

Travel as Transgression: Negotiating the *Sadar/Andar* Boundaries in Ashapurna Devi's Fiction

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Abstract

The majority of colonial Bengali literature depicting a female homosocial milieu, shows that the world of women, be it circumscribed by the constructs of fiction or bound by the guidelines of society, was mostly static, usually relegated to the corners of an exclusively masculine domain. Although interpersonal conflicts, oratorical warfare, and domestic calisthenics often transformed the kitchens and dining rooms into spaces of transgression, as far as geographical space is considered, women were mostly prohibited from pervading more than a very miniscule expanse of it. However, transition arrives through the pen of many authors, and even the ones known for their propensity towards writing of women within the frontiers of the household space slowly start to introduce the geographical migration of women in their writings. A pertinent example of this is Ashapurna Devi, who brings forth various women characters transcending domestic boundaries in her literary works, and their unique narratives are shaped by a series of intersections of their gender and class identities. The itinerant women in these cases are not adventurer-seekers flitting through places, nor are they seasoned travellers out to collate a travelogue of their experiences. For them travelling is a series of negotiations, often a lot of sacrifice measured against the bare minimum liberty granted. How then, do we read these travellers, and more importantly, how do they read the world? Often hailed as a proto-feminist author, Ashapurna Devi's own understanding of gender relations moulds these characters with nuances of her time. This paper seeks to delve into these various aspects, and gain an insight into the transactions between these women and the world as characterised by its rapidly shifting spatial dimensions. Instead of re-reading the oft-studied Satyabati trilogy, this paper will focus on the novels '*Nitfal*', '*Kalyani*', '*Tabu Aajo Achhi*', '*Gachher Pata Neel*', and '*Dolna*' from her oeuvre.

Keywords: Bengali literature, Ashapurna Devi, gender studies, postcolonial, travel literature

Alas! No more good girls of yore/ In gods and rites whose hearts remained
For them you mourn, those days are gone/ Now Bethune alone has so ordained
Them wench on land with a snap of hand/ Are taking up books now as they please
They read the A-B s, and dress as Bibis/ And soon they'll speak the Western speak...
Brethren I say, lament the day/ For the sight you'll soon be bound to greet
When they hike a ride, to the countryside/ And drive their buggies down the street.¹

Attempts to segregate the 'material' and 'spiritual'² spheres of action (to sustain an inner existence incorruptible by imperialism) led to momentous transformations in the identity category of the 'ideal woman' in late-nineteenth and twentieth century Bengal. As the above extract from Ishwarchandra Gupta's *Durbhikkho (Famine)* suggests, rewriting Indian women's movement across the boundaries separating the home (*andar*) and the world (*sadar*) triggered widespread hysteria and/or speculation about their newfound role in society. As "the keeper of the social order ... keeping the public/private, productive/reproductive, sadar/andar (public/private) binaries intact"³, the ideal woman was meant to take immense care to never cross these boundaries of the permissible/prohibited. But suddenly, with the advent of a new modernity, the *andar*—so far considered the sacrosanct centre of the nation—could no longer remain impervious to outward influences. Against this backdrop, Bengali literature became a site where the multifaceted complexities of the woman question played out.

Although not everyone visualised the new Indian woman with as rigid a lens as Ishwar Gupta, texts such as *Anandamath* or *Debi-Chowdhurani* by Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay often show extraordinary women traversing the *sadar*, only to dutifully return or pledge allegiance to the domain of the *andar* at the end of their arc. Tagore's novels centred on the nationalist struggle for independence (*Gora*, *Ghare Baire*, etc.) also foreground the conversation on women's emancipation, and even his short stories (such as *Nashtanirh*), which seemingly focussed on interpersonal conflicts, subtly weave in the idea that the freedom of the nation is invariably entwined with the independence of its women. These different portrayals often assimilated in the prototype of the contemporary modern woman as viewed by the average 'progressive' Indian she is "imported from Victorian England... [but] dressed with traditional Indian womanly qualities."⁴ She is refined but not negligent of feminine duties, wise in the ways of the world, but still faithfully confined to the domestic realm.

