Whelpton, a text that also includes the mid-19th century portrayals of Jung Bahadur and his entourage in such European newspapers as *The Morning Post*, *The Times*, *The Illustrated London News*, and *Midland Counties Herald*. In addition, I examine Perceval Landon's two-volume account of Nepal's history – written under the patronage of Chandra Shumsher and first published in 1928 – which describes, among other things, the contrasting masculinities of Jung Bahadur and Chandra Shumsher Rana.

Nepal and British India: Political Context

The first military conflict between Nepal and British India occurred in 1767 when the English East India Company dispatched a military expedition to Nepal under the leadership of Captain George Kinloch to assist King Jayaprakash Malla of Kathmandu against the forces of Prithvi Narayan Shah, the founder of modern Nepal, and

1 I am deeply indebted to Robin Piya and Kate Saunders for copy editing the manuscript, and also to Deepak Thapa of the Social Science Baha, for his constant support and advice.

the ancestor of the Shah kings. After the Kinloch expedition was repulsed, Prithvi Narayan continued his military conquest of the three Malla kingdoms of the Kathmandu Valley, and the western principalities collectively known as the Baise and Chaubaise Rajya, finally completing his dream of capturing the throne of Kathmandu in 1768.² In March 1792, a treaty of commerce was signed between Nepal and the East India Company, following which, in 1793, the Company sent a mission to Nepal headed by Colonel William Kirkpatrick, a diplomatic effort that paved the way for the 1801 treaty between the government of Nepal and the East India Company. The latter treaty led to the establishment of a British residency in Kathmandu Valley in 1802, and Captain W.D. Knox took up residence as the first British representative in Nepal in April 1802.³ A continuing escalation of animosity between the Company's government and the Nepali rulers in Kathmandu, however, led to war between the East India Company and Nepal in 1814. After a year of hard fighting on both sides, the war ended with the signing of the Treaty of Sugauli between the two governments in December 1815. The treaty brought to an end not only Nepal's further territorial ambitions, but also circumscribed its national borders as it was forced to surrender areas like Kumaun, Garhwal and parts of Himanchal Pradesh in the west, and Sikkim and other hill areas in the east, including Darjeeling, to the British.⁴

2 Prithvi Narayan Shah died in 1775, and his son and successor, Pratap Singh Shah, in 1777. The throne of Nepal then went to Pratap Singh's infant son, Rana Bahadur Shah. Due to the age of the infant king, real political power was wielded by Queen Rajyalaxmi, and, later, by her brother-in-law, Bahadur Shah, both of whom ruled as regents and extended Nepal's territorial control to Kumaun in the west and Sikkim in the east by 1790.

3 Rana Bahadur Shah abdicated his throne on 23 March, 1799, and another infant king, Rana Bahadur's year-and-a-half-old son, Girvana Yuddha Bikram Shah, became the new king of Nepal. Under the regency of Queen Rajarajeshvari and Queen Suvarnaprabha, who succeeded Queen Rajyalaxmi and Bahadur Shah as regents, and under the able leadership of its military leader, Amar Singh Thapa, among others, Nepal continued to expand its territorial borders into the turn of the 19th century.

4 See Shaha, 1996, pp. 107-47. Shaha argues that the treaty deprived Nepal of one

While the treaty of 1815 allowed Nepal to retain its status as a sovereign nation outside the yoke of the British Empire, it also allowed the British to acquire native allies – like the princely states of India – whom they used to crush a number of rebellious uprisings in India, including the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857.⁵ At the same time, Nepal's national sovereignty was severely compromised as it was deprived of its claim to and connection with the countries lying to the west of the river Kali.⁶ As a politico-cultural response to such a humiliation, the Nepali government pursued a strict policy of isolating its native subjects from foreign contact. Shaha argues that Nepal's policy of minimising contact with the British was partially influenced by the lessons its rulers had learnt by studying the history of the British colonisation of India, a history that led them to believe literally 'in the adage that with the Bible comes the bayonet, with the merchant comes the musket'.⁷ The upshot of all this was that Nepal – unlike India in the 19th century – remained not only outside the direct political control of the British, but also outside the sphere of their cultural and economic influence. While India followed Macaulay's brief on Indian education by establishing cultural and educational institutions to produce brown men with white cultural masks, the Nepali rulers, in an attempt to maintain national sovereignty, rejected the medium of mimesis that would have facilitated Nepal's access to the institutions and practices of Western modernity.⁸

third of its territory and forced Nepal to accept British arbitration in the event of any dispute with Sikkim.

5 The treaty was finally ratified by Nepal on 4 March, 1816, at Makwanpur after more fighting.

6 Shaha, 1996, p. 146.

7 Shaha, 1996, p. 154.

8 Following the formulae laid down by Thomas Babington Macaulay in his 'Minute on Indian Education', a system of educational and cultural training was perfected in various parts of the British Empire, including India, Nigeria and Kenya, to produce a class of mimic men who would imitate cultural and social values of the coloniser. The 19th-century imperial subjects – as can be seen in the tales of Kipling – could gaze with voyeuristic amusement at these native mimic

There were, however, two classes of people whose cultural and political situation led them to cross the cultural borders to come in closer contact with the British: the Gorkhali soldiers and the members of the royalty – especially the family of *shree teen* Rana prime ministers, who wielded the actual political power in Nepal for a period of 104 years following the rise of Jung Bahadur Rana in 1846.⁹

After his 1851 visit to Britain, Jung Bahadur developed a policy of keeping friendly relations with the British, while at the same time resisting the spread of British cultural and political influence in Nepal. Like his successors, Jung Bahadur's foreign policy was determined by a double politico-cultural imperative. Thus, by helping the British during the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857, he protected Nepal's sovereignty as an independent nation against British ter-

men without miming them in turn. With the spread of anti-colonial nationalist movements in the last decades of the 19th century and the early part of the next, however, many of the 'intermediate' class of natives in various regions of the Empire were beginning to challenge the colonial authority by refusing to mime imperial models. Macaulay's formula of 'almost, yet not quite' had laid the basis for an imperial imperative that urged the Indian elite to both mime the English, and, simultaneously, signify their cultural difference. In other words, the Indians had to perform their cultural identities under a double bind: they were supposed to mime the English while at the same time perform their own ethnic identities, a duality that made them seem almost English while reasserting that they could not be assimilated (see Barry, 1964, p. 49). As Homi Bhabha has argued, the imitations of native mimic men challenged the constructions of Englishness by pointing to the fact that Englishness itself was and is a performance. What Bhabha does not adequately discuss, however, is the way in which the elite native subjects were not only expected to mime the English but also to perform their stereotypical ethnic identities, which, as pointed out by Rey Chow, was a simultaneous performance that asserted the irreducible otherness of the native subjects while at the same time indicating the degree of sameness they had acquired through their mimicry. See Bhabha, 1994, pp. 85-92, for an analysis of colonial mimicry. Also See Chow, 2002, pp. 108-110, for a discussion of how non-western subjects mime or imitate their own 'nativeness'.

- 9 Following the Kot Massacre of 14-15 September, 1846, in which Jung Bahadur Rana had most of his his political rivals killed or debilitated, real political power of Nepal passed onto the family of the Ranas, who became hereditary prime ministers even though the Shah descendants of Prithvi Narayan continued to rule as kings.

ritorial ambitions.¹⁰ At the same time, however, he followed the isolationist policy of Prithvi Narayan Shah and his successors, keeping Nepal aloof from British cultural and economic influence, a cultural and political strategy that rejected an imitation of imperial models at both institutional and local levels. Kamal Raj Singh Rathaur writes that even after returning from his trip to Britain in 1851, Jung Bahadur 'nourished a very stiff nationalistic attitude towards the free movement of Europeans and their commercial intercourse'.¹¹ While he allowed Nepalis to join the British Army, for example, Jung Bahadur declared at the same time that he would disallow 'a single Gurkha sipahee in the British service to enter Nepal unless he had first taken discharge'.¹² When the British pressured Jung Bahadur to revise his attitude towards the Nepali subjects serving in the British Army, he agreed to let them back into Nepal if they returned wearing civil Nepali dress rather than British uniforms. It is probable that while Jung used the enlistment of Gurkha soldiers in the British ranks to win favour with the military and political leaders of British India, he simultaneously read the mimicry of Nepali soldiers wearing British uniforms as a signifier of Western cultural and political influence, an influence against which it was necessary to close the nation's borders.¹³ While, as a subordinate power, Nepal needed to be on the side of British India, especially during the Sepoy Mutiny and the anti-colonial nationalist movements in India during the 19th

10 By helping the British, Jung Bahadur also managed to regain for Nepal a portion of the land it had lost during the war of 1814-1816.

