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Shani Mootoo's *Cereus Blooms at Night*:
Problematizing Jameson's Theory of National Allegory

In his 1986 article, "Third-World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capital," Marxist scholar and literary critic Frederic Jameson establishes a provocative theory about the nature of third-world literature. He asserts, "All third-world texts are necessarily...allegorical, and in a very specific way: they are to be read as what I will call *national allegories*" (Third-World, 69). While interesting and evocative, Jameson's thesis is ultimately problematic in several ways. Using Shani Mootoo's novel *Cereus Blooms at Night*, this essay will engage the complexities and problematics of Jameson's model of national allegory. Mootoo's novel can be read as a response to and a criticism of the structures of postcolonial nationalism. *Cereus Blooms at Night* centers on the stories of personal struggle and marginalization of several central characters, positions which are based on the oppression of their gender identities and sexual orientations. In the process of reclaiming female power and naturalizing a spectrum of gender identities, Mootoo complicates nationalism and subsequently, Jameson's theory.

In his book, *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act*, Jameson articulates his over-arching Marxist theory about literature and literary interpretation. Jameson dismisses the notion that novels can be read as a purely aesthetic experience, when he explains that his book is "little concerned to raise once again the traditional issues of philosophical aesthetics: the nature and function of art, the specificity of poetic language and of the aesthetic experience, the theory of the beautiful, and so

forth. Yet the very absence of such issues may serve as an implicit commentary on them; I have tried to maintain an essentially historicist perspective...the issues of an older philosophical aesthetics themselves need to be radically historicized, and can be expected to be transformed beyond recognition in the process” (Political, 11). Replacing the aesthetic formulation, Jameson argues that all texts must be interpreted through an understanding of their historical moment and political implications. Jameson believes that all literature is inherently political, a fact which is obscured by the philosophical chasm between personal identity and public politics created by the system of capitalism. In the first world, “we have been trained in a deep cultural conviction that the lived experience of our private existences is somehow incommensurable with the abstractions of economic science and political dynamics” (Third-world, 69).

Five years later, Jameson revisited the subject of *The Political Unconscious* when he wrote “Third-World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capital,” which is an expansion of Jameson’s literary theory. Adding to his analysis of first world literature, which he sees as forged by structures of capitalism, Jameson’s theory of third world literature is a corollary to his first theory. Because of the socioeconomic history of colonialism, Jameson believes that the conditions of slave labor and sexual violence perpetrated against colonized bodies have merged the public and private in the minds of third world peoples. Jameson theorizes that the relationship between public and private spheres in first-world and third-world views are diametrically opposed.

Jameson warns his reader of the dramatic conflations he makes in the binary he invokes in his argument. He says “It would be presumptuous to offer some general theory of what is often called third-world literature, given the enormous variety both of national

cultures in the third world and of specific historical trajectories in each of those areas” (Third-world, 68). Yet, he waves away these concerns, saying “I am using the term ‘third world’ in an essentially descriptive sense, and objections to it do not strike me as especially relevant to the argument I am making” (Third-world, 67). To Jameson, the terms first-world and third-world are useful only in relation to one another, in the traditional colonial binary. In Jameson’s Marxist economic schema, “they [third-world nations] are all in various distinct ways locked in a life-and-death struggle with first-world cultural imperialism – a cultural struggle that is itself a reflection of the economic situation of such areas in their penetration by various stages of capital” (Third-world, 68). So despite the drastic conflation of homogenizing all third world nations and all first world nations on either side of the binary, Jameson attempts to redirect the focus away from this move and instead see only the relationship between and differentiation between the two. In this way, Jameson erases space for hybrid authors, like Mootoo, who are influenced by both first and third-world experiences and cultures.