The works of Ashapura Devi, who arrives on the Bengali literary scene in the twentieth century, should also be read in continuity to this canon, as she addresses Indian women's transformation with respect to the reconfigurations of spatial and cultural boundaries. In these texts, the proverbial '*Laxman Rekha*'⁵ is perhaps the most threatened in instances of travel, for it translates to a literal crossing of the boundaries separating the *sadar* and *andar*. This article intends to look into Ashapura Devi's novels *Kalyani* (1954), *Tabu Ajo Achhi (I'm Still Here, 1967)*, *Dolna (The Swing, 1963)*, *Gachher Pata Neel (The Leaves Are Blue, 1969)* and *Nitfal (Sum Total, 1985)*, to analyse how they represent travel as an act of transgression. It will also investigate how the travelling woman is held to certain parameters of righteousness, and the punitive measures that enforce the same in case of deliberate/inadvertent breaches on their part.

Religion, transgression and travel

The two primary female characters of *Gachher Pata Neel* are Sunanda and Meenakshi – respectively, the wife and the daughter of the house. The foremost information provided about Sunanda is that she is intent on going out every evening, flitting from one club to another, often inebriated to the point of losing consciousness. Bijoya, her mother-in-law laments, "The wife of the house – dancing around with men, what more can we ask for? Those ridiculous scanty dresses – makes me want to hang my head in shame."⁶

The erstwhile Bengali socio-cultural and-religious ethos too vilified women for such displays of brazenness. The Lakshmi *panchali* (once a veritable guidebook for many domesticated women cross Bengal) features an injunction by the goddess, where she avers that the shambolic state of the earth is due to its indecent women: "With garrulous laughs, and tongues that bruise/ They roam wherever, whenever they choose/ All virtues of shame the Woman adorned/ One by one, have all been scorned."⁷ The onus is on the *bhadra-mohila* (genteel-woman/ lady in Bengali) to ensure a smooth functioning of society. Any deviance from her gender role must call for apocalyptic effects! The women are to augment the respectability of the family they marry into, once the boundary of respectability is crossed, she is bereft of her gentility. A picture of the pious Sunanda of earlier days is provided for reference – "[She was always seen] worshipping the Shivalinga sitting by a corner of the house...[after marriage] she never drank water before putting vermillion on her parting."⁸ The image of the ideal woman is endorsed,

the one intently bowing before the authority of the phallus pre-marriage, and honouring the vermilion afterwards.

How then does the author rectify Sunanda's incorrigible ways? It comes suddenly, and conveniently. Sunanda has a complete change of heart, an absolute reversal of her personal system of ethics, and commits suicide by overdosing on sleeping pills. In the last moments of her life, she mourns "I found out that I had a value even beyond the bounds of my home, but could I ever find happiness? Or even peace, for that matter? Never, I never found it."⁹ The end of Sunanda is very consistent with the resolution of the rest of the vagrants to be discussed next. Any woman who oversteps her boundaries, ends up brutalised (Shanu), snubbed (Balaka), or, as seen from this example, dead. Nobody gets away scot-free from these transgressions of overstepping their preordained limits.

Meenakshi's system of ethics also compel her not to go away with her lover Dibakar, even after many invitations to a liaison. It is not just her class identity but also her caste identity that prevents Meenakshi from giving in to vagrancy. Referred to as 'the son of a Shudra'¹⁰, Dibakar Das, the antagonist and the sole prominently non-Savarna person in the novel is depicted as a lying, rapacious man who seeks to coerce her into marriage by besmirching her virtue. His physicality is described with adjectives (savage, rough) that connote him in a sub-human light. Despite being Meenakshi's lover, Dibakar revolts her, and she admits to feeling impure in his proximity. She avoids his touch, and feels increasingly more conscious of transgressing against her familial values. This fear of contamination, of defiling a Brahminical bloodline arises because the "purity of the household... [is] contingent on [the Savarna woman's] purity—spiritual, sexual, as well as caste purity."¹¹ Consequently, the transgressive nature of travel is re-established when she finally acquiesces to a trip to the countryside, and is brutally raped by Dibakar and left to fend for herself in the middle of nowhere. Now that the vagrant woman comes back to the other side of propriety, she has to reject the fruit of her womb, or accept a life of quiet confinement as the mother of an illegitimate child. Meenakshi ventures towards the latter. Although this portends a scandal, the woman dutifully chooses the domestic realm of quiet self-chastisement rather than public ignominy.

Respectability, Rape, Retribution

Nitfal (1985) begins with patriarch Bhavadeb Sen spotting his daughter-in-law Neera in Park Circus at noon and launching into a soliloquy how “everything ought to have limits, and one must follow it too”¹². His defeatist rage at being unable to impose such limitations on the younger populace raises a vital question that underscores the transgressive nature of women’s travel: who decides the parameters of propriety? Even his wayward son Bapi recedes into predetermined boundaries of respectability when it comes to taking Neera out on a ride on his bike. He says, “You’re the receptacle of the Sen family’s decency-civility-respect-honour, wait but a few days Madam, I’ll buy a real car for you to get lifts on.”¹³ The son might circumvent the doctrine of gentility, but in order to uphold the worthiness of the house, it is advisable that the women cease travel.