11 Rathaur, 1987, p. 45.

12 Quoted in Rathaur, 1987, p. 46.

13 During a conversation with the British resident concerning the subject of British private trade in Nepal, Jung Bahadur is reported to have expressed his position in a clear, unambiguous manner: 'We know you are the stronger power, you are the lion, we are like the cat; but the lion would soon kill the cat. You can force us to change our policy...but we will make no change in that policy, the strict observance of which we have preserved our independence as a nation to the present time...we will not allow Mr Cameron to come into the country, except as a private gentleman and your guest and upon your assurance that he will not attempt to engage in trade or make any inquiries into the resources of the country' (Shaha, 1996, p. 262).

century, fears of being overrun by British political and economic might forced rulers like Jung Bahadur (as both Landon and later Nepali historians like Shaha and Prem Uprety suggest) to resist British cultural influence and mercantile trade in Nepal. This resistance often found expression in their rejection of imperial models. Jung Bahadur, for example, steadfastly refused to import English form of education and culture into the country. His policy was influenced not only by a fear of British cultural invasion but also by a desire to keep the doors of Western modern influence closed to most of his countrymen, who, if allowed the benefit of western education, might have revolted against the autocratic Rana rule. While Durbar School, the first school in Nepal that taught English, became institutionalised during Jung Bahadur's time, it accepted pupils from only Rana families. Similarly, despite the fact that styles of European dress (including a coat and tie) and techniques of architecture and painting came to Nepal following Jung Bahadur's visit, these influences were only allowed to permeate within the borders of the ruling class, and every effort was made to keep the general public outside this mimesis and modernity.¹⁴

14 Both Whelpton and Shaha have argued that Jung Bahadur's visit to Europe inspired him to introduce new changes to Nepali society. Such changes included the introduction of the legal code called *Muluki Ain* in 1854, his partial abolition of *sati*, and the establishment of Durbar High School, the first school in Nepal that taught English. Shaha argues that the *Muluki Ain* may have been influenced by Jung Bahadur's close examination of European laws during his 1851 visit (Shaha, 1996, p. 243). Jung Bahadur's visit brought in other important western cultural influences to Nepal. While during the earlier period the pagoda and the shikara styles along with Mughal architecture were used to construct temples and palaces, following Jung Bahadur's trip, French styles of architecture became popular among the ruling elite of Nepal. Jung Bahadur built his Thapathali Durbar in the European style, though the practice of adopting European architecture to construct public buildings became widespread only after his death (Mainali, 2000, p. 113). In addition, the English coat entered Nepal after Jung Bahadur's 1851 trip. While the dress of the Shah and Rana rulers was influenced by the mode of the royal Mughal dress, which had also spread to other princely states of India despite the end of Mughal rule, Jung Bahadur's visit brought an English and British style of clothing to Nepal. From 1851 onwards, the Shah and Rana rulers used a variable mode of dressing, combining the use of French,

Jung Bahadur is of particular interest from the perspective of the present study because not only was his oriental royal body gazed upon as a symbol of martial Kshatriya masculinity by both the British and his Nepali subjects but also because he was suspected by some of his countrymen, as both Whelpton and Landon suggest, of having compromised his masculinity by succumbing to the temptations of miming European models. This is to say that Jung Bahadur's body functioned as a complex cultural artefact in representation such as in Whelpton's *Jung Bahadur in Europe* and in Landon's *Nepal*. His body was traced both by the issues surrounding the embattled mid-19th century nationalism of Nepal and the construction of ruling-class Kshatriya masculinity in the same period. For this reason, it seems instructive to compare the way in which Jung Bahadur's attitude towards mimesis was represented in the British press during his England visit with the manner in which the imitations of his *shree teen* descendent, Chandra Shumsher, was described in Landon's historical study. Both sources offer modes of interpretation that sought to gauge the relative modernisation and masculinity of these Rana rulers in relation to their mimicry (or their rejection) of the British models. I propose that such an analysis will help us see how the political and cultural influence of British India shaped the constructions of masculinity and nationhood in late-19th and early 20th-century Nepal, which in theory was outside the political domain of the empire.

Young Adult Gurkhas and Effeminate Indians

Landon writes that during the bitter year-and-a-half war with Nepal, the British had come to appreciate the valour and fighting skills of the Gurkha soldiers, and, following the Sugauli Treaty of 1815,

English and Mughal garments. Despite such changes, however, the cultural and economic borders of Nepal remained essentially closed to British influence during Jung Bahadur's rule. Not only did he disallow British mercantile trade in Nepal, but also discouraged Gurkha soldiers returning from the British Army from spreading western cultural influence in the country.

began recruiting Gorkhali soldiers in increasingly high numbers.¹⁵ The Gorkhalis were not a homogenous group of people, and the Gorkhali soldiers in the British Indian and Nepali armies came from a variety of castes and classes, including the hill ethnic groups, those from low castes, those born out of intermarriage between high-caste Hindus and the hill ethnics, and, finally, economically poor Brahmins and Kshatriyas. Despite such heterogeneity, however, as Lionel Caplan has argued convincingly, the class, caste and clan differences were subsumed into sameness as Gorkhalis were 'constructed' as a homogenous race within the military imagination of the British. 'Gorkhas exist in the context of the military imagination, and are thereby products of the officers who command and write about them; outside that setting, it can be argued that there are no Gorkhas, only Nepalis.'¹⁶

15 The term 'Gorkhas' or 'Gorkhali' initially referred to people from the Kingdom of Gorkha, situated in the basin of river Gandaki in the mid-western region of present-day Nepal. Prithvi Narayan Shah, the king of Gorkha, unified Nepal in the 18th century, beginning the dynasty of the Shah kings of Nepal. Vansittart rightly argues that the term 'Gorkhali', as it was used in the 18th and early 19th centuries, was not 'limited to any particular class or clan' but rather was 'applied to all those whose ancestors inhabited the country of Gorkha, and who from it subsequently extended their conquests far and wide over the eastern and western hills' (Vansittart, 1992). If we follow Vansittart's definition, it becomes obvious that the highland peoples of western Nepali provinces like Doti and Jumla were not Gorkhalis, whereas even some 'low-caste' people belonging to Damai and Sarki subgroups could be recognised as Gorkhas in the 18th century because their ancestors had lived in the Gorkha kingdom. Around the time that Prithvi Narayan began his conquest of Nepal, the 'fighting people' of the Gorkha kingdom included 'Magars, Gurungs, Khas and Thakurs' (Vansittart, 1992, p. 7). The Gorkhali soldiers who entered the British Army in the 19th and 20th centuries were mostly Magars or Gurungs and a few economically poor Khas and Thakurs. Vansittart complained in the late 19th century that none of the British regiments 'enlist Khas now', though 'a regiment of Khas would make a very fine body of soldiers'. He also wrote that Thakurs can be obtained only 'in small numbers', and that the unconverted Magars and Gurungs made the bulk of the Gorkhali regiments in the British Indian Army. Apart from this, in the late 19th and early 20th century, Limbus and Rais from eastern Nepal entered the British Indian Army.

16 Caplan, 1995, pp. 10-11. Caplan writes that there are four kinds of writings about

Certain stereotypes about Gurkhas circulated throughout ethnographic texts, military records, travelogues and memoirs written about them. Gurkhas were seen as exotic and romantic and were often compared favourably to their 'Indian alter' who represented for the European writers 'otherness in the most negative sense of violating the values and sensibility of the West'.¹⁷ What distinguished Gurkhas from their Indian counterparts was their 'martial masculinity' which differentiated them from the so-called effeminate races of India, like Bengalis and south Indians, as well as classes of people who engaged in trade or entered the administrative service of British India as clerks. While some of the peoples of India, like Marathas and Rajputs, were seen as both martial and masculine, other Indian subjects were perceived by the British as effeminate. George MacMunn, for example, has written that 'merchant and town dwellers' of India lacked guts, and its 'intelligentsia were timid'.

Bengalis were especially seen as feminine and described as 'soft' or 'languid or enervated', and 'superficially cultivated and effeminate'.¹⁸ In 1932, for instance, MacMunn described the *babus* – a term that was first used to describe Bengali men and then later extended to include all Indians – as 'clerky worky class' that lacked the true virtues of masculinity. What remains constant in these descriptions is an association of mimesis with feminine qualities. Babus entered administrative posts in British India by virtue of their training as urbanised mimic men; their superficially cultivated exterior – a consequence of the faulty mimicry of Englishness – however, made them seem effeminate.¹⁹

Gurkhas: regimental histories, personal memoirs and autobiographies written by the officers who commanded them, coffee table picture books 'with splendid photographs of Gurkhas in various settings', and finally books that 'attempt to tell the Gurkha story in a general and popular way' (pp. 4-5).

17 Caplan, 1995, p. 4.

18 Quoted in Caplan, 1995, p. 102.

19 Caplan argues that such a denigration of Bengalis can be read as an 'ideological assault' aimed especially at that section of the Indian Bengali population – high caste, increasingly educated and urbanised – which had provided the anti-colonial leadership during the Indian Mutiny of 1857. It was in Bengal that the

In contrast to such effeminate creatures, a product of mimesis and co-optation, Gurkhas were seen as hard, masculine people who were outside the theatre of mimicry. Moreover, in British representations, Nepal came to be constructed as 'a military state in which a military outlook pervaded every section of the society'.²⁰ Brian Hodgson, for example, wrote in 1833 of the 'warlike enthusiasm' of the people and also described the 'exclusive military and aggressive genius of Gurkha institutions, habits and sentiments'.²¹ Caplan concludes his analysis of the Gurkhas by writing that the British considered Gurkhas as 'gentlemen warriors', a quintessential martial race that was an exotic, oriental mirror image of the British officers who managed them. They were imbued by such characteristics as 'courtesy, a sense of fair play, good humour, skill in games and good sportsmanship', while lacking the rational control and moral purpose of their English officers. In other words, the Gurkhas were perceived as 'young gentlemen', and their masculinity was conceived of as reflecting the emergent manhood of English public-school boys with whom they were compared. While the imperial masculinity of British soldiers was associated with their moral courage and their desire to fight for a noble cause, the Gurkhas' display of physical courage was seen as 'based on emotion rather than intellect', and thus was described as reflecting the masculinity of English boys rather than that of middle-class English adults. While Caplan's study makes a persuasive study of the constructions of Gurkha masculinity, I suggest that an essential point needs to be noted while studying the constructions of English masculinity towards the turn of the last century: the lower, especially working class, subjects of Britain, like the country's young adults, were seen as lacking the

swadeshi movement was launched in 1905 leading to a number of bomb attacks on the British subjects.

20 Caplan, 1995, p. 103.

21 Stiller has written that Hodgson's view that Nepal was a nation of soldiers was an erroneous one since 'the military accounted for a small percent of the Nation's population' and that 'Nepal was then, as it is now,' a nation of farmers (Caplan, 1995, p. 104).

moral, rational control that characterised the masculinity of middle-class Britons.²² The masculinity of Gurkha soldiers was thus related to both the emerging manhood of young public-school boys and the physical masculinity of working-class Britons. From this perspective, it is instructive to note the different performance of Jung Bahadur's masculinity during his 1851 England visit: Jung not only presented himself to the British imagination as a hyper-masculine Gurkha ruler, but also, by fusing the signifiers of his Kshatriya masculinity and his pseudo-royal masculinity, he *almost*, though not quite, succeeded in exceeding the constructions of lower-class or 'young adult' masculinity that were deployed to label or classify the rest of his countrymen.