Jameson continues to articulate the linkage between the first/third-world cultural divide and subsequently, the literary divide. Jameson writes, “one of the determinants of capitalist culture, that is, the culture of the western realist and modernist novel, is a radical split between the private and the public, between the poetic and the political, between what we have come to think of as the domain of sexuality and the unconscious and that of the public world of classes” (Third-world, 69). Because of the nature of capitalism itself and the ideology of individualism, which are inextricably intertwined, first world authors and readers alike view literature as purely private, purely aesthetic. Conversely, Jameson believes that in third-world nations, the concept of separation

between the public and private spheres is lacking because of the history of colonialism and the continuing influences of neo-imperialism. Jameson writes of third world texts, “*the story of the private individual destiny is always an allegory of the embattled situation of the public third-world culture and society*. Need I add that it is precisely this very different ratio of the political to the personal which makes such texts alien to us [first-world readers] at first approach” (Third-world, 69). Jameson summarizes his first world/third world juxtaposition in the context of Chinese author Lu Xun’s story, saying that the central action of the story is for Lu Xun a “social nightmare,” which “in a western writer would be consigned to the realm of the merely private obsession, the vertical dimension of personal trauma” (Third-world, 72).

In his most definitive invocation of the colonial binary, Jameson draws upon Hegel’s Master/Slave dialectic. He explains, “only the slave can attain some true materialistic consciousness of his situation, since it is precisely to that that he is condemned. The Master, however, is condemned to idealism – to the luxury of the placeless freedom in which any consciousness of his own concrete situation flees like a dream, like a word unremembered on the tip of the tongue” (Third-world, 85). Jameson continues, “This placeless individuality, this structural idealism which affords us...a welcome escape from the ‘nightmare of history,’ but at the same time it condemns our culture to psychologism and the ‘projections’ of private subjectivity. All of this is denied to third-world culture, which must be situational and materialist despite itself” (Third-world, 85). Jameson seems to fluctuate between whether or not he believes third-world authors have agency, in one way he says their use of national allegory is always

“conscious” but on the other hand, he invokes a master/slave relationship to show how the literature is forced into the allegorical form.

Jameson explains that in order “to read this [third-world] text adequately – we [westerners] would have to give up a great deal that is individually precious to us and acknowledge an existence and a situation unfamiliar and therefore frightening – one that we do not know and prefer *not* to know” (Third-world, 66). In our globalized capitalist society, the west is unwilling to see that their economic success continues to be predicated on the oppression and exploitation of the third world, a condition which is a direct result of the colonial legacy. This is a fact “we do not know and prefer not to know.” In the 20th century, global decolonization subverted imperialism into new forms, which Jameson refers to as “multinational capitalism,” a form of continuing oppression which is invisible to western countries. There is a denial in the West that novels are political: Jameson summarizes, “Such allegorical structures, then, are not so much absent from first-world cultural texts as they are unconscious, and therefore they must be deciphered by interpretive mechanisms that necessarily entail a whole social and historical critique of our current first-world situation” (Third-world, 79).

Third-world intellectuals, Jameson explains, craft allegorical structures, which are “conscious and overt” (Third-world, 80). Some postcolonial authors have deliberately picked up the national allegory as a mode for explicit political commentary. After decolonization, third-world intellectuals were trying give voice to the frustration of the postcolonial nation state. Jameson says that the national allegory is the “formal or literary manifestation of this political problem” of decolonization (Third-world, 76). While this is a valid point, however, the problem comes when Jameson conflates authors who are

explicitly involved in political nationalist movements with all other authors who are in Jameson's words, "condemned" to write national allegorical novels.

From his experiences in Cuba, Jameson describes the way in which literature as a political agent has been institutionalized in the education system there. At the college preparatory school he visited, Jameson noted that Cuba's school curriculum is taught "in a socialist setting which also very much identifies itself with the third world" (Third-world, 74-75). Jameson comments that "the semester's work I found most challenging was one explicitly devoted to the study of the role of the intellectual as such: the cultural intellectual who is also a political militant, the intellectual who produces both poetry and praxis" (Third-world, 75). Acutely aware of their own position as a "developing" country, the Cuban academy is invested in the overt mission of creating an entwined nationalist literature and political rhetoric, and training new generations of scholars to engage academic works that aspire for the betterment of the nation. Instead of staying within the Cuban context, Jameson cannot resist the urge to generalize: "in the third-world situation the intellectual is always in one way or another a political intellectual" (Third-world, 74). Jameson's example of Cuban political novels is a very compelling one, yet he fails to see the distinction between the intentionality of this mode and the ability of different or more complex forms of literature to be created by third-world authors.