Bhavadeb’s daughter Shanu is confined too. Her confession that, “It is only hoping for a plum job for Partho that Shanu has been building stairways to her heaven”¹⁴, is less self-serving or avaricious, for the other kind of travel that women embark on – that of upward mobility on the socio-economic paradigm – can only be sustained by the providing father or spouse. But when an unfortunate misunderstanding results in Partho taking a faraway job (effectively jilting Shanu), she too decides to take up a measly teaching job in the wilderness of Gosaba. Her family’s attitude towards her choice is that of disregard, since it is unnecessary (at worst – unthinkable) for women of her class identity to travel for any cause other than leisure or pleasure. But it is important to note that even though her departure is hasty, she still has her chaperone father in tow, because the *bhadramohila* is in perennial fear of losing the prefix in her appellation. Even in her reckless desertion of everyone, she must remain faithful to the idea of the reticent, obedient girl back at home. The school secretary Jagannath Babu reinforces these implicit boundaries when he proudly proclaims his purdah-practicing wife does not grant entrance to the likes of Shanu in her kitchen. “For to her, (the male) Master Babu and (the female) Master Didi is quite the same.”¹⁵ This proves the conscious defeminisation of the woman who travels beyond the expanse of her domestic purview.

Bhavadev’s father Satyadeb Sen, a former freedom fighter, writes in his journal, “Women can’t be kept bound to their homes anymore...they have their rights, have their freedom, even in the workplace...but what next? Do they even know that freedom must bring with it responsibility?”¹⁶ Of course, if he has similar qualms about the newfound freedom of the native Indian men, he never pens them in his journal. Satyadeb reassures the readers, the modern Indian woman is markedly different from the image of the ideal woman Swami Vivekananda

had envisioned. Vivekananda proclaims in *Swamijir Ahoban (The Call of Swamiji)*, “India, do not forget – the ideal of your womankind: Sita, Sabitri, Damyanti”¹⁷ – mythical women who travel great distances accompanying their husbands, living or dead, (often for the express purpose of breathing him back to life) – his quest and her quest being the self-same. This travel is permissible. Through the jungles of Panchavati, roads of Vidarva, or even the underworld, the ideal woman fulfils her wifely duties. With chastity on her side, she must put all accusations of misdemeanours to rest, or die trying.

But Shanu cannot escape unscathed or ‘undefiled’ when Jagannath traps and rapes her, after cutting off all means of correspondence with home. Her misfortune is described as a misstep – “Shanu didn’t know she was stepping foot in a snake hole”¹⁸ where the world is a series of perilous traps, waiting to engulf the woman whole when she steps out of line. Following their reconciliation, Partho rehabilitates the abused Shanu, but also states, “But it is necessary to learn a lesson in time Shanu, don’t you know what our country is like?”¹⁹ Her traumatising experience only amounts to a learning curve, teaching her restraint. Needless to say, Partho does not show much inclination for introspection, seeing how he too had gone away on such a poorly-thought out trip, but of course he does not have to, because the travelling man does not face the same consequences for his momentary lapses. Fate, if that is what we are to use in place of ‘authorial intent’, is remarkably partisan when it comes to meting out retribution for these foibles.

Mother, Wanderer, Transgressor

The resolutions of these travelling women’s arcs embed yet another message in them – not just the epithet *bhadra*, but also her *mohila*-ness is at stake while aping the manners of men by stepping outside. This defeminisation occurs with the tropes of pointing out a series of traits – namely, Kindness, Empathy, Shame, Reticence, etc – represented not as affective traits, but as qualities inherently built in to the female physiology. Much like the varied social dictums that discourage women from abdicating perpetual interiority, her body is characterised as a self-regulating space, inscribing and reinscribing boundaries of permissibility.

The mother’s body, in particular, is vested with the most sacred signifiers of this myth of femininity. Any breach in this condition dictates that eventually and inevitably, masculine traits creep in, thus jeopardising her innate maternal instinct. Neera, for example, decides to abort

her first child, as motherhood would pose as an impediment to freedom of movement. She is chastised for her indiscretion, and Bhavaddeb thunders at her husband, “I want to know, who gave you the freedom to murder the progeny of Bhabadev Sen? Answer me!”²⁰ This reinforces two ideas, that the woman’s body is foremost defined by its reproductive function; and subsequently, it is not her own to interpret as she chooses but is subject to the collective deliberations of the family/society/patriarchy.