Jung Bahadur's Oriental Royal Masculinity

John Whelpton's *Jung Bahadur in Europe*, a translation of an anonymously written travelogue, *Jung Bahadur ko Belait Yatra*, includes, as part of its background introduction to the text, stories surrounding Jung Bahadur's hyper-masculine courage.²³ What is unique about

22 Nandy has pointed to a difference that traced the social construction of masculinity in 19th-century Victorian England. Thus while 'the lower classes were expected to act out their manliness by demonstrating their sexual powers', the people belonging to the middle classes 'were expected to affirm their masculinity through sexual distance, abstinence and self control'. For further details, see Nandy, 1983, p. 10. Philip Dodd has similarly argued that while the working class was constructed as masculine, the manliness of working class subjects was often exclusively associated with their physicality. See Dodd and Colls, 1987, for a description of British masculinities.

23 Whelpton quotes a number of sources in reconstructing the political and textual background of Jung Bahadur's visit. The text of *Jung Bahadur Ko Belait Yatra* was first published by Kamal Mani Dixit in Nepali in 1957 after he discovered a version of the text 'in an old exercise book in the Kathmandu house of Rudravikram Rana', who was a relative of Jung Bahadur's. Since 1957, other versions of the text have come to light. The first of these is included in a printed book, a biography of Jung Bahadur's published in Calcutta and written by Prithiman Thapa, a political opponent of Jung Bahadur's nephew Chandra Shumsher. The other two versions – both in manuscript form – were found as parts of a *vamsavali* (chronicle), the first having been compiled by a court officer named Buddhiman Singh in 1878, and the second discovered in the collection of Hemraj Pandey,



Jung Bahadur Rana with one of his wives, Maiya Maharani.

Whelpton's 1982 version is that apart from the lengthy background introduction to explain to western readers the historical context

the great-grandson of Rajguru Vijay Raj. In addition to this, there was one more version found in a palace belonging to one of Chandra Shumsher's wives. See Whelpton, 1983, pp. 134-5, for details concerning the text of *Belait Yatra*.

of Jung Bahadur's visit, it also includes depictions of Jung Bahadur's visit in British and French newspapers, including *The Morning Post*, *The Times*, *The Illustrated London News*, *Midland County Herald*, *L'Illustration*, *Le Constitutional* and *L'Assemblée Nationale*. These additions make Whelpton's text a composite one, combining elements of travelogue, history and journalism.

Whelpton argues that the narratives of Jung Bahadur's oriental physical courage accompanied him during his trip and were amply circulated through the European press. These stories included tales of how he had tamed wild animals and battled natural elements like flooded rivers and fires.²⁴ Similarly, he was credited with accomplishing such 'manly' actions as subduing a buffalo that had escaped from a fighting arena on 9 April, 1840,²⁵ rescuing a family in Kathmandu from a fire on 1 August, and taming a wild elephant on 13 November of the same year.²⁶ Though some of these stories seem rather far-fetched, Whelpton argues that they contributed to creating an image of Jung Bahadur as an exotic oriental prince who was an extreme example of physical, hyper-masculine Gorkhali manhood.

Nepali representations of Jung Bahadur – which often draw heavily from Perceval Landon's 1928 study and Jung Bahadur's English-trained son's Padam Jung Rana's biography of his father

24 There exist a number of historical portrayals in which Jung Bahadur is described as taming a wild horse and then subduing a serpent at the age of eight, including the one written by his son: 'About the same time while playing in his father's garden at Thapathali he saw a snake under a tree near a temple. Well knowing the dangerous character of the venomous reptile, he...boldly caught the head of the serpent tightly in one of his hands, and ran to his father to show the valuable capture he had made' (Rana, 1909, p. 13). Also see Whelpton's background introduction to *Jang Bahadur in Europe*, pp. 67-148.

25 Padma Jung Rana writes that 'buffalo fights in Nepal are akin to the famous bull fights of the Spaniards'. On this particular day, a buffalo escaped during a fight in the courtyard of the royal palace at Basantapur. Jung Bahadur 'with a rope in one hand and a blanket in another...succeeded in cleverly blindfolding the beast and driving him out by twisting his tail from behind'. Rana, 1909, p. 21. See also, Whelpton, 1983, pp. 67-148.

26 See Rana, 1909, pp. 21-4; Whelpton, 1983, pp. 67-148.

– similarly mention that Jung Bahadur’s courage was repeatedly tested in the 1840s by the then crown prince of Nepal, Surendra Bikram Shah, often considered an effeminate man and a possible homosexual who lacked the masculine courage of Jung Bahadur’s.²⁷ In February of 1842, for example, Surendra ordered Jung to ‘leap on horseback from the bridge into the waters of Trishuli’. Though Jung Bahadur miraculously came out alive after the dangerous jump, the capricious prince ‘tested his manhood’ again by asking Jung to leap down into a well, popularly known as the Twelve Years Well, in Kathmandu on 22 April, 1841.²⁸ Tales of Jung Bahadur’s hyper-masculinity were often magnified in the British press during his European visit of 1851.²⁹ *The Times* of 6 August, for instance, reports of Jung Bahadur’s ‘great physical courage’ and describes how on ‘his way down to Calcutta in the steamer, passing through the jungly shores of Sonderbuns, some object of game attracting

27 Rana, 1909, p. 24.

28 The well was very deep and was used to deposit the ‘bone of slaughtered buffaloes and hence was doubly dangerous’. Jung Bahadur ‘took the precaution of throwing some 20 to 30 bales of cotton into the well, to minimise the danger from the sharp bones at the bottom’ and actually jumped into it on the next day and survived, though he received ‘severe cuts in his right ankle’. Though the wound healed, Jung Bahadur ‘suffered from inflammation and pain in this joint for a month or so every year’ (Rana, 1909, p. 3). In another popular account, Jung Bahadur was supposed to have jumped down Bhimsen’s column, or Dharahara, the tower that stands in the middle of Kathmandu, following the orders from the crown prince. Padam Jung Rana, however, writes that Jung avoided certain death by telling the prince that he would jump from the top of the column with the help of ‘two parachutes the construction of which will take some 15 or 20 days’. He further writes that the crown prince, whether he forgot the incident or changed his mind about it, never brought up the subject again and Jung Bahadur’s life was consequently saved (Rana, 1909, p. 30; see also, Whelpton, 1983, pp. 67-148).

29 Jung Bahadur’s English experience began on 25 May, 1850, at Southampton where he faced trouble when the local customs personnel wanted to open his baggage. Feeling insulted, Jung Bahadur ‘threatened to take the next steamer back to Alexandria’, and had to spend ‘a day or two in the Peninsular Shipping Company’s Southampton offices before the local customs authorities obtained instructions from London to clear his baggage’ (Shaha, 1996, p. 228).

his attention, regardless of the tigers and the alligators, and to the great alarm of his followers, he jumped overboard into the water or mud, but returned equally safe and unsuccessful'.³⁰ In a similar vein, *The Atlas* of July 24 reports of 'wonderful rumours' of Jung Bahadur's 'prowess as a warrior and an intrigant' that 'buzzed about in the salons, the clubs, and the gossiping alleys of the operas'.³¹ Such rumours associated Jung Bahadur's exotic otherness with his vicious physical masculinity, which was in sharp contrast to the feminised mimic men of India, those clerky babus who were forever miming the English in an imperfect manner.

Within such British constructions, Jung Bahadur is portrayed as an oriental ruler whose masculinity made him seem to approximate the model of English masculinity, but who at the same time fell short of that model because he was perceived as lacking the moral rationality of the middle-class English. While the faulty mimicry of the babus made them effeminate even as they tried to emulate the modes of imperial manhood, Jung Bahadur's performance of exotic otherness was seen as turning him into a hyper-masculine figure of romance. In other words, extracts from the European press show that the European press and the public, highly impressed by the expensive oriental costumes and jewels Jung Bahadur and his brothers wore, represent him as a figure of oriental romance and exoticism.³² *The Atlas* of 24 July, 1850, describes the rich oriental appearance of Jung Bahadur and his brothers in a similar manner and interprets their visible bodies as figures of fantasy and romance:

They came, they were seen and forthwith they conquered.
To look at the lustre of their retinue, to count the diamonds

30 Whelpton, 1983, pp. 259-60.

31 Whelpton, 1983, p. 264.

32 Shaha, for example, writes of the 'magnificent costumes of Chinese silk and brocade embroidered with threads of gold and silver' that Jung Bahadur and his brothers wore, along with their 'picturesque headgear inlaid with glittering gems and precious stones and peaked with the white bird of paradise plumes' (Shaha, 1996, p. 231).

which sparkled in their brown skins, to mark the gemmed turbans, the jewelled aigrettes, the white bird of paradise plumes – who would not have been forgiven for believing that the whole party might be an incarnation from the Arabian night whisked thither from Baghdad or a city of Cathay, attended by the fiery Pari Banou, with Solomon's seal in the carpet bags and journeying with passports covered with hieroglyphics and stars, the genuine autographs of the King of Genni.³³

The Illustrated London News of 15 June, 1951, similarly interprets the otherness of Jung Bahadur and his brothers' dress: 'People look at these glittering personages and begin to have doubts as to the "Arabian Nights" being a work of fiction. What if they have arrived here flying through the air on a magic carpet! What if they have a tent packed up in a turban big enough to cover a regiment.'³⁴

Such British representations show that, unlike the Indian Maharajahs who were seen as feminised not only by imperial subjects like E.M. Forster and J.R. Ackerley but also by Gandhi, Jung

33 Quoted in Shaha, 1996, p. 231. *The Indian News* of 1 August, 1850, describes in a similar manner the impression the royal guests left upon the minds of the upper-class English society: 'Our Nepali guests have abundantly partaken of the national hospitality, they have been lionized in private and public, armies have been paraded before them and royalty itself has been their cicerone. No evening party having the slightest pretension to the aristocracy of either rank, wealth or talent is held to be complete without them.' (Shaha, 1996, p. 232). In a similar vein, Jung Bahadur's appearance is described in *The Morning Post* of 28 May, 1851, in the following manner: 'The general made his appearance on deck about half past seven. His dress consisted of a black satin cloak, profusely embroidered with gold of elegant workmanship. His head-dress was a cap nearly covered with large emeralds, diamonds and other precious stones.' *The Morning Post* goes on to describe that the cap Jung was wearing was 'surmounted with a bird of paradise, the fastening of which was covered by a profusion of brilliants' and that the General's 'fingers were covered with rings, on one of which was a diamond, an amethyst, and an emerald of immense value' (Whelpton, 1983, p. 225).