Jameson comes close to articulating a literary theory that denies the existence of any sort of personal narrative, instead saying that all literature is inherently allegorical for the politics of the nation. It seems that he is praising third-world intellectuals for their awareness of this condition, despite the history of oppression that has informed this

consciousness. When Jameson approaches a critical reading of a “*semi-peripheral*” western novel that operates as a national allegory, Jameson’s conclusions destroy his earlier implications that personal and individual narrative are false illusions. In his reading of Spanish author Benito Perez Galdos’ novel, *Fortunata y Jacinta*, Jameson decides the novel can be read both as “an allegorical commentary on the destiny of Spain,” or in a way that sees the “political analogy as a metaphorical decoration for the individual drama” (Third-world, 79). This example creates problems in the rigid binaristic structure that Jameson is using, because his designation of Spain as “semi-peripheral” makes it semi-first-world. Despite its awkward relation to the binary, Galdos’ work is ultimately treated as belonging to the first-world, and suddenly personal narratives are possible. Jameson’s claims devalue the individual third-world “other” and erase the space for individualism in third-world literature, while still maintaining that third-world scholars are conscious of, and therefore choose to, writing exclusively in terms of political allegory. In this vacillation between the mandatory and voluntary imposition of the national allegory framework, Jameson is essentially allowing the third-world intellectual to erase their own agency and ability to produce a more complex work (like Galdos).

Shani Mootoo’s novel *Cereus Blooms at Night* can operate as a space in which to discuss Jameson’s thesis and its relationship to structures of postcolonial nationalism. Mootoo’s writing is influenced by her experience growing up in Trinidad, through the process of decolonization and the height of the Trinidadian nationalist movement. At the moment of decolonization, a new patriarchy emerged, which was in essence a reincarnation of the heteronormative colonial patriarchy. Because colonialist rhetoric had

been so internalized by the oppressed Trinidadians, the leaders of the new nation state proved their ability to rule by adopting the structures and ideologies of colonial power. Grace Hong writes, “Scholars of Trinidadian history have convincingly narrated the transition from the colonial era to the postcolonial (or neocolonial) one as mediated by an elite anticolonial nationalism that mobilized decolonization movements by, ironically, preserving the notions of propriety and morality first established in the colonial era” (Hong, 74). Nationalism became the project of asserting middle class values and patriarchal heterosexual relationships. Because of this formulation of nationalism, the structure of a novel as national allegory is fundamentally a masculinist structure, which denies space for women, lesbians and gays (Smyth, 147). While Jameson does not address gender specifically, his argument is layered over the masculinity and heterosexuality of nationalist doctrine. Also, Jameson’s engagement of sexual politics hints at the linkage between the racial and gender binaries.

Cereus Blooms at Night overtly resists easy assignment to a national project. While the novel is undoubtedly influenced by Trinidad, a colony of Britain until 1962, Mootoo deliberately creates a fictional space in which to set her novel. *Cereus Blooms at Night* takes place in the town of Paradise, on the fictional island of Lantanacamara. The white “British” characters in the novel are from yet another fictional place, referred to only as “The Shivering Northern Wetlands.” In this way, Mootoo subverts the desire for readers to see her novel as a political piece about Trinidad and asserts her agency as an author to control the content of her novel and the privatization of her characters. Instead of crafting her novel as overt political act, Mootoo writes a beautiful and complex novel that responds to the politics of nationalism, as it relates to gender and sexuality. However,

the novel is not confined to its interaction with the political, the personal narratives in the text exist in their own space, which is the site of nature Mootoo constructs for them. In this way, Mootoo naturalizes female power, a wide range of gender identities and reclaims the “paradise” of their island as a space for diverse and hybrid identities.

In Mootoo’s story, the narrator’s voice intrudes, explaining that he is unable to tell a story which is not affected by his telling of it. Additionally, the narrator is not merely a narrator, he is in fact the novel’s symbolic author, who “started to jot down everything she [Mala] said, no matter how erratic her train of thought appeared to be. When she saw me awaiting her next word and writing it down as soon as she uttered it, she drew nearer...I became her witness” (Mootoo, 99-100). As a sort of disclaimer, Tyler explains, “I cannot escape myself, and being a narrator who also existed on the periphery of the events, I am bound to be present...It is my intent, however, to refrain from inserting myself too forcefully. Forgive the lapses, for there are some, and read them with the understanding that to have erased them would have been to do the same to myself” (Mootoo, 3). It is this understanding of narrator intrusion that hints at the relevance of the real author’s underlying influence over her story, that it is impacted by her life, her experiences and her voice. It might seem that this hint at author’s presence might reinforce Jameson’s idea of literature as innately invested in the author’s politics, but Mootoo’s own hybridity complicates Jameson’s binaristic theory. As both a Trinidadian and a Canadian author, Mootoo refuses, and her novel refuses, to be confined within Trinidadian politics or third-world allegorical structures.

