

## CHAPTER 1

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# Languages of Longing

## *Indian Gurus, Western Disciples and the Politics of Letter-Writing*

### **An Archive of Feelings**

This chapter will look at the formative role of letters as a medium in constituting discipleship. It examines the guru-figures Swami Vivekananda, Rabindranath Tagore and Mahatma Gandhi and their relations with a cast of close Western disciples. In the context of high British imperialism, letters moulded sympathetic Western men and women into intimate disciples serving a range of Indian causes.

The cast of Western disciples gathered around these guru-figures came from a variety of lineages. C. F. Andrews and William Pearson were Christian missionaries (Anglican and Baptist respectively); Margaret Noble, Sara Bull and Josephine MacLeod were involved in various heterodox initiatives (some linked to Hindu eclecticism); Madeleine Slade was the daughter of a British Admiral. Sister Nivedita (Margaret Noble), C. F. Andrews and Mira Behn (Madeleine Slade), came to occupy major roles in Indian cultural and political nationalism. Western followers' profound spiritual disquiet was rooted in the pervasive mechanisation of life produced by industrial modernity; gurus and ashrams constituted part of a larger 'seeking'. All of them were attracted to some form of immanent spirituality that inhered in the figures of Vivekananda, Gandhi and Tagore.

### **The Modern Letter in Colonial India**

The coming of the modern letter in India is intrinsically tied to the expansion of communication networks used to order empire. Building on an earlier system

of *dak*, the rapid proliferation of postal networks scaled time and distance, emerging as key to imperial governance.<sup>1</sup> The introduction of the Indian penny post in 1854, following its British counterpart in 1840, saw an explosion of postal communication over the next century. Aimed at aiding the unrestricted flow of information, a series of postal reform measures made post cheaper and hugely popular in India. From 43 million in 1860–1861 it increased to nearly 250 million in 1900–1901, a figure that included not only letters but also the cheap quarter anna postcards.<sup>2</sup> The Indian Postal Service was one of the fastest to Indianise, with over half of the 214 senior appointments (ranks between Superintendent to Post Master General) being held by Indians.<sup>3</sup> It marked the intensification of the postal system and its penetration deep into the countryside, integrating the empire as never before, with negligible violence. The rapid proliferation of postal networks spawned new literary publics and practices across a range of languages and populations.<sup>4</sup>

Letter-writing manuals existed since the eighteenth century in Britain, used as prescriptive guides for ‘model letters’. In Victorian Britain, they offered instruction in the art of letter-writing, which was considered necessary education for building characters of young men and women in their public conduct.<sup>5</sup> With the popularisation of the penny post in Britain after 1840, letters became part of new cultural and political economies of knowledge circulation. Transatlantic networks of abolitionist activism, for instance, allowed for conversation to take place between geographically disparate people.<sup>6</sup> Prescriptive or actual, private letters were understood to reveal the ‘authentic character of an individual even if their public conduct could not’.<sup>7</sup> The private letter was a site to produce and perform a true individual moral self away from public glare. It was to this epistolary tradition that Western disciples like Andrews, Pearson, Noble, Slade belonged.

Indian correspondents, on the other hand, came from a different if not unrelated tradition. The coming of print culture had brought forth important breaks and continuities from earlier traditions of orality in the subcontinent. The rationalising of postal communication, while introducing new forms of letter-writing, transformed pre-colonial forms as well. Of particular importance was the emergence of the personal letter and the ways it changed conventions and meanings around letter-writing practices for the English-educated Indian elite. It helped chart a process of self-individualisation in an emergent private sphere, while also partaking in a larger colonial modernity.

There has been a long tradition of epistolary manuals and compilations since at least the Mughal times.<sup>8</sup> Much of these letters focused on diplomacy, and there was no broad private–public distinction in epistolary categories. Medieval-era love letters came closest to any form of personal letter, but they were generally written in effusive courtly language that showed off nobility and refinement.<sup>9</sup> As Francesca Orsini notes, the coming of colonial literary modernity gave birth to a new critical individual subjectivity that took itself very seriously.<sup>10</sup> Older epistolary forms were not effaced, but the advent of a modern selfhood greatly affected the kind of authors and audiences emerging around the form.

The gradual development of a loose but distinctive public–private sphere made personal letters an imaginative space where selves were creatively deployed and cultivated. As discourses of the colonial elite sought to catch up with their metropolitan counterparts, the glamour, distance and status associated with English as a language of power, in relation to vernacular languages, made letters written in English something of a marker of culture and high learning.<sup>11</sup> Conversely, the ability of certain educated Indians to correspond and converse in English (alongside their own native languages) generally invested them with the potential to be part of an Anglicised colonial symmetry.<sup>12</sup> This is not to deny the significant growth that vernacular letter-writing practices had within elite and non-elite Indian audiences. Nonetheless, knowledge of English endowed their authors with the possibility to engage with Western actors and networks beyond India. Rammohan Roy's prolific contacts with important British and American figures bear an early testimony to this possibility of 'reaching out' to a wider world through colonial networks.

This influential class of English-educated (and bilingual) colonial elite pioneered ideas of citizenship and civil rights within the colonial public sphere.<sup>13</sup> Western Indophiles formed a precipitating point in this interlocution, vocally arguing for the extension of metropolitan rights and privileges to imperial subjects. To this end, they collaborated in various colonial elite-led projects. Their active presence in Indianist enterprises became a morally legitimising force.

Their epistolary corpus offers insights into the intimacies forged between iconic Indian figures hailing from a critical class of Western educated elite and their Western disciples. They form a minor if influential trend in a time of high imperial consolidation, of Western men and women who willingly accepted the discipleship of Indian figures and stood against the imperial politics of their own nation and/or racial privilege. Tagore and Vivekananda of course made

concessions in distinguishing Western culture from Western imperialism, but this distinction was generally under strain.