34 Quoted in Whelpton, 1983, p. 231.

Bahadur and his brothers were represented as properly masculine in the European press. Their masculinity – based upon a rejection of the mimesis of imperial models – was seen as royal and pre-modern and hence different from the modern, rational middle-class British masculinity.³⁵

Mimicry, Masculinity, Strategy

Nepali critics like Abhi Subedi have argued that Jung Bahadur's adoption of the glittering royal dresses during his visit to England was a strategy calculated to draw attention to himself by deliberately appearing exotic: 'The encounter of awe of the colonial locus and the conscious projection of the exoticism of one's own self make Jung a unique character in this journey to the centre of colonial power...He very carefully kept on projecting his image as an actor on the English stage. He kept projecting his image as an actor in a play that he himself had written and silently performed...'³⁶ Subedi goes on to argue that since the British government did not treat the

35 See Forster, 1977, and Ackerley, 1932, for colonial descriptions of Indian Maharajas. Also see Gandhi's portrayal of the Maharajas in his *An Autobiography: The Story of My Experiments with Truth* (Beacon Press, 1993). Gandhi, like Forster and Ackerley, describes the Maharajas as effeminate. Compare those representations with the description of Jung Bahadur and his brothers in *The Illustrated London News*: 'What if they bear signets carved with the token of Solomon, and giving them power over the King of Genii! What if Peris and Fays flutter invisibly about them! What if they have a retinue of African musicians and eat cream tarts and lambs stuffed with pistachio nuts. For myself I have an inward comfort in believing that all the jewels displayed by their oriental Highnesses were found sticking to the pieces of flesh carried by the eagles out of Valley of Diamonds, and it would be difficult to divorce me from the creed that the gentlemen in question are near relatives to Prince Camaralzaman, King Beder, Nouredin and the fair Persian – to say nothing of Aladdin, Ali Baba, Sindbad, and that 'cute' fisherman, who did the genie in such magnificent style when the latter was fool enough to re-pack himself in the copper vessel' (Whelpton, 1983, p. 231). *The Atlas* of July 24 interprets the 'glittering oriental figures' of Jung Bahadur and his companions in a similar vein and reports that by 'coming in this guise, lavishing diamonds and gold, enshrined in a halo of oriental mystery, the Nepal Embassy became at once the talk of the town' (Whelpton, 1983, p. 264).

36 Subedi, 2002, p. 18.

rulers of Indian princely states on an equal level and often ignored their claims to be recognised as sovereign rulers, Jung Bahadur – the prime minister of a small country like Nepal, which occupied a marginal position in the theatre of colonisation – made himself deliberately exotic in order to get the required attention from Britain’s rulers and its public. While it is impossible to know what Jung Bahadur actually thought about his royal attire with pearls and precious stones, Subedi is right in pointing out that Jung Bahadur’s body in royal garments functioned as a cultural strategy in relation to the gaze of the British subjects, gazes that saw his oriental royalty as proof of his hyper-masculinity, especially when compared to the subservient femininity of Indian princes.³⁷ This is to say that texts like Whelpton’s *Jung Bahadur in Europe* represent Jung Bahadur as deliberately performing the stereotypical role of oriental prince for a certain political gain.³⁸

From the Nepali perspective, Jung Bahadur’s 1850-1 visit to England and France was a highly successful one.³⁹ Jung Bahadur

37 Shaha writes that at the time of Jung Bahadur’s 1851 visit, the British government was unsure about his status as an ambassador of the king of Nepal, especially since in the mid- and late-19th century no emissaries from the princely Indian states were recognised as full-fledged ambassadors. This created a problem for the British since Jung Bahadur was given the official status of an ambassador before the visit and it was necessary to treat him as such.

38 Butler, 1993, has made a persuasive study of how gender is not only historically and politically constructed but also a matter of performance. It is an effect that is produced when men and women reiterate the codes, rituals, and conventions of masculinity or femininity through their everyday performances of gender.

39 Tony Gould writes that Jung Bahadur’s visit to England was a success from the British perspective, too, for they ‘made sure Jung was shown enough of the industrial might and military muscle of the country to come away with a healthy respect for it’ (Gould, 1999, p. 90). Shaha argues that the visit might have influenced Jung Bahadur’s decision to support the British during the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857. Jung Bahadur realised that because of their superior military, economic, and cultural power, the British were there to stay in India, and it was necessary for him to appease them to protect the independent status of Nepal. At the same time, he followed the traditional isolationist policy laid down by Prithvi Narayan Shah by maintaining minimal contact with the Europeans and discouraging mercantile trade. This double policy functioned for Nepal, as

and his party acquitted themselves 'quite credibly on the whole in their private as well as public dealings with the Europeans' despite their previous lack of exposure to the European manners, rituals and speech. Landon writes that Jung Bahadur carried out his main aim of inspecting 'military processes and arsenals', and also diligently studied 'naval concerns and every process of the industry'.⁴⁰ Apart from this, Jung Bahadur's visit to England also made a strong case for the relatively independent and sovereign status of the Nepali nation vis-à-vis the subordinate princely states of India to which it was often compared by the British. Unlike the princely rulers – and also the Nepali leaders like Chandra Shumsher Rana, who visited Britain in 1904 – Jung Bahadur was the only prince from the Indian subcontinent who was recognised officially as a visiting ambassador of a sovereign state.⁴¹ Jung Bahadur's English-trained son Purushottam Shumsher Rana later wrote that his visit to Europe was 'a great achievement for Nepal and Nepalese, since Nepalis had only been known in Europe till then as a martial Gorkhali race south of the Himalaya. Jung Bahadur was able to underline Nepal's sovereign independent status in European minds.'⁴² Against such a polit-

Shaha argues, as a strategy for the 'maintenance of the independent territorial integrity of Nepal in the face of the fierce wind of change that was blowing across the entire region and had brought nearly all of the Indian subcontinent under foreign domination' (Shaha, 1996, p. 242).

40 Landon, 1928 p. 138. Jung visited Birmingham and Edinburgh and even went down a 'mine in order to satisfy himself as to the manner in which coal was hewn.'

41 Before Jung Bahadur, General Mathbar Singh Thapa had cancelled his visit to England in 1835 precisely because the British government refused to grant him the status of a visiting ambassador. Bir Shumsher – son of Jung Bahadur's brother Dhir who accompanied him during the 1850 trip to Europe – similarly cancelled his proposed visit to England in the late 19th century for the same reasons, while Chandra Shumsher in 1908 was given a subdued welcome as the British placed him at a same diplomatic level as they would 'one of the ruling princes or maharajahs of the "A" class Indian native states'. Despite this, however, Chandra Shumsher was still received with 'a 19 rather than a 17 gun salute' that was extended to the Indian Maharajahs' (Shaha, 1996, p. 241).

42 Rana, 1998, pp. 70-1.

ical backdrop, Jung Bahadur's visit to England as an ambassador of Nepal was read as a diplomatic coup in Kathmandu, and it was not surprising that he was welcomed as a returning hero after he reached the Valley following the purification rites at Rameshwaram, rituals that were supposed to free him from the threat of cultural contamination.

Jang Bahadur was received with great outbursts of public joy. The route taken by him was lined with troops on both sides; the principal civil and military officers of the Kingdom went out to meet him on the banks of the Bagmati river; immense crowds thronged the streets and collected on every possible standing ground, as if the whole country had come out to welcome him; people from the remotest provinces had gathered to see him as though he were inhabitant of another planet...Dressed in a magnificent robe of white silk, which set off his slim figure to great advantage, and bowing as he approached the pavilion, he looked truly the hero who had braved perils both on land and water, to visit one of the greatest countries on earth. Decked with a coronet of brightest silver, studded with a galaxy of pearls, diamonds and emeralds, and with the sword presented by Napoleon III hanging at his side, he drew all eyes upon him as he advanced to the seat of honour in the middle of the pavilion.⁴³

Such a reconstruction of Jung Bahadur's homecoming – represented in Landon's *Nepal* and in the texts of Padam Jung Rana and Purushottam Shumsher Rana – describe how the people from 'the whole country', including those 'from the remotest provinces' gathered in Kathmandu to welcome a national hero who had braved all to make a case for Nepal's sovereign status in Europe. In such texts, Jung Bahadur is represented as a national hero, as a royal leader who was able to achieve his goal without compromising either his masculin-

43 Landon, 1928, pp. 140-1.

ity or his caste status as a Kshatriya. His royal robes on the occasion of his homecoming are depicted as suggesting a triumphal return of a native Nepali prince rather than some westernised native elite. Moreover, the sword presented by Napoleon functioned as proof that Jung Bahadur's masculinity was approved by the West, without him having to revert to an imitation of the imperial models to prove his manhood.