Returning to Jameson’s conflation of public and private, he sees sexuality as the primary site of this intersection. The exercise of sexuality as biopower was a result of the

conflation of the racial hierarchy and gender hierarchy. Mootoo's novel engages this political and libidinal merger in several ways, the foremost of which is Chandin's sexual oppression of his daughter, Mala. Jameson, using a Chinese novel as an example, writes that the main character and his enemies both represent different aspects (or reactions to) the nation. In this framework, Chandin is "the persecutor...whose response to powerlessness is the senseless persecution of the weaker and more inferior members of the hierarchy" (Third-world, 74). Chandin's libidinal perversion manipulates the gender hierarchy to act out frustrations that result from Chandin's racial oppression, and the attempts of formerly males to exert their power by replicating colonial gender politics. Yet, while the novel does include the linkage between the racial and gender systems, it is Mootoo's treatment of it which is the basis for her complication of more traditional narratives.

Mootoo reclaims female power when Mala overthrows her tormentor, Chandin, killing him in self-defense and locking his body inside the house that once imprisoned her. After this, Mala never again sleeps inside the house and instead creates a new home for herself in the half-acre yard. The house, the edifice of Chandin's oppression, is literally consumed by the forces of nature, weather and the hyper-growth of Mala's plants. Mala is able to communicate with the plants and further their growth: "She knelt on the ground and whispered to the grass and other young plants, encouraging them to grow, and then she listened as they stretched up to her" (Mootoo, 127-128). The cereus plant, for which the novel is named, is a symbol for the novel's central characters united by their mutual exclusion from the dominant society. It is this plant that is the primary destructor of the house, which has come to represent the oppressive, heterosexual

patriarchy. “The roots of the cereus, like desperate grasping fingers, had bored through the damp wood of the back wall of the house. It was no longer the wall that supported the succulent but rather the other way around” (Mootoo, 115). Mala “enjoyed the smell of rotting, water-logged wood” as the house deteriorated (Mootoo, 130).

In even more dramatic ways, Mala becomes a part of the natural world. “Mala’s companions were the garden’s birds, insects, snails and reptiles. She and they and the abundant foliage gossiped among themselves” (Mootoo,127). Mala abandons language and her body becomes an extension of nature itself: “every muscle of her body swelled, tingled, cringed or went numb in response to her surroundings – every fibre was sensitized in a way that words were unable to match or enhance. Mala responded to these receptors, flowing with them effortlessly, like water making its way along a path” (Mootoo, 127). Mala is completely unrestrained by societal conventions, concepts of femininity or the gaze of others. “She farted at will, for there was no one around to contradict her” (Mootoo, 127). In this way, Mootoo has reclaimed Mala’s identity in nature, creating a utopia in the yard in which Mala can be completely free in a way she has never been before.

The ultimate symbol of Mala’s freedom is the image of the bird. While still suffering under Chandin’s power, “Pohpoh [Mala’s childhood nickname] imagined that if she could gather enough speed, she would be able to take off, flying above all the walls and gardens, above the topmost branches of the tallest trees around and even farther – a frigate bird soaring with other frigates until her town below was swallowed up, consumed in an unidentifiable fleck of island adrift like a speck of dust in a vast turquoise seascape” (Mootoo, 97). This daydream is based on the idea of fleeing the island, which is

ultimately the root that Asha takes. Mala, however, attains her dream of becoming as free as a bird, without leaving the island. The people of Paradise refer to Mala as the “Bird” and she is also frequently described with this imagery, both of which indicate that she has reached this status of natural, bird-like freedom and is no longer confined by Chandin or society at large. The fact that Mala can become free without leaving the island is a reclaiming of nature and her homeland.