## Epistolary Communities

The community of letters formed out of this cast of Indian and Western characters was expansive. Anxious for physical and emotional proximity to their mentors, letters compensated both. Enthralled by their mentors' personalities, disciples wanted a larger stake in their lives and work. The letters passing through this small but influential community could be broadly categorised into primary and secondary epistolary networks. Primary epistolary networks constituted the corpus of letters exchanged directly between Western disciples and their Indian gurus. In these, disciples poured out their hearts to mentors and sought instruction. As emotional practice, letters between mentors and their disciples recorded the gradual shifts and shifting sensibilities made possible by letter-writing. Despite initial enchantments, these relationships were not forever beholden to the greatness of the guru. They came under frequent strain and primary epistolary networks provide a rich narrative of this densely constituted interiority.

Undergirding these major epistolary networks lay various ancillary connections that refer to lateral correspondence exchanged (*a*) within followers and their close confidantes; and (*b*) between various Indian mentors and their wider circles. These include Noble's correspondence with other Western disciples of Vivekananda such as Sara Bull and Josephine MacLeod, or the accounts of Gandhi's associates Mahadev Bhai and Pyarelal that shed light on primary networks. Letters exchanged between Gandhi and Tagore, Andrews and Pearson, or members of their wider circles such as the French litterateur Romain Rolland, Tagore's British associate Leonard Elmhirst, the Moderate Congress politician Gopal Krishna Gokhale, the Arya Samaj leader Munshi Ram<sup>14</sup> and the Wesleyan missionary Edward J. Thompson belonged to this category. Secondary epistolary networks consist of these parallel epistolary connections. They illuminate the relationships forged between gurus and disciples.

Romain Rolland's diaries provided the most consistent record of these intersecting networks.<sup>15</sup> A unique European pacifist literary figure with a deep interest in Indian culture and philosophy, he had personally met Vivekananda, Gandhi and Tagore, as well as all their Western disciples. He had even 'gifted' Slade to Gandhi. Each of them confided in Rolland their doubts, hopes and fears. Rolland's diaries unified these different sets of disciples within a shared tradition

of Indophilia. Rolland's diary entries, culled from his personal exchanges, offer valuable comparative insights into the broader convergences at work.<sup>16</sup>

Secondary epistolary networks between disciples or other confidants constantly referred to the state of their relations with mentors. Noble, for instance, wrote of her initial days of training in Hinduism to her fellow-disciple and friend Josephine MacLeod:

The hot season has begun again. I teach now from 7 till 11 in the morning.... At 11 I bathe – eat – rest – and then write, like a veritable Hindu. In future, I mean to dress in this fashion for those hours....

I am visiting Swami's little cousin in her zenana and teaching her English. Swami says that if I bring her into this work and make her my spiritual and intellectual heir I shall be conferring the greatest benefit that he could ask on him. Just fancy!<sup>17</sup>

Vivekananda's influence loomed large in these adoptions, in her dress, food and living habits and her teaching English to zenana women.

A similar, if more intense inter-braiding, can be seen in Andrews's letters to Tagore. Written to William Rothenstein, a British artist and literary associate of Tagore, Andrews bared his heart:

It is hard even yet to get over the pain of separation from the Poet [Tagore] ... I have never known love such as this, that has been given me from him.<sup>18</sup>

Secondary epistolary relations provided that useful space where this excess of meaning was performed.

## Letters to the Guru

C. F. Andrews joined the Cambridge Brotherhood Mission in Delhi (St Stephen's College) in 1904 as an Anglican missionary. Known for his reformist and unorthodox views, Andrews courted frequent controversy within missionary and Anglo-Indian circles in India and England, particularly the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in England. Influential in the selection of S. K. Rudra as the first Indian Christian to head St Stephen's College, Andrews strongly advocated for an Indianisation of Christ and Christianity.

Between 1905 and 1910, years that saw the proliferation of the Swadeshi movement in Bengal, along with the rise of extremist politics and revolutionary terrorism, Andrews emerged as a distinctive liberal Christian voice. He was condemned by the Anglo-Indian community but highly regarded by Moderate Indian nationalists for his denunciation of violence.

Pearson was a Baptist missionary teaching at the London Missionary College in Calcutta. Dissatisfied with its 'narrow' theological atmosphere, he sought to quit the mission in 1911, and wished to continue in India as an independent worker. Andrews's eclecticism (his position against conversion, belief in a fulfilment theology) had already spread by then in Indian missionary circles. Pearson was attracted to Andrews' reformist if polarising streak, and introduced him to Tagore in London.<sup>19</sup> Both men had a shared experience of Cambridge education and missionary service in India.

Pearson and Andrews first met Tagore at a London reading session, in 1912. Tagore had by then left behind his former association with the Swadeshi movement. Increasingly disillusioned with the exclusivist strains of Hindu cultural nationalism that came to dominate the movement, he moved towards pantheism and a language of universal humanism. In 1912, his *Gitanjali* poems – translated into English from their Bengali originals – had created a stir in London literary circles.<sup>20</sup> Its mysticism and lofty sentimentalism stirred poets like W. B. Yeats, and eventually paved the path for a Nobel Prize in 1913.