It is important to note that Jung Bahadur needed to be on his guard during his trip because his 'decision to visit Europe had already made him suspect in many orthodox eyes', and for this reason he needed to reject a mimicry of Englishness in order to 'show that he remained a good Hindu in other respects'.⁴⁴ Such a perspective coincides with the depictions of Jung Bahadur in the European press in which he was represented as a possible agent of western modernity. In other words, Jung Bahadur was seen not merely as an ordinary Gurkha soldier, but as, *The Times* of 6 August, 1850, described, a tactful, well-mannered native ruler through whose medium western civilisation might enter Nepal. Such a portrayal of Jung Bahadur as tactfully rational made him exceed the constructions of Gurkha masculinity that were merely physical. The contributor to *The Times*, thus, goes on to evoke the bloody history of the Kot Massacre through which Jung Bahadur came to power after killing his opponents and goes on to warn his readers that the Nepali ambassador should not be judged according to Christian standards or values:

I should be sorry, that is to prejudice his reputation amongst any who, ignorant of the elements of Asiatic character, or Asiatic education, mind, morals, doctrines and opinions, might regard him as a sort of George Barnwell, or ordinary cutthroat. On the contrary his manners, his ability, his tact, and energy have alike confirmed him in the goodwill of the Nepalese army and people; and I look upon his visit to Eng-

44 Whelpton, 1983, p. 156.

land as one of the many gradual but sure measures and steps by which the Almighty is paving Asia with civilisation.⁴⁵

In other words, Jung Bahadur was seen both as a pre-modern hyper-masculine oriental prince and as a person who could be reclaimed as an agent of Western modernity. This is to say that Jung Bahadur's masculinity was constructed within a space of cultural slippage. While his national origin tied him to the brave but irrational masculinity of the 'young adult' Gurkhas, the gem-and-pearl-covered glossy surfaces of pre-modern exotic royalty made him exceed that lower-order masculinity. Furthermore, this led to a situation where he was seen as almost rational and modern, as a modernised native ruler through whom western ideals could be spread.

In the context of Jung Bahadur's 'westernisation', his position as a royal Kshatriya male became an embattled one. Thus, it must be remembered that if Jung offered his body to the gaze of the British imperial subjects as a cultural and political strategy, his 'royal' body was also gazed upon by his own native subjects, both by those who had accompanied him during the journey and by the rest of his countrymen (especially its reading public, including the powerful courtiers), who were obviously the intended readers of *Belait Yatra*, which was originally published in Nepali in the 19th century.⁴⁶ In this context, it is crucial to note that English newspapers, despite the rumours of Jung Bahadur's preferences for English lifestyle and cultural practices, described him as rejecting a mimesis of Englishness in public. Rather, they represented him as following the caste rules that formed a symbolic circle around him,

45 Whelpton, 1983, p. 261.

46 Subedi rightly points out that the travelogue created 'a halo around a historical and real Jung Bahadur' and projected a 'Nepali sense of independence and uniqueness', while contributing towards a valorisation of Jung Bahadur's actions 'so much so that after his return the press he brought, the techniques of the painters learned and the approaches he made to courtesans all went down to the folk level. The traditional troubadours even started singing his intimate relationship with the British Queen to a humorous proportion' (Subedi, 2002, p. 19).

protecting him from the contaminations of Englishness.

The Morning Post, for example, describes the extraordinary 'abulations' of the Nepali guests, a ceremony performed not only for cleanliness but with the aim of preserving the purity of their caste from cultural contamination: 'Not only the Hindoo servants, but some of the chiefs were in the back-yard, washing themselves almost perpetually. They stripped with the exception of a slight cloth around their loins, and they would wash themselves all over with about a half pint of water'.⁴⁷ *The Illustrated London News* of similarly reports how the Nepali party created a symbolic border between themselves and their guests during a gathering 'at which all artistic and aristocratic London were present'. *The Illustrated London News* further describes how the Nepalis 'were not only ensconced in a closed room with trusty sentinels at the door, but the carpet of the apartment in which they sat, and which was of the same piece as that which covered the floor of the adjoining chamber, was at their request, severed at the threshold, and rolled back on either side, so as to destroy the idea of any immediate connection or communication between themselves and the neighbouring infidels'.⁴⁸ In a similar vein, *The Morning Post* of 28 May reports the 'strict notions' of Jung Bahadur and his brothers concerning 'their religion, diet and abulations' and of their 'dread of having their food, or the vessels which contain it, touched by Christians'. In other words, fear of contamination led the Nepali entourage to engage 'the whole of the forecabins and saloons of the Ripon, in which they filled up a cooking apparatus, which was constructed out of a large square box made of planks and paddle-floats, filled with mud and sand'.⁴⁹ *The*

47 Whelpton, 1983, p. 229. Such a double strategy probably meant that not only did Jung Bahadur had to appear as exotic and masculine in relation to the gaze of the imperial subjects to make his claims of sovereign equality, but that he also needed to strengthen his royal manliness in front of the gazes of his countrymen who might see him as someone who was in a danger of compromising his Kshatriya masculinity through an imitation of the English modes of eating, dressing and sexual behaviour.

48 Whelpton, 1983, pp. 243-44.

49 Whelpton, 1983, p. 224.

Morning Post describes further how Jung Bahadur refused to go to any hotel of Southampton due to 'religious scruples, lest any food prepared for Christians should be mixed with his own' and that the entire entourage 'appeared to observe utmost secrecy in dressing and eating their food, and were much alarmed lest any of the blacks and other persons belonging to the Peninsular company should observe them'.⁵⁰ These '[p]ersonal habits of the Nepalis, particularly their practice of bathing in the open with a loin cloth tied with a string round their waist, attracted public notice and comments in the newspapers. So, too, did the Nepalis' refusal to eat cooked food of any kind at the functions they were invited to or to eat at the same table with any Europeans'.⁵¹ In addition to this, whenever the Nepali party were visiting someplace outside London, and had to stay in a hotel or a private house as guests, they 'insisted on making their own separate arrangement for cooking, because their caste rules did not permit them to eat cooked food touched by Europeans or to have drinks including water served by them'.⁵² In other words, Jung Bahadur and his brothers drew a symbolic circle of 'un-touchability' around them, and strictly followed the dietary restrictions that forbade them to eat with the foreigners, a practice that evoked curiosity among the British public.

50 Whelpton, 1983, p. 227.

51 Shaha, 1996, p. 239.

52 Shaha, 1996, p. 240. Shaha further writes that 'the Nepalese wanted to make sure that even milk for their use was not touched by Europeans and therefore they had a cow brought to their place of residence every morning so that that it could be milked by the Nepali servant accompanying the party'. *The Illustrated London News* of 22 June reports the Nepali practice of eating in seclusion due to their caste rules and describes how, during a banquet held in honour of the Nepali prime minister, the Nepali party rejected the common dining room (a space of mimicry in which the natives often had to mime the table manners of the Europeans as discussed by Gandhi) to eat in private. 'Not permitted by the laws of caste to join the company in partaking of the rich viands which loaded the tables, his excellency and party retired to the drawing room as the banquet commenced, and there partook of lychees and of peaches, nectarines and other choice fruits; returning to their place at the table by the time dinner was over' (Whelpton, 1983, p. 240).

Whelpton argues that while in private Jung Bahadur and his brothers did not really mind alcohol, English food, and visits to the dancing girls in London and Paris, it was necessary for them to keep up appearances. 'They were afraid not that they would jeopardise their chances of securing a favourable reincarnation or attaining nirvana, but that they might be thought to have "lost caste", with all that this entailed for their social and political status.'⁵³ What Whelpton fails to mention, however, is that a loss of caste in Hindu society is also linked to a loss of masculinity. While upper-caste Brahmins and Kshatriyas, by virtue of their mastery of certain knowledge and martial virtues respectively, could claim proper forms of masculinity, a loss of caste could make a Brahmin or Kshatriya masculinity deviant, even effeminate. From this perspective, it is interesting to note that despite of the triumphal return of Jung Bahadur and his brothers, certain nagging doubts followed their homecoming, evoking fear that perhaps they had lost their high caste status as Kshatriyas, and their attendant masculinity, by falling into the ways of the British.

While Jung Bahadur had taken the precaution of making a pilgrimage to Rameshwaram, a holy site at the tip of the Indian peninsula, to undertake 'a religious ceremony of purification', which was supposed to free him from the impurities of cultural contamination, rumours concerning his newly acquired 'imperial pose' and Englishness had followed him back to Nepal. Gould, for example, writes how Jung Bahadur had dismissed an Indian prince on his way back to Nepal from England, assuming an imperial posture to address the latter as 'a native'. Gould describes the incident as Jung Bahadur's 'capacity to flatter Europeans' through a mimicry of authoritative pose vis-à-vis the natives: 'Thus saying, he politely rose and let the rajah in the most graceful manner to the front door, which was no sooner closed behind him than he returned, rub-

53 Whelpton, 1983, p. 120. It was especially important for Jung Bahadur to be careful since the Nepali party included Kaji Karbir Khatri, 'a venerable looking old man, bigoted to an excess, and thoroughly disgusted with his trip to the land of beef eaters'.

bing his hands with great glee, as he knowingly remarked, "That is the way to get over an interview with these natives."⁵⁴ Oliphant has similarly observed that following Jung Bahadur's return there were rumours in the Kathmandu Durbar that the European visit had turned his head, and had transformed him into a foreigner: 'He has become a Feringee (foreigner) - "He wants to introduce their barbarous customs among us" - "He brings visitors, and is making friends with the English, in order to betray us to them." This is said by his enemies at the court; and while they watch his every action, esteem him a traitor who, if they did not know it, is the best friend of their country.'⁵⁵ Captain Francis Egerton has similarly written of a priest who maintained that Jung Bahadur was still contaminated by his European journey.⁵⁶ Henry Oldfield, the residency's doctor at Kathmandu has likewise pointed to Jung Bahadur's 'supposed partiality for the English, and his alleged violation of caste etc in England, by drinking wine, eating meat, and flirting extensively with English ladies'.⁵⁷