Mala’s reverence for nature was taught to her by her mother, Sarah, and her mother’s lover, Lavinia. “Lavinia loved the freedom and wildness in Sarah’s garden, so unlike her mother’s well-ordered, colour-coordinated beds” (Mootoo, 54). As opposed to Sarah’s free garden, Mrs. Thoroughly’s garden represents colonialism, in its exploitation of and control over nature. Like colonized bodies, the natural world also keeps the memory of the “trauma” of colonialism (Mootoo, 91). Lavinia explains to Pohpoh as a child that, “Snails, like most things in nature, have long memories. A snail’s soul, which is invisible, mind you, will come back after it has died, looking for its old home. It will have grown bigger and stronger, and will hover around its old stomping grounds, guarding and protecting you in return – as long as you protected it first!” (Mootoo, 54) The trauma of colonial destruction is embodied in both Mala and the natural world, therefore their communion is essentially the process of mutual recovery.

The novel explicitly critiques hierarchies that justify the colonial project’s oppression of people of color and its abuse of nature. Ambrose is disgusted by the “assumption that humans are by far superior to the rest of nature, and that’s why we are the inheritors of the earth. Arrogant, isn’t it? What’s more, not all humans are part of this sun. Some of us are considered to be much lesser than others – especially if we are not

Wetlandish or European or full-blooded white” (Mootoo, 198). Ambrose’s exposure to a western education is ultimately an experience which attempts to make him devalue nature and internalize self-hatred.

Mootoo’s treatment of Ambrose and Mala’s heterosexual relationship is innovative and interesting. Mootoo feminizes Ambrose, creating him in opposition to the hyper-masculinity of nationalism and Mala’s oppressive father, Chandin. Ambrose and Mala’s sexual relationship is based on consent, affection and respect. Through her encounters with Ambrose, Mala explores female sexual pleasure for the first time. Mala directs Ambrose’s body and his kisses, “intent on keeping him attuned to what had now become *her* goal” (Mootoo, 95). Originally, Ambrose initiated a sexual advance toward her, however, Mala takes control of the situation and reappropriates it to her “goal” of achieving orgasm. Therefore, she is defining the sexual encounter by female, instead of male, orgasm. “She used his hardness to arrive at her intended destination before he could even unbuckle his belt” (Mootoo, 96). After her orgasm, Mala puts back on her clothes and leaves Ambrose without his attainment of an orgasm. This first encounter paved the way for subsequent sexual exploration between the two, as equals.

After one of their romantic interludes is cut short by Chandin’s violent intrusion, Ambrose abandons Mala to fight off Chandin on her own, an act which he bears the guilt of for thirty years. Ultimately, Mala however does not need Ambrose to fight her battle for her, because she is incredibly powerful and resilient herself. Although Ambrose was weak and inactive to save her, she is able to forgive his desertion. Mala and Ambrose’s relationship represents an inversion of the gender hierarchy, and the reversal of the attributes associated with traditional masculinity and femininity. While Ambrose suffers

guilt for his failure, and is painfully parted from his love for many years, ultimately Ambrose is a character with whom the reader sympathizes. Mala's eventual reconnection with Ambrose facilitates the liberation and recovery of her oppressed, childhood self. As Mala and Ambrose sit on a bench, "she pointed up into the sky and traced a distant flight pattern that she alone could see. She laughed as her eyes followed what he finger described, and waved to whatever it was she saw. She trembled with joy. In a tiny whispering voice, she uttered her first public words: 'Poh, Pohpohpoh, Poh, Poh, Poh'" (Mootoo, 249). Mala sees the figure of Pohpoh as having finally achieved the freedom of a bird, which symbolically means that the horrors of the past have healed and been forgiven. This experience also signals Mala's return to language, as a vehicle through which to communicate with Ambrose.

In addition to the inversion of the gender hierarchy, which ultimately ends in equality between Ambrose and Mala, *Cereus Blooms at Night* also responds to nationalism by creating space for a range of gender identities and sexual orientations. Toward this goal, Mootoo creates new senses of identity and community, in ways that naturalize instead of politicize gender and sexuality. Scholar Grace Hong explains Mootoo's project in *Cereus Blooms at Night* is "to insist on the importance of finding other ways of imagining community, ways that do not always take recourse to the nation-state and nationalism, and in so doing, contribute to the erasures of the racialized, gendered and heteronormative exclusions on which national modes of collectivity are founded" (Hong, 74). Literary critic Heather Smyth summarizes the work of several influential postcolonial scholars to understand the interconnection of nationalism and heteronormativity. She writes, "Much useful work has been done by such critics as

Benedict Anderson and Homi Bhabha on the topic of the modern nation as a self-generating symbolic community that maintains political unity through a continual displacement of plurality. Jacqui Alexander, in particular, has brought an analysis of Caribbean nationalism and sexuality together...She points out that in order to assert their legitimacy, the Caribbean states she examines naturalize heterosexuality by criminalizing lesbian and gay sex” (Smyth, 144). Citizenship became defined in terms of heterosexuality and the still implicit male dominance that has its roots in colonial oppression.