Andrews and Pearson were greatly moved by Tagore's poetry and personality. Within weeks of their first meeting, Andrews wrote to Tagore:

My thoughts are with you so constantly and I seem at times to pass whole days with you altogether, remembering you in my prayers and thinking of you ... also longing to be with you.... I want you to tell me anything you would wish me to do to help you.<sup>21</sup>

Tagore became part of this projection: in their daily prayer and longing, thought and habit. Pearson was ready to give up his missionary vocation and join Tagore's utopian ashram-school at Shantiniketan:

You told me in London that you wanted to capture me for Shantiniketan and now I am able to write and tell you that I am a willing captive and that it is only a question of time now for the captive to enter the place where the bonds of affection have been woven.<sup>22</sup>

Through letters, both Andrews and Pearson could imagine an intimacy with Tagore, already the vaunted *gurudev* (the Guru as God) (Figure 1.1). Tagore, in turn, warmly reciprocated both Pearson and Andrews's overtures in lofty terms. Pearson's letter 'stirred [Tagore's] heart to its depths'. Affirming Andrew's affection, Tagore wrote: '... your love has made my life richer and I count it as one of the gains of my life that will abide. Have faith in my love when I am silent.'<sup>23</sup> Andrews and Pearson visited Tagore's ashram in his absence to help with daily activities, while writing letters that affirmed their loyalty.

2  
508 W. High Street  
Urbana, Illinois  
15 Jan. 1913

Dear friend  
your letter has  
stirred my heart to its depths,  
it has made the morning light  
brighter for me and wafted the  
breath of peace from our Shant Niketan  
ashram into my room in this  
American boarding house. It has  
been doubly welcome to me owing to  
other letters brought by the same  
mail complaining of the financial  
difficulties of our school. But God  
gives infinitely more than he claims  
and it is with a feeling of gladness

**Figure 1.1** Tagore's letter to Pearson, 15 January 1913.

Source: Rabindra Bhavana, Visvabharati.

Like Andrews and Pearson, Noble and Slade too wished to be part of their mentors' lives and work. Letters became the medium to express their desires. Never having met Gandhi in person, Slade came to know of him through Romain Rolland in 1924.<sup>24</sup> She wanted to join his ashram at Sabarmati immediately. Gandhi had then professed caution and a preparatory interval of one year. After a year, Slade reiterated her request:

Most Dear Master,

... The first impulse has never faded, but on the contrary my desire to serve you has grown ever more and more fervent.... My being is filled with a great joy ... of giving all I have to you and your people and the anguish of being able to give so little. I pine for the day when I shall come to India.

Dear Master, may I come?<sup>25</sup>

She gave up 'the drinking of all wines, beers or spirits', 'meat of any kind' while learning to spin and read Hindi.<sup>26</sup> In a similar vein, Noble's guru Vivekananda too advised against her coming to India. Noble was already active in the London Vedanta Society that Vivekananda established with the help of British disciples. Vivekananda acknowledged that she had 'the making ... of a world mover' but felt she 'could do more work for us in England than by coming here.'<sup>27</sup> A cautious Vivekananda confided in Sara Ole Bull, a wealthy American patron-disciple, who also knew Noble:

I do not think any European or American will be of any service here just now, and it will be hard for any Westerner to bear the climate. Mrs. Annie Besant with her exceptional powers works only among the Theosophists and thus she submits to all the indignities of isolation which a Mlechha is made to undergo here. Even Goodwin smarts now and then and has to be called to order. He is doing good work as he is a man and can mix with people. Women have no place in men's society here, and she can do good only among her own sex in India. The English friends that came over to India have not been of any help as yet and do not know whether they will be of any in the future, with all these, if anybody wants to try she is welcome.<sup>28</sup>

In 1898, Josiah Goodwin, a British monastic disciple of Vivekananda, had passed away due to severe exhaustion and illness while working in India.<sup>29</sup> Goodwin's death exemplified Vivekananda's anxieties. It was only after other



disciples interceded on Noble's behalf that he conceded.<sup>30</sup> Both Gandhi and Vivekananda warned Slade and Noble of the general lack of European comforts and everyday deterrents that ranged from casteism, racism and poverty to language and climate barriers. However, aspiring disciples regarded these ordeals as testaments to the purity of their resolve.

Self-abnegation and suffering formed a common arc for disciples to prove their worthiness. Exalted references such as Master, Bapu and Gurudev served to underscore a relationship of worshipful subservience. Nivedita yearned to serve Vivekananda:

... today I want to do things only because they are my Father's [Vivekananda's] will.... One longs to serve for serving's sake, for ever and ever, dear Master – not for our miserable little life.<sup>31</sup>

Declarations of subservience placed them at par with Indian disciples, who were already familiar with the cultural idiom of *gurubhakti* (devotion to the guru). Yet, even as it rendered them in equal relation to their fellow Indian disciples, their extraordinariness was well understood. Their letters, suffused with (spiritual) invocations of complete surrender, continued to perform physical and symbolic inversions of hierarchy.

## Love in Letters

Reciprocity was fundamental to the act of letter writing.<sup>32</sup> Its promise led disciples to continue writing, in the hope that their gurus would read and reply. Vivekananda comforted Noble: 'Every word you write I value' and 'every letter is welcome a hundred times ... whenever ... and whatever you like[d], knowing that nothing will be misinterpreted, nothing unappreciated'.<sup>33</sup> For Noble, writing to her guru was an eagerly anticipated act. She would playfully assert its joy:

All day I have been promising myself the joy of writing to you. Haven't I been a bad daughter? To my poor old father, too!<sup>34</sup>

Seemingly light, the assertion of a filial relationship between Vivekananda and Nivedita was also part of a continual attempt to frame that relationship in sacred terms.<sup>35</sup> Fellow women disciples such as MacLeod felt she had the

'lover's adoration' for Vivekananda.<sup>36</sup> Relations between male gurus and their women disciples were largely framed within father–daughter relationships, containing potential slippages.