As Landon points out, rumours of Jung Bahadur's supposed Anglicisation were used by his political rivals, including his brothers Bam Bahadur and Badri Narsingh, to instigate a failed plot to assassinate him, a conspiracy that was partially based upon the testimony of Kazi Karbir Khatri - a 'venerable, old gentleman' in Jung Bahadur's entourage - who had propagated the rumours that Jung had 'partaken of meals offered by British and French high officials, as well as water and food from the hands of Christians, which was frowned on by Hindu rules and regulations'.⁵⁸ According to some of such rumours, Jung Bahadur had paid 'one hundred and fifty thousand pounds for spending a night with London's most prominent

54 Gould, 1999, p. 92.

55 Gould, 1999, p. 92.

56 Gould, 1999, p. 92.

57 Gould, 1999, p. 93.

58 Rana writes that the 'conspirators were also giving out that Jung had had sexual relations with European ladies, giving their names as Laura Bell, Lora Montez and Fanny Cerito among others' (Rana, 1998, p. 74).

prostitute of the time Laura Bell', though the records of the Indian office indicate that the total English money Jung Bahadur had at his disposal during his trip to England was only thirty thousand sterling pounds.⁵⁹ Both Landon and Shaha argue that such rumours were read by Jung Bahadur's political opponents as evidence of his moral failing, and also as a sign of a masculinity that was threatened by social stigma.⁶⁰ This is to say that Jung Bahadur's mimesis of the English postures and practices, as well as the rumours concerning his sexual relationships with European women, was used by his political opponents to argue that his Kshatriya masculinity was tainted during his European sojourn. This argument was used to garner support for the plot to assassinate Jung Bahadur. While the plot was foiled and the guilty (including Kazi Karbir Khatri and Jung Bahadur's brother Badri Narsingh) were punished after Bam Bahadur lost his nerve and confessed to Jung Bahadur at the last moment, the representations of the event in Landon's *Nepal* and subsequent native historical studies show how Jung Bahadur's supposed Anglicisation could be seen as a proof of a loss of his high-caste Kshatriya manhood, and used by his political opponents to plot his fall.

To mime or not to mime: Chandra Shumsher's politico-cultural predicaments

By the time Chandra Shumsher Rana – Jung Bahadur's nephew, and the son of his brother, Dhir Shumsher, who had accompanied him during his 1851 visit to England – became the prime minister of Nepal in 1901 by dispossessing his brother Dev Shumsher in a coup on 27 June of the same year, the cultural and political situation of Nepal in relation to the British had changed dramatically. Arguably the most influential Rana prime minister after Jung Bahadur, Chandra Shumsher not only consolidated his family's rule in Nepal through affiliation with the British, but also opened Nepal's closed borders

59 Shaha, 1996, p. 232.

60 Shaha, 1996, p. 275.

to western influence in a tactical manner, one that consisted of a selective imitation of western cultural and political forms.⁶¹ A study of the foreign policy of Chandra Shumsher in the first three decades of the 20th century shows that while the same double imperative still worked at the heart of Nepali foreign policy – consisting of a combination of military and political alliances with the British and a simultaneous discouragement of trade and cultural commerce with them – Nepal and its rulers had increasingly come under the dominating sway of British political and cultural presence by the turn of the 19th century.⁶² Thus, it is instructive to note that Chandra Shumsher was not only the first Rana prime minister to receive English education and, unlike Jung Bahadur, was often seen in public in English clothes, but he went out of his way to help the British during World War I.⁶³ On 21 December, 1923, Chandra Shumsher con-

61 Chandra Shumsher's image as a rational, modern ruler of Nepal is constructed largely through the two-volume representation of Nepali history by Perceval Landon, a British citizen who was commissioned by Chandra Shumsher for the job. Later Nepali historians, including Rishikesh Shaha and Prem Uprety, have made extensive use of Landon's work in articulating their own studies of the Rana regime. Landon's 1928 study of Chandra Shumsher is important not only because it shows how Chandra Shumsher wanted to be remembered by the British, but also because it allows us to understand how Landon constructed Chandra Shumsher's image for British readers.

62 During his 29-year rule as prime minister, Chandra Shumsher continued the Rana policy of cooperating with the British on military and diplomatic matters, while keeping his countrymen outside the British cultural influence. Towards the turn of the century, an intense rivalry had sprung up between British India and Russia, both of which were trying to extend their sphere of political and economic influence into Tibet. Both Landon and Shaha write of the role Chandra Shumsher played in facilitating the Younghusband military mission (which included the 8th Gorkha Rifles) that crossed the Sikkim-Tibet border and captured first Gyantse and later Lhasa in August 1904. This led to the signing of the Lhasa Convention on 9 September, 1904, and opened up a direct trade route between British India and Tibet through Kalimpong, diminishing 'the volume of trade that passed through Kathmandu by the Kuti and Kerung passes'. Thus, while Chandra Shumsher's help to the British obtained for him the title of Grand Commander of the Star of India, it actually harmed Nepal's trade interests in the long run. See Shaha, 1996, p. 42.

63 On the eve of World War I, Chandra Shumsher offered his help to the British

cluded a fresh treaty with Britain. The treaty was heralded in Nepal as increasing Nepal's prestige as a sovereign nation that, unlike the princely states of India, was independent from Britain.⁶⁴ In practice, however, as Shaha and Uprety argue, Nepal's foreign policy continued to be conducted through British India's headquarters in New Delhi, and its status as an independent, sovereign nation remained severely compromised. The only function the treaty served was to strengthen Rana regime while at the same time keeping common Nepalis isolated from the influence of western modernity, contributing to a perception of what has been described as an 'internal colonisation' of the Nepali people by the Ranas.⁶⁵

even before it was requested. Nepal initially loaned 6000 of its troops who were to be used for general service within the border of India, a number that went up to 16,554 after reinforcements and later additions. Meanwhile, Gorkhali soldiers directly recruited for the British Indian regiments fought in the battlefields of Europe and the Middle East. Shaha writes that 'Nepal lost more soldiers than any one of the warring countries in proportion to its total population which was about five million at the time' (Shaha, 1996, Vol II, p. 49). Despite this and other material war-time contributions, however, British India did not return the territory that was ceded to it by Nepal as a consequence of the 1815 Sugauli Treaty, as was the original Nepali request. Arguing against the sympathetic portrayal of Chandra Shumsher by Landon, later Nepali historians like Shaha and Uprety contend that Chandra Shumsher's contributions performed only one task: that of consolidating his own prestige and power – along with the power and influence of Rana family – within Nepal. Lord Chelmsford, the viceroy of India, thus offered an annual present of 1 million rupees to Chandra Shumsher, who was also promoted to the post of full general in the British Army in 1919 and was awarded the Grand Cross of the Order of St. Michael and St. George.

64 Shaha argues that the Rana regime in Nepal falsely interpreted the signing of the 1923 treaty as a major achievement in order to increase the prestige of Chandra Shumsher: 'The signing of the Treaty was treated as an event of national importance to create a misleading impression outside Nepal that Chandra Shumsher had brought independence to the country as if it had not been independent before his time. Two days' public holiday was announced in Kathmandu and a general remission of three months was granted to prisoners other than those held for life. Food and clothes were distributed among the poor and there was illumination in Kathmandu for several days in celebration of the occasion' (Shaha, 1996, Vol II, p. 57).

65 Shaha argues that the treaty was concluded 'because it served the interests of

By 1900, Gurkha soldiers returning home from their battalions had brought back to Nepal knowledge of western cultures, rituals, and institutions. Some of them stayed in India to instigate the anti-Rana movement and to protest against the Rana policy of closing the national borders.⁶⁶ It was simply not possible to reject mimicry at the institutional level towards the beginning of the 20th century, and western modernity continued to enter the pre-modern national space through cross-cultural mimicry. Thus, while Chandra Shumsher rightly thought that an influx of western ideas would hurt the long-term interests of his family, unlike Jung Bahadur, he was not able to keep Nepal entirely isolated from the rest of the world. Despite his iron rule as an autocratic prime minister, Chandra Shumsher also put into effect a number of reforms that modernised the nation somewhat in the early decades of the century, including the abolition of slavery and the practice of *sati*, or widow self-immolation. Other modernisations included the imitation of western cultural and educational institutions as well as English training for individual Nepali citizens in India and in Nepal. Chandra Shumsher soon realised, however, that these reforms could prove to be dangerous to the autocratic rule of his family. As had been the case in India, the leaders of the movement that sought to overthrow the Ranas often came from the group of people who were drawn to the theatre of imperial mimesis, either due to their education or because of their exposure to English culture during their tenure in the British Army.

both the Rana prime ministers and the British rulers of India at the same time. It served the British interests because they could tell the Rana prime minister that they had recognised their services by enhancing the status of their country without having to do anything more. It served the interests of Maharaj Chandra Shumsher and the later Rana prime ministers to insulate the Nepali people from the impact of the Indian nationalist movement and to maintain their own personal power intact. It was another matter that the common people of Nepal were short-changed in the deal' (Shaha, 1996, Vol II, p. 53).

66 Chandra Shumsher's inauguration of the Tri-Chandra College in 1918, which till the abolition of Rana rule in 1951 remained the only college in Nepal, along with his attempts at social reform and limited development of bureaucratic and administrative infrastructure, can be seen as a response to these protests.



Chandra Shumsher with his second wife, Bal Kumari Devi, and their daughter, Rajya Laxmi Kumari Devi.