As a gay man, Tyler is an outsider to society, he is “not a man and not ever able to be a woman, suspended nameless in the limbo state between existence and nonexistence” (Mootoo, 77). Tyler cannot exist according to the definition of citizenship in a nation-state that illegalizes homosexuality. Mala is supportive of Tyler’s identity and steals him a nurse’s dress to wear. When Tyler dresses as a woman for the first time, he reveals himself expectantly to Mala and waits for her reaction. She does not respond or even seem to notice his transformation. Slowly, Tyler realizes “the reason Miss Ramchandin paid me no attention was that, to her mind, the outfit was not something to either congratulate or scorn – it simply was. She was not one to manacle nature, and I sensed that she was permitting mine its freedom” (Mootoo, 77). Through Mala’s acceptance, Tyler is able to better come to terms with his sexual orientation and recognize his gayness as a natural part of his identity.

Otoh, Ambrose’s transsexual daughter-turned-son is ashamed of his father’s passivity and failure. Otoh tells Tyler “It’s as if I wanted to redeem my father’s name, to rescue her [Mala] and be the Romeo he never was” (Mootoo, 125). By wearing

Ambrose's old clothes, Otoh helps his father recover his suppressed memories of the past. Ambrose sees Otoh dressed in the clothes of his youth and he says "you have given me the gift of remembering" (Mootoo, 145). In addition to helping Ambrose recollect his romance with Mala, Otoh suggests to his father that they visit Mala at the Paradise Alms House, which is ultimately the first step in reconnecting the two in their love once again. Otoh retells his father's story, acting with the strength and bravery that Ambrose failed to exert. Ironically, the strongest male figure in *Cereus Blooms at Night* is physically a woman. Eventually, Otoh inspires Ambrose to use his own agency, which he does when he contacts Judge Bissey to retrieve Asha's letters for Mala.

The relationship between Tyler and Otoh resists easy assignment to one classification. In terms of their genitalia, Tyler and Otoh have a heterosexual relationship. In terms of appearance, Tyler and Otoh appear to be two gay men. But since Otoh has transformed himself into a man, and Tyler enjoys cross-dressing and using makeup, perfume and other traditionally feminine products, they both occupy a transgendered space. In this way, quite literally, the man in the relationship has the vagina and the woman has the penis. Mootoo's treatment of gender and sexuality is a complex revision of the male/female gender binary and its implied hierarchy, which are fundamental assumptions for nationalist ideology and literature. While Ambrose and Mala represent a positive and equal heterosexual relationship, and Lavinia and Sarah do the same for homosexuality, the relationship between Tyler and Otoh is something else entirely. Their gender identities disrupt the binaristic structure of heterosexuality, and reveal a spectrum of gender identities that are not confined by the concepts of "male" and "female" alone. In this way, Mootoo displaces the framework of national allegory by complicating the

nationalism's reliance on only two gender formations with Tyler and Otoh, who are "neither properly man nor woman but some[thing] in-between" (Mootoo, 71).

Despite its flaws and contradictions, Jameson's controversial thesis facilitates an interesting discussion of the relationship between third-world literature and postcolonial nationalism. Jameson empowers third-world novelists as political agents, but fails to conceptualize their ability to move beyond this mode or to create more complex texts. Most importantly, Jameson's argument is problematic because it is laid over the masculinist and heteronormative constructions of postcolonial nationalism. Shani Mootoo's novel brilliantly responds to the oppression of women and the erasure of diverse gender identities in nationalism by establishing a utopic natural world for the marginalized central characters. Because nationalism works through the gender binary, and specifically through a patriarchal binary, then Mootoo's destabilizing of masculine power and binaristic gender constructions is then too a destabilization of nationalism and the tool of national allegory.

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