Feelings of love and affection were framed through different kinds of operative limits. Gandhi was the least inhibited in declaring and naming this love for both male and female disciples. Gandhi cherished writing 'love-letters' to his disciples, that included his South African Jewish colleagues Henry Polak and Hermann Kallenbach, and later Andrews and Slade. Gandhi referred to Kallenbach's letters as 'charming love notes' and both had, at least on one recorded occasion, pledged deep love for each other, while regarding Gandhi's wife Kasturba as his 'mother'.<sup>37</sup> Gandhi did not shy away from acknowledging the homoerotics in his relationship with Kallenbach.<sup>38</sup> In a letter from London, Gandhi reminisced:

Your portrait (the only one) stands on my mantelpiece in the bedroom. The mantelpiece is opposite to the bed.... The pen I use ... in each letter it traces makes me think of you. If, therefore, I wanted to dismiss you from my thoughts, I could not do it.... The point ... is to show to you and me how completely you have taken possession of my body. This is slavery with a vengeance.<sup>39</sup>

Material artefacts – portrait, bed, pen – came together to stage a 'possession' of Gandhi's body. The highly charged language of absence evoked romantic longing. Love-letters helped imagine co-presence. That Gandhi destroyed many of Kallenbach's early letters to preserve their confidentiality limits us from speculating too much on the nature of this 'possession'. In this, he seemed to have acted on Kallenbach's insistence on their not being read by anyone else.<sup>40</sup> Gandhi censured his powerful love but did not forbid or dissuade him: 'Everyone considers that your love for me is excessive.'<sup>41</sup> Homoeroticism figured not infrequently under the benign sign of mentor–disciple relationship.

Kallenbach's 'excessive' love soon manifested in resentment towards C. F. Andrews, who became close to Gandhi within a few weeks of his arrival in South Africa in 1914. Andrews's emergence as a trusted aide stoked Kallenbach's jealousy. Gandhi assured him repeatedly: 'Though I love and almost adore Andrews so, I would not exchange you for him.'<sup>42</sup> Apparently, the reassurance was not enough, for within two months we find sterner replies to Kallenbach: 'You seem to have been hasty in judging Andrews. I fancy that I know him better.'<sup>43</sup> Gandhi chided Kallenbach for being 'petty'.<sup>44</sup> Interestingly, it was

to Andrews that Gandhi turned for help in getting Kallenbach to India in 1915, after his return from South Africa and the outbreak of World War I (Kallenbach was German, and later became a Zionist).<sup>45</sup> From Shantiniketan, where Gandhi's Phoenix School boys were temporarily lodged, he remembered Kallenbach while working on sanitary reform:

Extraordinary changes have been made in the Santiniketan school, Andrews and Pearson rose to the occasion and Pearson and I, whilst we were working away at sanitation reform, thought of you – how you would have thrown yourself into the work.<sup>46</sup>

It is difficult to say if such letters soothed Kallenbach's jealousy. But he did identify correctly Andrews as a major contender for Gandhi's affections. Andrews, not always registering these upsets, continued to nestle himself deep within Gandhi's discipleships, both Indian and Western. In a letter to Mahadev Desai, Andrews invoked both Polak and Kallenbach: 'I am so glad Bapu was able to see Henry Polak. Give my dearest love to Bapu and tell him I am in correspondence with Hermann Kallenbach and am trying to get him to take an interest in African handloom work.'<sup>47</sup>

On their first encounter in 1914, Andrews had stooped to touch Gandhi's feet in a racially polarised South Africa.<sup>48</sup> He was shunned by the White press and population. But this act gained him immediate affections from both Gandhi and the Indian community. Though his stay was brief, he played an important role in brokering the Gandhi–Smuts<sup>49</sup> Agreement. Andrews's regard for Gandhi found clear expression in his letters to Tagore, his other (already) great love:

The English in Natal are far worse than the English in Calcutta. What is exercising them at present is the fact that I [as an Englishman] took the dust of Mr. Gandhi's feet – the feet of an Asiatic – on landing. I am afraid I shall never be forgiven.<sup>50</sup>

Andrews hoped to Gandhi that his transgressive acts in Natal would make him worthy of Tagore's love:

I long – Oh! How deeply I cannot tell you to take this love itself and lay it at the feet of Gurudev. I am longing and hoping that by and through this experience I shall not be made less unworthy of his love.<sup>51</sup>

The need to love became an existential need for Andrews. Dust connected many things: spiritual subservience, racial transgression and male intimacy, all inspiring a love for India. He constantly compared his feelings for Gandhi and Tagore and initially found the former falling short: 'I could not love him immediately, instinctively, as I loved you when I saw you in England.'<sup>52</sup> Unlike Tagore and Shantiniketan, he felt he had to 'cut channels, for love to run freely ... and to get past the barriers of mere kindness and friendliness which falls short of true love'.<sup>53</sup> Compared to the rustic, unfettered freedom of Shantiniketan, Phoenix and Tolstoy Farm were highly regulated spaces, made with the object of carrying out political struggles. In his letters, he would confide his love for Gandhi to Tagore, that for Tagore to Gandhi, and for both Gandhi and Tagore to Gokhale, creating a thick affective trail linking everyone. Aboard a ship bound for India from Capetown, he yearned for 'Mohan':

I have been thinking so much about you on this voyage – more even, I think, than on my voyage from the Cape. It is the coming closer to India that brings me even closer to you ... how sane and true you were, Mohan [Gandhi], when we were in Pretoria and I was questioning myself of going to the [passive resistance] march with you if it were to begin once more....<sup>54</sup>

Reciprocating this embrace, Gandhi's 'love-letter' playfully noted:

If you cannot have a nurse like me, who should make love to you but at the same time enforce strict obedience to doctor's orders, you need a wife who should see that you had your food properly served, you never went out without an abdominal bandage.... But marriage is probably too late. And not being able to nurse you I can only fret.<sup>55</sup>

The attention to material details of care – food, bandages – or the invocation of specific roles such as nurse and wife, virtually re-constituted co-presence. The reference to 'love-making' and wifely care by a strictly celibate Gandhi evoked a language of conjugal intimacy. Like a doting wife, he vividly portrayed Andrews as the suffering husband, evoking a vision of conjugal care.