As a response, Chandra Shumsher not only imposed strict limitations on the recruitment of Gurkhas to the Indian army, but also tried to float the idea that Gurkha soldiers, as a consequence of their ‘imitation of British manners and eating habits’, had lost their caste

status. Shaha, for example, writes that Chandra Shumsher asked 'the British authorities not to promote Nepali soldiers beyond the rank of a non-commissioned officer, and also insisted on the strict observance by Nepali soldiers of *pani patiya*, the rites of religious purification on their return home'.⁶⁷ Chandra Shumsher's attitude towards Nepali soldiers in the British Army is representative of a strategic double standard: while he strengthened his own cultural power by miming British models, he discouraged a similar imitation of Englishness by common Gurkha soldiers, whom he saw as a possible threat to rule by his family.

Despite the Rana attempts to keep Nepal closed to outside influences, western cultural, economic, and educational conventions had spread to various parts of Nepal by 1900. The second volume of Landon's *Nepal* shows that in the context of such an altered cultural landscape, mimicry of Englishness at the everyday level of clothing and eating no longer unambiguously signified social stigma or a loss of caste status (and manhood) by Nepalis. While Jung Bahadur's mimicry towards the mid-19th century is shown by Landon and Whelpton as being interpreted by Nepali subjects as possible proof of his deviant masculinity and loss of caste status, Chandra Shumsher's imitation of European models is read as a deliberate tactic by which he enhanced not only his cultural and political power but also the fiction of his manliness. Landon's *Nepal* further shows that Chandra Shumsher's imitation of Englishness was often turned into a public spectacle with the Rana prime minister appearing in public dressed in western clothes. Such spectacles distinguished him from the pre-modern hyper-masculinity of Jung Bahadur and portrayed him as an enlightened modern man.

Chandra Shumsher's 'rational' imperial masculinity

Unlike in the case of Jung Bahadur Rana, there exist no hyperbolic tales describing Chandra Shumsher's masculinity. Shaha writes that unlike his brother Dev Shumsher, whom he deposed through a

67 Shaha, 1996, Vol II, p. 65.

bloodless coup, 'Chandra did not indulge in drinking or womanizing vices.'⁶⁸ He was, however, 'a born conspirator and a past master in the art of intrigue', who knew 'how to exercise authority to his own advantage and purpose'.⁶⁹ A number of historians including Shaha, Landon, and Uprety speak of the manly courage and rational decision-making ability of Chandra Shumsher. Landon, for example, argues that it was he who masterminded the massacre of 1882 that brought power to the family of the seventeen Shumsher brothers, sons of Dhir Shumsher.⁷⁰ Shaha argues further that during his 1908 visit to England, the English-trained Chandra Shumsher did not excite the imagination of the Europeans in the same manner as Jung Bahadur: 'Chandra Shumsher thus merely served as an object of curiosity to the British press and public, whereas his predecessor Jung Bahadur, even without any knowledge of English, had made a great impact on both the British and French press and public as his country's true ambassador. The newspaper reports and editorials in the English press at the time of Chandra's visit were not even half as complimentary and colourful...' ⁷¹ Landon, on the other hand, suggests that Chandra Shumsher's visit provoked an interest that was not matched by some of the Indian princes who were visiting England at the same time.⁷² He describes, for example, how 'public

68 Shaha, 1996, Vol II, p. 37.

69 Shaha, 1996, Vol II, p. 37.

70 It was a massacre during which Jung Bahadur's sons, including Jagat Jung, were killed by their Shumsher cousins, leading to a shift of power within the Rana family.

71 Shaha, 1996, Vol II, p. 44.

72 Though Chandra Shumsher was given a salute of 19 guns, two more than the Nizam of Hyderabad, he was not accepted as an ambassador of an independent nation like Jung Bahadur. Before the visit, Manners-Smith, the British resident in Nepal, had suggested to the Indian office that Chandra Shumsher should be treated 'on the same footing as Sardar Nasrulla Khan, the prime minister of Afghanistan' rather than as a ruler of one of the Indian princely states. After being rebuffed by the Indian office, Manners-Smith secured an understanding from Chandra Shumsher that the latter 'would not discuss affairs of state in England, and that his dealings in all such matters would rest with the government of India' (Shaha, 1996, Vol II, p. 44).

interest concentrated upon the jewelled head dress' that Chandra wore, and many observers commented favourably upon his royal dress by comparing it with the garments of the visiting Indian princes: 'The gorgeous jewels in the turbans of the Indian princes...were as nothing to the diamonds worn by the maharaja.'⁷³

It is important to note, however, that while Chandra Shumsher occasionally wore oriental royal dresses during his trip to Britain, he is also depicted in Landon's *Nepal* wearing English clothes, including the garments of its high-ranking military officers, to evoke a model of masculinity that was different from the one suggested by the self-exoticising dresses of Jung Bahadur's. In other words, while Chandra Shumsher followed his uncle's example by allowing himself to be seen as a hyper-masculine oriental ruler in exotic garments, he combined that exotic model of oriental manliness with the model of British imperial masculinity. By wearing his exotic gems and royal clothes, Chandra Shumsher evoked the image of an oriental prince who demanded to be seen as a leader of a sovereign, independent nation. At the same time, by dressing in British clothes and military uniforms, Chandra was not only able to project himself before the English as a modern ally of the Empire, but also succeeded in presenting a model of masculinity that was closer to the prototype of rational, middle-class English masculinity, a masculinity that was different from the physical, impulsive masculinity of its young adults and working-class subjects.

Landon writes that Chandra 'attended the picturesque ceremony of trooping on the Horse Guards Parade' in the uniform of a major-general of the British Army and that he also visited Edinburgh, Sussex, and Glasgow 'wearing British suit and boots'.⁷⁴ He also describes further how Chandra Shumsher visited Oxford during the commemoration week and received the honorary degree of Doctor of Civil Law from the chancellor of the university. It is important to make note of the manner in which Chandra Shumsher's visit

⁷³ Landon, 1928, Vol II, p. 122.

⁷⁴ Landon, 1928, Vol II, p. 124.

was later represented in *The Oxford Chronicle*: 'The Prime Minister of Nepal...had also been in his time a student and had successfully passed the examinations in the university of Calcutta, of which Lord Curzon was chancellor during the six years of his viceroyalty. The King and the Queen had already received their distinguished guest with a welcome due to a friend and ally, and the university now willingly added its meed of recognition.'⁷⁵ Unlike the physical, pre-modern oriental masculinity of Jung Bahadur's, Chandra Shumsher's restrained, 'rational' manhood was seen in such imperial representations as inextricably associated with his English education. While this perception reduced Chandra Shumsher's exotic otherness, making him a less colourful personality than his 19th-century predecessor, it also made him appear a much more reliable ally of the Empire, one who could be counted on to support British India in its hour of need.

No other text points to the rational modernity of Chandra Shumsher more than his famous 'Appeal for the Emancipation of Slaves and Abolition of Slavery', a prose tract that was produced in both Nepali and English. It is an extraordinary document in which Chandra Shumsher draws from both Hindu Vedic sources as well as the discourse of western civilisation to support his argument. He speaks, for example, of how the Sanskrit scriptures, including *Yagna Valka*, *Smriti*, *Markendeya*, *Linga* and *Bhavisyottara* puranas, 'contain many injunctions' against the practice of slavery, and also how, according to these ancient sources, someone selling slaves in this life is sure to be born as a *vyadha*, or low-caste hunter, in the next life.⁷⁶ At the same time, speaking from a modern perspective, he argues that Nepal should change its outdated customs, which are perceived as a mark of stigma by the more civilised nations: 'But customs generally keep our nationalism intact and when they become effete are either discarded or yield place to others more vigorous. There are some which may have possessed a temporary utility but

75 Landon, 1928, Vol II, p. 124.

76 Rana, 1925, pp. 52-3.

have continued when that is passed until attention is drawn to them through change of circumstances.⁷⁷ It is important to note the choice of words here: while 'The Appeal' describes the traditional native customs as 'effete', it welcomes the arrival of more vigorous, and therefore manly, customs of the West as inevitable. 'The Appeal' reproduces the orientalist perception that the ancient cultures of the Indian subcontinent had lost their masculine vigour and degenerated into a dead set of effeminate customs, and so needed to be replaced by the manly, vigorous cultures of the West. Furthermore, speaking simultaneously from a traditional and a modern perspective, 'The Appeal' criticises both the changing circumstances in which the upper-caste Brahmins have to find employment as porters and *doli bearers*, while at the same time noting that such a change is inevitable due to the arrival of western modernity. It states: 'The enlightened opinion of the civilised world with whom we are coming into more and more intimate contact now is pressing us with all its moral force in every matter and we are compelled to move in this matter also to be abreast of times.'⁷⁸ Texts like 'The Appeal' and Landon's *Nepal* present the image of Chandra Shumsher as an enlightened ruler who, though an upholder of tradition, was simultaneously a modern rational man.

Not only does Landon present Chandra Shumsher as a rational, masculine native Kshatriya ruler, but also shows him as fusing two different models of mastery and masculinity by wearing royal Nepali clothes as well as turning out in English attire. While, by wearing native regal clothes, Chandra Shumsher could make a claim to the royal Kshatriya masculinity, his imitated Englishness reduced the pre-modern barbarism of his royal garments, making him modern and masculine at the same time.⁷⁹

77 Rana, 1925, p. 4.

78 Rana, 1925, pp. 44-5.

79 While in the case of Gandhi, an evocation of spiritual power was linked to a rejection of a secular, politico-cultural one, in the case of the Rana and Shah rulers, both spiritual and political power were united in the body of the *Shree Teen* and *Shree Panch* respectively. Thus, while Gandhi's mimicry of the lower-

Anti-Rana Nepali nationalism and Chandra Shumsher's 'effeminacy'

As early as 1907 a number of Nepalis living in India – influenced by the anti-colonial *swadeshi* Indian nationalist movement – were attacking the policies of Chandra Shumsher through newspapers like *Gorkha Sathi*. Prithiman Thapa, a dismissed Gorkha soldier, for example, addressed anti-Rana public meetings in May 1907 and sought 'support for the Swadeshi movement through Nepal's official representative in Calcutta, Colonel Bahadur Jang Rana'. Uprety has argued convincingly that the anti-colonial Rana movement in Nepal was initiated by those native Nepali subjects who had entered the space of westernisation or modernisation, and that 'like their counterparts in India, the Nepali intelligentsia was a product of the 'westernisation' process that had picked up momentum in the first half of the 20th century'.⁸⁰ Such westernised Nepali subjects in India, however, had passed through the detour of Gandhism in the early decades of the 20th century and often espoused Gandhi's cultural principles, which included an advocacy of a simple lifestyle and a rejection of European clothes and rituals.