Atashi from *Tabu Ajo Achhi* follows a similar trajectory. While she is elevated to celestial heights by Nishith for her ‘ethereal appeal’, things change when she mothers his child. Nishith, despite grooming Atashi in his theatre group for such a long time, vehemently dislikes the idea of his wife transitioning into a cinema actress, because the lover and the mother is never held to the same standards. Their boundaries of propriety are subject to re-evaluation. On this account, there is a complete concurrence between the radical Nishith and his conservative, estranged brother who says, “Know this, once the bird learns to fly, you’ll never be able to hold her back any longer.”²¹

Atashi too realizes that Nishith is unwilling to compromise when it comes to putting his wife’s charms on the market, although the barter was once carried out on his own terms. Thus, she travels to Bombay and changes her identity to the siren Bidyutlata. Years later, her son Goutam, upon finding out the truth about his mother, confronts her, and is sorely disappointed, almost having made peace with the idea of a dead mother than a non-normative one. But, at this point, Bidyutlata has the fated change of heart once again, and thus follows her second exodus – back to Kolkata. Although she uses her very femininity and sexual allure to traverse the masculine space, Atashi too finally has to get back into the coven of the sanctioned code of feminine conduct. Thus, her arc ends with her disavowal of the expatriate life in Bombay.

Esha Dey writes, that even Ashapura Devi’s own in-laws “accepted her creative preoccupations on the condition that she should perform her duties in the household as a wife, mother.”²² This arises from the understanding that even on inhabiting “the outer [masculine, transactional] domain, [the mother] carried the domestic unit and the household”²³ with her. Atashi too knows that there is really only one path for her to follow – that of motherhood or a professional. So, her pledge: “Maybe that girl Atashi still lives within Bidyutlata. She still dreams of a blooming family, where she is the woman, the wife, the mother. [That girl] will cultivate her art anew – the art of life”²⁴, seems more like a compromise, because this ‘art of life’ is the only art prescribed for the good woman who does not transcend boundaries. Nishith

might have dilly-dallied with the same line of work, might have contaminated himself in the same entertainment business, but he can re-establish himself anew as a respectable citizen. Atashi/Bidyutlata might not have the same shot at redemption.

Sumona from *Dolna* is an exception. For one, she travels with her parents. Her voyage resembles the more commonplace, textbook notion of travel for the average Bengali. Her father Kantikumar, one of the most exceptionally empathetic male characters in the novel, also encourages her daughter to step out and pursue her degrees, sometimes earning the ire of other family members, who feel, “Studying for a B.A or a M.A does not mean granting full freedom to venture anywhere whatsoever.”²⁵ But things go wrong in this idyllic vacation, when Sumona chances upon an abandoned baby boy on one of her evening walks and returns home with him. Sumona’s case is very different from the other travelling women, because she is the only one who jeopardises her own (albeit limited) freedom of movement to fulfil the maternal role. She stays bound at home to take care of the infant, and unlike Neera or Sunanda, to whom motherhood essentially poses an impediment to movement, it is for the baby’s sake she decides to leave her home and get as far away from her known surroundings as possible.

But on her way to collegemate Deepa’s house in Sreerampur, Sumona realizes why self-sufficiency does not always guarantee autonomy. To disclaim the boundary is to face the unknown that provides no succour. It is only a matter of time since she is reduced to a hapless victim, desperate to feed the exhausted child, even contemplating beggary in the process. When she is intercepted by the police and reunited with her family, she is more relieved than upset, more so because her partner Siddharta decides to bring up the infant as his own with Sumona. The child’s future seems somewhat sanguine, and Sumona’s great journey of self-actualisation is cut short, and the novel ends with them driving back to her house, to return to the very protected surroundings from where she came, and where she presumably will remain in the days to come. This novel toys with the idea of transgression, only to reassert the viability of the *sadar/andar* boundaries. It does not matter that women like Sumona have conquered the supposedly masculine world of academia, at the end of it all, they are destined to return to the primordial, time-honoured vocation for women- that of motherhood, volitionally or through happenstance.