Andrews's desire to love and be loved by prominent men such as Munshi Ram, S. K. Rudra, Tagore and Gandhi helped him realise his 'feminine' self. As he confided to his Stephens colleague and friend S. K. Rudra, another of his great loves, he was 'too much of a woman by nature ... and [he] cannot

help' not expressing his love and concern.<sup>56</sup> Perhaps anticipating its potently risqué aspects, Andrews qualified this 'feminine' self as essentially maternal:

... it is because of this unchanging motherly influence that the 'mother' in me has grown so strong. My life seems only able to blossom into flower when I can pour out my affection upon others as my mother did upon me.<sup>57</sup>

To love India was construed as essentially an effect of this strong maternal urge.

Andrews felt powerfully attracted to different kinds of masculinity embodied by all these 'great' Indian men. Glad to add Gandhi to his initial acquisition of the trio of Tagore, Munshi Ram and Rudra, Andrews wrote gushingly to Desai:

... what Babu used laughingly to call the 'Trinity' (whom I worshipped in South African days) – Gurudev, Mahatma Munshi Ram, and Mr Rudra – It is a supreme joy to me to find that, in not one single instinct of the 3, have I been betrayed; and if my Trinity of worship has become a Quaternity – I need not tell you which name has been added to the list!<sup>58</sup>

To be able to come in their close confidence and affection was a dual affirmation of his 'womanliness' and their manliness. It evinced his 'feminine' ability to 'love' and 'long' for their presence while also sublimating it under an abstracted Indophilia.

Love letters provided the perfect site to hold homoeroticism. Potent attractions of disciples for their mentors could be contained, their sexualities sublimated into non-threatening idioms of affection. Epistolary spaces manifested and indeed celebrated these intimate transgressions less readily achievable in more formal spaces. It 'queered' languages of intimacy within standard idioms of discipleship, a point rarely recognised within mainstream scholarship.<sup>59</sup>

When the discipleship was heterosexual, as with Gandhi and Mira, love letters helped cultivate suitable distance. Like Nivedita, Mira too had the 'lover's adoration' for Gandhi, as Rolland astutely noted.<sup>60</sup> To cultivate physical distance, Mira was continuously sent to different ashrams to learn Hindustani, and more importantly, stem her over-attachment to Gandhi. Letters also became a mode of instruction in Gandhian syncretism: 'I have all your love letters. The one about the repugnance against Mussalmans is disturbing. It is the fear of conversion that has caused this repugnance.'<sup>61</sup>

Though letter-writing is based on reciprocity, the desire to please Gandhi led Mira to forfeit that expectation. Yet, Gandhi insisted:

Though you absolve me from having to write to you I cannot deny myself the joy of writing to you every Monday. Writing love letters is a recreation, not a task one would seek an excuse to shirk.<sup>62</sup>

At times, Mira did not even seek an acknowledgement of her 'love-letters', satisfied in the quiet knowledge that they would be read by him. She wrote voluminously, sometimes, as Gandhi complained, not 'shorter than ten pages'.<sup>63</sup> For Mira, to be replied to was a privilege in itself, even if this was a two-liner. Gandhi's replies, often short and curt, were hardly effusive. He always followed up on her training in the ashram and practicalities:

You should give me your day's doings, and describe the prayers, the studies and the meals. Tell me what you are eating. How are your bowels acting? What is the quantity of milk you are taking? ... Are there mosquitoes there? Do you take your walks regularly? Do you write any Hindi?<sup>64</sup>

Gandhi's ashram letters generally served a didactic function. They reflected his constant pursuit of ideal dietary regimes and a minimalist lifestyle.

Disciples sought an amplified sense of their gurus' selves in letters and generally found them. Through letters, they felt the guru's touch. Distance imparted meaning to the letter's embodiment, compensating for actual physical absence. Andrews wrote to Tagore:

It was such an intense pleasure to see your dear handwriting again. I had been looking for it mail after mail hoping against hope ... and my heart overflowed when it came at last with its opening word of 'friend'. I wish I could tell you what that means to me, but it must be told in other ways than letters!<sup>65</sup>

The 'mail' – embedded in a longer history of imperial networks and postal modernity – ordered epistolary meanings of intimacy in space and time. The wait for the letter created the momentum for fulfilment. Postal modernity came to manifest new languages of emotion around the private letter, shaping its correspondents' intentions and expectations. Both handwriting and signature

came together to reconstitute this cultural-material embodiment of the self. Even as Andrews fretted, 'I could never tell you in words how I love you', letters came closest to instantiating this love.<sup>66</sup>

## Anxieties of Longing

Disciples' love for gurus could not remain opaque to the anti-colonial ethos of their projects. While Tagore did not participate in mainstream political endeavours as Gandhi, he nevertheless remained a critic of empire. Epistolary texts bore testimony to confessions of complicity and failure. An anguished Andrews confessed to Tagore about his failings:

I have failed many times. The greatest failure was last year when to my surprise the missionary societies, one and all, asked me to write a book for their younger people to study. I accepted the task ... I was ashamed of the book..., especially when I met you and stayed with you. But the sense of shame has increased since I came back to India and visited the ashram ... but I will *never* [emphasis added] write a book on those lines again! I want to realise a truer self ... and I am going to make a great claim upon your friendship and ask you to help me to do so.<sup>67</sup>