Uprety writes of the splendid dresses, living quarters, and lifestyles of the Ranas that separated them from the common people, thus constituting a class of native rulers that appeared as different from the common folk as the white rulers of India did from their

class subaltern Indian subjects was represented as displacing the model of Kshatriya masculinity with that of the androgynous Brahmanical one, a model of manhood that functioned as the cornerstone of Indian nationalism, the texts of Landon, Whelpton and Shaha, among others, represent the Rana rulers as exalting the model of Kshatriya masculinity above its Brahmanical counterpart. Such a model of Kshatriya manhood, as the case of Chandra Shumsher amply illustrates, absorbed the signifiers of Western modernity in the early decades of the twentieth century, while simultaneously gaining its politico-cultural power by differentiating itself from other forms of 'low order' masculinities: the young adult masculinity of the Gurkha soldiers and the effeminacy of the Indian babus as well as that of the Shah kings like Surendra and Trailokya, whose power the Ranas had usurped.

80 Uprety, 1992, p. 17.

native populace. 'The bright complexion of the Ranas was further enhanced by the colourful silky, satin garments they wore, the sparks of precious gems that decked their headdress and the spacious stately mansions they lived in. Here they lived like proud divinities in sharp contrast to the poor earthy brethren who surrounded them.'⁸¹ It is interesting to see how the Ranas absorbed the rituals of Englishness within the system of their own royal rituals to strengthen the cultural gap between themselves and their fellow countrymen. Photographs of the eminent Ranas – Jung Bahadur, Bir Shumsher, Chandra Shumsher, Krishna Shumsher and Kaisher Shumsher – in their English shooting outfits often show them posing majestically in front of slain tigers during hunting trips. These Tarai hunts often functioned as occasions for members of the British ruling class and the Rana rulers of Nepal to come together to make a common assertion of mutual mastery and masculinity. The photographs of King George V's hunt in the Tarai in December 1911 – like the prints of the Prince of Wales's hunt in Chitwan from 14 to 21 December, 1921 – for example, show the Rana rulers in their English shooting dresses, including hunting shoes, breeches and coats, standing frozen in imperial manly poses alongside their British guests in front of slain tigers, while the Nepali soldiers and other subaltern natives, who were often employed to round up the tigers, are pictured as undifferentiated figures at the background, unable to emerge out of the constructions of young adult manhood to which they were assigned in British representations.

The early anti-Rana writings in Nepal often tend to read the Anglicisation of the Rana ministers as a symptom of their moral degeneration. In a satirical tract titled *Makai ko Kheti* (Cultivation of Maize), for example, Krishna Lal Adhikari made a symbolic attack upon Chandra Shumsher through 'a comparative analysis of the utility of a dog of an English breed and a native dog'.⁸² Bhandari has argued that Adhikari's tract was intended to satirise the

81 Uprety, 1992, p. 11.

82 Uprety, 1992, pp. 26-7.

Anglicisation of the Ranas by comparing the native dog that fights to its last to protect the crop of maize from thieves to the English dog with its improved appearance that does nothing to fight the intruders.⁸³ Sharma has similarly argued that *Makai ko Kheti* criticised the westernisation of Chandra Shumsher and his high officials by deploying symbolic methods: '[T]he book also dealt with the various insects and termites that could destroy a maize crop and, in doing so had used the term "red headed pests" and "black headed pests". Those terms were somehow interpreted as being directed not towards the insects in a technical sense but towards the high echelon of Rana officialdom that wore caps bearing these colours as parts of their respective official attire.'⁸⁴ Uprety reads Adhikari's allegory as a 'political satire on the pro-British policies of Premier Chandra Shumsher, who had developed an English taste, opinion and intellect.' Uprety goes on to discuss that Chandra Shumsher himself 'symbolised the ease and comfort' of the English dog, while the 'ill clothed, ill fed and poverty stricken Nepali people represented the *bhote kukur* (native dog)'. Such an interpretation makes sense when we consider that Tara Nath Ghimire, himself a writer and a contemporary of Adhikari, had contrasted 'the native dog which sleeps in the open air and feeds on the corn-meal musk and wild vegetable stew' with the 'pampered English dog, which only eats rice pudding and sleeps and snores in sofas and couches of the rich and nobility'.⁸⁵ While Chandra Shumsher's alternations between his royal Kshatriya garments and English dress is represented by Landon as fusing two different signifiers of power upon his publicly visible body, the English-trained anti-Rana Nepali intelligent-

83 Bhandari, 2045, p. 37. Bhandari argues that the real author of the book was a certain Bhojraj Kafle, who, like Adhikari, was an official in the Rana administration. Following the controversy after the publication of the book, however, all the blame was placed upon Adhikari, who was sentenced to prison for nine years by Chandra Shumsher. After serving only three years of punishment, Adhikari died of tuberculosis in prison in 1980 BS (CE 1923-24). In Nepali history the incident is known as 'Makai Parba'.

84 Sharma, 2045, p. 78.

85 Uprety, 1992, p. 27.

sia, following the example of Gandhi, not only refused a mimicry of Englishness but also attacked the Rana prime minister for miming the British rulers. Within the context of such a critique, the signifier of the honest though uncultivated 'native dog' was linked with the values of true Nepali martial masculinity, whereas the pampered English dog was seen as sign of a Rana aristocracy that had become feeble and hence effeminate.

In addition to the challenge of the anti-Rana nationalists, as both Shaha and Uprety argue, Chandra Shumsher's imitation of the imperial models was also looked at critically by those members of his own Rana clan whom he had placed among the 'C' class, removing them effectively from the roll of succession. Uprety has maintained that the Ranas of the 'C' class were often critical of the acquired Englishness of Chandra Shumsher and associated his imitation of imperial dresses and manners with his thin, degenerating body affected by tuberculosis, a body no longer capable of ruling the nation.⁸⁶ It is probable that Chandra Shumsher used the cultural strategy of alternating between the royal clothes of a ruling-class Kshatriya and the clothes of upper-class Englishmen in order to deal with such a possible challenge to his masculinity and political authority. Landon, for example, writes of the way in which Chandra Shumsher's daily rituals and manners of dressing reflected the complex cultural background that led him both to imitate the imperial models, and, at the same time, reject them strategically: 'In general he dresses quietly in a kind of undress frock-coated uniform, and does not, except on greatest occasions, use the magnificent diamond head-dress or the other insignia of his high office...but on rare occasions when he appears in public he is generally dressed in a plain double breasted European suit of dark blue, wearing the triple emerald necklace, a crescent of huge stones on his breast, and a jewelled badge on his cap.'⁸⁷ Trained in English language and culture, unlike Jung Bahadur, Chandra Shumsher did not shun an

86 Uprety, 1992, p. 275.

87 Landon, 1928, Vol II, p. 91.

imitation of western clothes in public; at the same time, however, he followed the caste rituals scrupulously as part of his everyday routine, rejecting the western influence that shaped him: 'He goes to his first bath of obligation where soap is used that is of ceremonial purity. After being anointed by purified pastes, he enters a new bath into which a few spoonfuls of the sacred Ganges water have been poured. He then goes to the room set aside for his spiritual observances and there makes his daily symbolic offering to the Brahmans of five rupees and eight annas...'⁸⁸ While Chandra Shumsher's English clothes fused with his royal gems and stones to function as signifiers of cultural and political power to reaffirm his mastery and masculinity, his strict observance of caste rules protected him from the charges that his masculinity was compromised due to his imitation of the English. In other words, Chandra Shumsher occupies a mobile, shifting position in the cultural economy of the early 20th-century Nepal.

Conclusion

Masculinity, just like femininity, is not singular but plural. In other words, there is not a single, universal model of masculinity; rather, there are multiple masculinities shaped by a variety of factors, including class, ethnicity, and institutional and political location. This study has shown how the masculinity of common Gorkhali soldiers was represented as being similar to the masculinity of lower-class Britons, a mode of masculinity associated with qualities such as physical valour, courage, impulsiveness, and lack of rational control. This was different from British representations of the masculinity of the Rana prime ministers, Jung Bahadur and Chandra Shumsher, who were seen as approximating the model of upper- and middle-class British masculinities – modes of 'being a man' that was culturally seen as related to values such as rationality and self control, in addition to physical strength.

At the same time, Jung Bahadur's masculinity was represented as

88 Landon, 1928, Vol II, p. 93.

‘pre-modern’ and hence different from the ‘modern’ masculinity of middle-class Britons. By contrast, Chandra Shumsher’s masculinity – tied to his adaptation of western clothes and modern world views – was seen as relatively more modern than that of Jung Bahadur’s. Such a mimesis of the West, however, made Chandra Shumsher vulnerable to attacks from anti-Rana writers who thought that his masculinity may have degenerated due to his consumption of western goods. Landon’s representation of Chandra Shumsher shows that the latter might have tried to deal with such possible accusations by alternatively performing two different models of masculinity and mastery: that of a ‘pre-modern’ royal Kshatriya masculinity tied to the discourse of Nepali nationalism; and that of upper-class British masculinity associated with the ‘modernity’ of European foreignness. By passing in and out of the intersecting circuits of royal Kshatriya and British masculinities, he took on multiple cultural avatars; performing alternating ‘modes of being a man’ in relation to the social gazes that sought to read his body as a contested site that was cut across by the discourses of Hindu caste system, Nepali nationalism, and western modernity.

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