Paradigm of the permissible

Whenever the various interpersonal relationships are described in the novel *Kalyani*, travel metaphors abound, and they delineate the distinguishable aspects of displacement when conjugated with gender and class. Everywhere, be it from the blooming romance of the younger characters – Moni waiting for Nikhil to visit her house for their brief interludes, or be it the tempestuous dynamic between the unattainable Bibhuti and the timorous widow Kalyani – the traditional gender roles of courtship dictate that the gallant comes with his steed to the castle where the woman sits, eager to be whisked away.

The daughter, Moni, is chained to the dictums of her time, but her confinement does not mitigate her migratory instinct and her letters reverberate with zeal of exploring the unknown. She writes about the profundity of her feelings for Nikhil from within the confines of her home, hiding from her ultraconservative mother. But, as the narrative states: “How could Moni ever entrap such an ocean (of emotions) with mere words?”²⁶ The equation of scriptural space with topographical space mainly emerges from Moni’s inability to traverse the latter. Much like epistolary novels act as an ersatz assertion of the narrative voice’s surrogate existence, here letter-writing becomes akin to surrogate migration.

Diametrically opposite to her is the wife of Professor Chatterjee, Balaka Devi. A socialite with a penchant for being fashionable, she has no problems having impromptu liaisons with young barristers in trains, or travelling all alone with the bachelor Nikhil. At the very beginning of the novel, a widowed Kalyani travels to Ishwarpur, escaping the patriarchal chokehold that awaited her in Kolkata. Thus, her tryst with travel is very different from Balaka’s impromptu wanderings. Like the widows of her time moved to places of pilgrimage, Kalyani decides to sustain her livelihood working odd jobs in an ashram, as life amidst family members had become unbearable in the cogwheel of rituals and abstinence.

Balaka, however, travels not out of necessity, or to salvage a personal crisis, but simply because it seems fun to spend her days play-acting a village belle in Nikhil’s ancestral abode. Although she embraces the bullock-cart, “Oh how marvellous! I feel so giddy just hearing about it!”²⁷ – she wants an immersive experience not at the cost of comfort, and procures extra funds from her husband to make sure her journey is as luxurious as possible. Her statement, “A lady cannot just walk some 20 kos road like the village girls”²⁸ succinctly sums up the vast chasm that exists between the idea of what constitutes travel across the different classes. Bibhuti’s coinage for Balaka – ‘Projapoti Marka (Butterfly Branded)’²⁹ describes her as a flitting butterfly, while also implying her coquettish ways. Concatenated with her excessive

wanderlust is her apparently excessive sexual allure, and this is pitted against the understated beauty of Kalyani or Moni.

It gradually becomes clear that a paradigm emerges when it comes to segregating the women in the novel, and their intent or capacity for travel often characterises this classification. There is the good woman, Moni – the one who stays at home, loves from within the circumscription of society-sanctioned values, accepts her subjugated state when compared with brother Mollinath, and is accommodating in her ways. Then there is the kind like the professor's wife Balaka, who is always on the side of excess – excess loquaciousness, excess frivolity, excess libertinism. It becomes clear with which faction the author's sympathy lies, and her entire discourse on travelling of women is pandering to the side in favour of keeping a check on these excesses. In this paradigm on which Moni and Balaka are posited at opposite ends, Kalyani falls somewhere on the middle, she travels, but only out of dire compulsion.

The author holds a certain kind of traveller woman in high regard, the 'un-poeticised' variety as she calls the illiterate dames of yore. They are described as steady on their feet, always sacrificing personal comforts to accommodate others, sans a veneer of sophistication or elegance. Ashapurna Devi notes how this traveller woman is not attractive to the male gaze, since they threaten their counterparts with their physical bravado and mental fortitude. So, entering the masculine world precludes flaunting feminine wiles, or so it was, before figures like Balaka Devi enter. This insistence on reclaiming femininity while crossing boundaries makes it doubly transgressive, and hence the vilification of women like Balaka, to serve as a cautionary tale.

In conclusion, across many novels of Ashapurna Devi, the travelling woman's breach in the masculine world is almost always followed by a breach in her physiological constitution. Sometimes, as an aftermath of traversing space, she is raped, making the liability of her womb serve as a reminder of her femininity. Conversely, Neera's abortion, or forceful abjuration of the fruit of her womb is a quasi-indoctrination into the man's world, but she too is demonised in the narrative, thereby underscoring the transgressive nature of her decision. To shun the garb of the *bhadramohila* is to voluntarily shun her femininity – and hence Neera's brazen, libertine ways, Sunanda's alcoholism, and Bidyutlata's exodus from the husband and son. But this crossing-over does not come free from penalties, the author metes out punitive justice to Sunanda and Bidyutlata. At her kindest, Ashapurna Devi writes a redemption arc for the latter,

but in Sunanda's case, the implication is clear that the most acceptable kind of bad mother is a dead one.