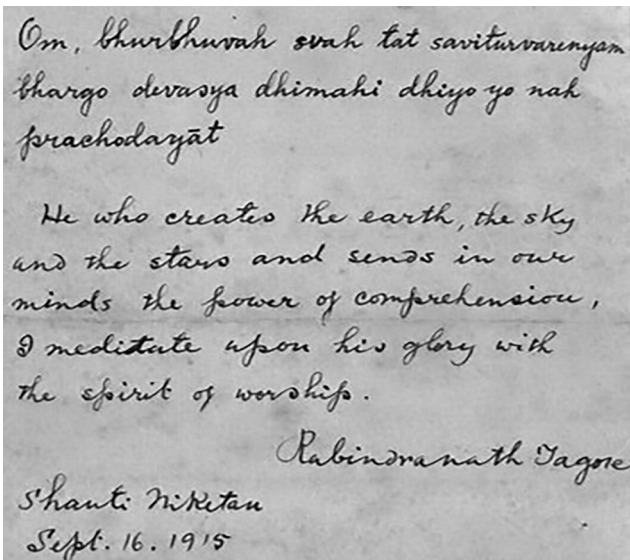
Andrews's book *The Renaissance in India: its Missionary Aspect* (1912) credited the advent of missionary Christianity in India for its new social, cultural and political awakening. In letter after letter to Tagore, he expressed torment for this deed and sought penitence (Figure 1.2). Tagore's letters seemed to give him new life: '... since your letter came my mind has been wonderfully relieved. The assurance of your love and the call to your side have changed the aspect of affairs, and I am happy.'<sup>68</sup>

Andrews could not wait to be 'freed from all ... claims, as soon as possible, of Government and Mission and Anglo India with its social calls and conventions'. Meeting Tagore had only made the 'longing stronger' along with a 'liberalising of [his] own Christian thoughts'.<sup>69</sup> Pearson underwent a similar experience. He was impatient to offer his services for Tagore's ashram 'with the humility and reverence of a worshipper', trying to give up the 'poverty and failures of [his] own life and ... fix a steadfast gaze on the ideal for which the as[h]ram stands'.<sup>70</sup> Pearson wanted to quietly work on his Bengali and leave his Baptist missionary obligations before immersing himself in Shantiniketan. Pearson's love for Tagore elicited in Andrews a similar feeling:

It has been very beautiful on this voyage to watch Willie's love for you, and it has given me a deep joy which I cannot express in words.... To speak of you, as we do together, has been his great and widest comfort.<sup>71</sup>

He wished to follow in Pearson's footsteps: learn Bengali and Sanskrit, travel and live widely in India and with Indians, engage with Indian philosophy. Like Pearson, he wanted to try, from a 'completely independent standpoint (not as a paid agent)', to express Christian thought in the 'East': 'I have been proud and conceited in the past and underrated Hinduism; I would be so no longer'.<sup>72</sup> Love for Tagore spilled into new investments, linking them in a relationship of transitivity:

... there has come ... through my love for you, a new confidence ... I have entered into the heritage of India herself and been made one with her spiritual experiences and felt its depth and power.... But the fountain of my own heart was still partly sealed and only since I have learnt to love you has it burst its bonds and overflowed.... It has taught me to love ... all the dear friends I have made at the ashram.<sup>73</sup>



**Figure 1.2** Tagore sends a Vedic prayer of peace to Andrews. Tagore occasionally sent lofty Sanskrit verses to Andrews, a famous *Shantimantra*, or Vedic prayer of peace in this case.

Source: Rabindra Bhavan, Visvabharati.



Andrews's 'love talk' was, however, interpreted as a sign of going native by missionary colleagues and Anglo-Indian society.<sup>74</sup> He wrote to Gandhi:

That attack on me in the English newspapers for my 'Hindu' proclivities goes on. The missionaries are probably saying ... that I am going to become a 'Hindu' and if I go to Bolpur and resign the Delhi Mission this will be universally believed....<sup>75</sup>

Coming closer to Tagore intensified his desire to leave his missionary ties:

I could not be true to my love for you, if I did not seek to share them with you and I trust your love enough to be sure that you will welcome the burden ... it was my very meeting with you, which made has made me realize more clearly my own position and become dissatisfied with it. I could not share your life, without feeling the confinement of the narrow walls of my own.... If I remain a missionary, in a somewhat narrow Missionary Society, I am in a sort of bondage.<sup>76</sup>

Tagore and Shantiniketan continued to figure in almost every letter from and between Andrews and Pearson, reminding them of the promise ashram life held. Visions of being and working with Tagore heightened their yearning.

Work became worship and gurus became near-divine characters. Mira, bouncing between ashrams all over India, remained 'immersed in [her] Bapu'. Her letters to Gandhi show the painful negotiation of a new cultural self, and fear of failure:

Bapu dearest, another long and precious letter from you has just arrived!

I could not, even if I tried, be anything else but what I am before you, and that is why, however I am ashamed of my weakness, I have to lay bear [*sic*] before my Bapu – Yes – you are indeed father and *mother* and what is more than all, you are Bapu, *my Bapu* – in whom I live, and in whom I have that utter confidence that only boundless love can inspire – and it is Bapu alone who can make me what I should be. The strength and love of my Bapu are ever with me now.... Nothing that bears the slightest shade of *untruth* can stand before you....<sup>77</sup>

Gandhi's replies to Mira are almost clinical in their brevity and directness. He referred to his disciplining of Mira's passionate desire as a necessary 'operation':

I sent you away too quickly after a serious operation. But the sending you away was part of the operation.... Jannalaji says I should have kept you with me. Well, you are going to belie their fears and be and keep quite well and cheerful.<sup>78</sup>

Almost like a mandate, Gandhi's instructions to Mira brought more sorrow than solace. The attempt to excise personal attachment almost broke Mira. 'Love-letters' bore testimony to this continued cycle of distress and relief that characterised their relations.

### Becoming Idealised Objects

The bodies of white women and their investments became gendered sites of nationalist spectacle. Both Noble and Slade adopted vows of Hindu celibate asceticism, or *brahmacharya*, becoming Nivedita and Mira respectively. Vivekananda anticipated for Noble her role of India:

What was wanted was not a man, but a woman; a real lioness, to work for Indians. India cannot yet produce great women, she must borrow them from other nations. Your education, sincerity, purity, immense love, determination and above all, the Celtic blood make you just the woman wanted.<sup>79</sup>

In letter after letter, Vivekananda continued to spell out what the Indian nation needed Noble to embody: purity, education and a Celtic racial valour mobilised to deliver manhood. He continued to warn her of people who stood in the way of such a project:

... as long as you go on mixing with that [Tagore] family, I must go on sounding my gong. Remember that that family has poured a flood of erotic venom over Bengal ... my mission is simply to bring MANHOOD to this people [*sic*].<sup>80</sup>

Nivedita, in due course, became a central figure in the politics of deficit masculinity that dominated discourses of colonial Bengal and India in the early twentieth century. Creating a desexualised but forceful language of discipleship was central to Vivekananda.

Gandhi, attuned to a different vision of Hinduism and masculinity than Vivekananda, exercised another set of expectations on Mira. She chose to adopt celibacy and took her vows in Gandhi's presence in 1927. Her letters were frequently circulated by Gandhi as objects of education for ashram inmates:

... you should perhaps know that I send most of your letters to the Ashram for being read to the members. They are so beautiful. Those that contain criticism of the attitude of the Kanya Gurukul I did not send. I destroyed them.... I do not want you to restrain yourself because other eyes may see the letter ...<sup>81</sup>

The practice of circulating letters gave them a performative role. This simultaneous gesture of approval, through circulation of her appreciative letters, and control, by destroying more critical letters, formed part of a larger disciplining exercise.

Mira's coming closer to a syncretic and 'essential' Hinduism reflected her desire to identify with an aspirational collective:

Everyday of my life I become more and more deeply in love with the Hindu nature – I don't know how to express it Babu – I just feel as if it were the highest development of humanity which we have in this world, with its inborn gentleness, forgiveness and tolerance – its simpleness and natural feeling for God.... I get the feeling that to pass into the Hindu nature is the natural, perhaps the road to salvation ... as long as one remains to any extent outside it, one feels oneself to be to that extent a barbarian.... I now realise that barbarism in myself and sooner or later I will overcome it.... If I can not all together overcome it in this life, then I ask nothing better than to be born a Hindu in the next birth – and this the Blessed Way will at last become open to me.<sup>82</sup>

The strong desire to be Hindu produced the experience of being so. Mira was far less vocal than Nivedita in Hindu nationalist discourse, but both became extraordinary examples, affirming an Indianness they were not born into. Indian cultural and nationalist politics generally remained sensitive to the strategic use of these figures. Racial difference made Western discipleships extraordinary, and in that sense, useful. The bind this claim created on white women disciples led to further disciplining of their bodies and desires.

## Conclusion: Archipelago of Affect

The anthropologist Monique Scheer has argued that emotions are not merely cognitively rooted but also consistently material, embodied and embedded in practice.<sup>83</sup> Letter-writing is a distinctive mode of such emotional practice. The act of writing made physical acts around them more real. Conversely, physical acts informed by epistolary dialectics reinforced their convictions.

Since historians can only access the expression of an emotional experience, not the experience itself, languages of expression assume primacy in understanding emotions as practice. Every act of writing became an act of memory. Letters made possible a dense archipelago of affect. Mentors resisted, not infrequently, the proprietary appropriations of their disciples. Vivekananda and Gandhi continued to sermonise on the dangers of 'personal love'. The 'problem of the personal' lingered in relations with women disciples. Letters became a means of inserting distance. Vivekananda clarified to Nivedita that despite 'persons giving [him] almost the whole of their love', he 'must not give any one the whole of [his] in return, for that day the work would be ruined ... a leader must be impersonal'.<sup>84</sup> Similarly, Mira's desire for physical proximity and willingness to please Gandhi irked him:

Why hanker after my company! Why touch or kiss the feet that must one day be dead cold? There is nothing in the body ... experience and effort will unravel it before you, never my association in the manner you wish.... Why so helplessly rely on me? Why do everything to please me? Why not independently of me and even in spite of me? ... Break the idol to pieces if you can and will.<sup>85</sup>

Gandhi pushed back against Mira's constant 'clinging'. Invocations of impersonality and the idea of a greater (implicitly spiritual) cause served to stem the dangers of excessive personal adoration. Gandhi was always fearful of sexual transgression, and his own lifelong experiments with celibacy bore witness to this anxiety. Gandhi pontificated that Mira 'must not cling to [him] as in this body. The spirit without the body is ever with [her]'.<sup>86</sup> Vivekananda struggled with the incessant rumour-mongering about his chastity, usually spread by detractors.<sup>87</sup> Creating a sacralised language of discipleship was essential, given the prominence of celibacy or *brahmacharya* to Gandhi and Vivekananda's projects. The conjoining of *gurubhakti* and *deshbhakti* has long been an integral part of

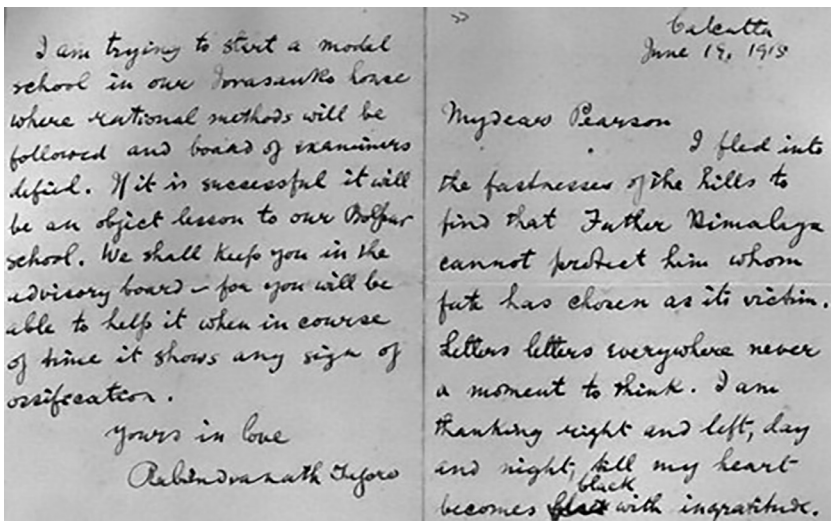
the nationalist project in India, since at least the late nineteenth century, and with important consequences for many forms of *bhakti*.<sup>88</sup>