Those who fail to make this sacrifice completely, or are stuck on the threshold of this road to appropriating masculinity (like Shanu or Meenakshi) are also taxed heavily for this half-hearted dalliance with gender roles – the invasion of their physical autonomy almost seems like the society's prerogative to put them back in their place, to confine them to their inherent and ultimate reproductive function. In case of Sumona, her entry into the off-limits, masculine world is immediately conjugated by her chancing upon a deserted child, thus setting in motion the fulfillment of her maternal role. All the contingencies of the world only work to prove that there lurks no good beyond the boundary of permissible freedom, and if someone happens to cross it by mistake, they are meant to come back with an epiphanic realisation of the debt they owe to civilisation on account of their socio-biological makeup. Even when the rape does not end with a pregnancy, the resolution of the narrative is brought about by the lover's acceptance and rehabilitation of the fallen woman, thus signifying a re-assimilation with the orthodox, or at the very least, the normative familial unit. Autonomy of the individual is never rewarded with a perpetuation of the freedom sanctioned, it is cut short by this reality-check, and the heroine then reminisces about her stint with vagrancy from the comfort and security of her house, with a child on her lap or a dutiful provider by her side.

Notes

¹ Ishwarchandra Gupta, *Ishwarchandra Gupter Granthaboli*, ed. Kaliprasanna Bidyaratna (Calcutta: Basumati Karyaloy, 1910), 127, my translation.

² Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 6.

³ Jasodhara Bagchi, *Interrogating Motherhood* (Kolkata: Sage Publications India Pvt Ltd, 2017), 4.

⁴ Bharati Ray, "Women of Bengal: Transformation of Ideas and Ideals 1900-1947", *Social Scientist* 19, no. 5% (May - June, 1991): 3-23. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3517870>.

⁵ The boundary drawn by Laxmana in the myth of *Ramayana* to protect Sita from peril when left without supervision – emblematic of the boundaries that have remained in operation in a patriarchal society to confine/limit/domesticate women.

⁶ Ashapurna Devi, *Doshti Upanyas* (Bengali: *Ten Novels*) (Calcutta: Ananda Publishers, 2012), 26, my translation.

⁷ *Shree Shree Laxmi Devir Panchali O Bratakatha*, compiled by Shaktipada Chakrabarty (Calcutta: Saraswati Library, n.d), my translation.

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- ⁸ Ashapurna Devi, *Doshti Upanyas*, 26, my translation.
⁹ Ibid, 85, my translation.
¹⁰ Ibid, 76, my translation.
¹¹ Swati Moitra, "A Nineteenth-Century Bengali Housewife and her Robinson Crusoe Days: Travel and Intimacy in Kailashbshini Debi's 'The Diary of a Certain Housewife'," *Feminismo/s* 36 (December 2020): 49-76, <https://doi.org/10.14198/fem.2020.36.03>.
¹² Ashapurna Devi, *Doshti Upanyas*, 786, my translation.
¹³ Ibid, 806, my translation.
¹⁴ Ibid, 797, my translation.
¹⁵ Ibid, 840, my translation.
¹⁶ Ibid, 805, my translation.
¹⁷ Swami Vivekananda, *Swamijir Ahoban* (Kolkata : Udbodhan Publications, 2005), my translation.
¹⁸ Ashapurna Devi, *Doshti Upanyas*, my translation.
¹⁹ Ibid, 870, my translation.
²⁰ Ibid, 840, my translation.
²¹ Ibid, 398, my translation.
²² Esha Dey, "An Authentic Voice Ashapurna Devi", *Indian Literature* 39, no. 1 (1996): 8-16. Accessed May 27, 2022. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23335711>.
²³ Swati Moitra, "Nineteenth Century Bengali Housewife", 49-76.
²⁴ Ashapurna Devi, *Doshti Upanyas*, 410, my translation.
²⁵ Ibid, 197, my translation.
²⁶ Ashapurna Devi, *Kalyani* (Calcutta: Kalika Printing Works, 1950), 80, my translation.
²⁷ Ibid, 14, my translation.
²⁸ Ibid, 16, my translation.
²⁹ Ibid, 105, my translation.

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