With male disciples, disenchantments played out differently. There was no imminent fear of sexual transgression that loomed large. Tagore and Gandhi agreed to share Andrews between themselves. As Gandhi wrote to Tagore:

Much as I should like to keep Mr. Andrews with me a little longer, I feel sure that he must leave for Calcutta tonight.... And you must have him while you need him.... I would ask you ... to lend me ... Andrews now and then. His guidance at times is most precious to me.<sup>89</sup>

Secondary epistolary exchanges such as these reveal what Indian mentors thought about their Indophile mentees and each other. It brought to fore doubts, differences and dismissals. Tagore, for instance, did not hesitate to criticise Gandhi's practices to Andrews, anticipating much of their later differences:

Only a moral tyrant like Gandhi can think that he has the dreadful power to make his ideas prevail through the means of slavery. It is absurd to think that you must create slaves to make your ideas free. I would much rather see my ideas perish than to leave them in charge of slaves to be nourished. There are men who make idols of their ideas and sacrifice humanity before their altars.<sup>90</sup>



**Figure 1.3** Tagore playing 'truant', 1914.

Source: Rabindra Bhavana, Visvabharati.

Tagore continued to air his differences with Gandhi, but Andrews remained a shared emissary. Even as disciples sought to stake their claims on Tagore, he resisted their zealous overtures in his ashram and literary endeavours. Playing truant (Figure 1.3) whenever his disciples' desires for physical proximity became exasperating, he continued to dispense transcendent wisdom from suitable epistolary distance. Andrews recognised the strain his tendency to act as custodian put on his relation with Tagore.

I was too eager to be continually present with the Poet ... whom I deeply loved, and it became an oppression to him because he saw with his fine instinct that it was weakening my individual character. Therefore, in the gentlest manner possible he warned me from this.<sup>91</sup>

The 'oppression' such declarations of love conferred on Tagore was not minor. Edward J. Thompson, a Wesleyan missionary, poet and admirer of Tagore, was scathing of Andrews as 'beneath contempt as regards judgement and intellect generally', and for fanning Tagore's vanity.<sup>92</sup> He did not hesitate to convey this to Tagore's British associates, including the poet Robert Bridges and the artist William Rothenstein. Thompson's offers to translate Tagore were often thwarted by the poet himself, who had 'every hope that Andrews will be willing to help me in this work'.<sup>93</sup> Yet, this closeness occasionally brought its own allegations. Always uncertain of the literary merit of his English translations, Tagore felt annoyed that his close association with Andrews had led people to suspect that he owed his literary success in a 'large measure to Andrews': '... which is so false that [he] can afford to laugh at it'.<sup>94</sup> Thompson blamed Andrews for 'annex[ing] Tagore as a private possession', a feeling shared by another British disciple, the agricultural educationist Leonard Elmhirst. Andrews wrote anxious letters to Elmhirst, when they went on international tours to China and South America, asking for news on Tagore:

I should be so very grateful if you could send me news.... You will understand my anxiety, yet it is not merely my anxiety... I know how very greatly Gurudev values letters, which I may send to him, giving him news about the ashram and about India itself. He almost hungers for this.<sup>95</sup>

Tagore frequently appealed to the lofty language of freedom to distance himself. Letters became vectors to intimate such distance. Yet, disciples too

occasionally rebelled at the continuous demands made on their person. Pearson, often travelling with Tagore on his international voyages and having to act as secretary, chafed at this imposition. Tagore was startled at this revelation:

You must have freedom, not only for your sake but for mine. That I had been forcing you to a life from which you had been struggling to be free is a discovery which is the most difficult of all the burdens that I am bearing at present.... You know I love you, and therefore any service you offer to me which is irksome to you is doing injustice to me.<sup>96</sup>

Declarations of love went both ways to act as reasons for control and freedom. Intimacies became reciprocal when mentors returned this gesture. The confiding of their hopes and fears made them accessible figures.

The tendency to overcompensate was writ large in much epistolary articulation. Letters laid bare Western disciples' continuous grappling with a new set of idioms and individuals all of which were distinctively Indian. Mediated by a politics of race, nation, class and gender, the letter became a point of convergence between individuals located in various positions of power. They became agentic in intermeshing big discourses in their everyday contexts and relations.

The letter lay at the heart of an affective geography that gave form and language to disciples' Indophilia. Letters abound in a language of loss, the will to intimacy constantly riven by disciples' doubts of self-worth. In time, these intimacies inspired wider investments both in India and abroad.

## Notes

- 1 Devyani Gupta, 'Stamping Empire: Postal Standardization in Nineteenth Century India', in *Global Scientific Practice in an Age of Revolutions, 1750–1850*, ed. Patrick Manning and Daniel Rood (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2016), 219–220.
- 2 Mark R. Frost, 'Pandora's Post Box: Empire and Information in India, 1854–1914', *English Historical Review* 131, no. 552 (2016): 1043–1073.
- 3 *Ibid.*, 1055.
- 4 *Ibid.*, 1058.

- 5 James Poskett, *Materials of the Mind: Phrenology, Race, and the Global History of Science, 1815–1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2019), 118.
- 6 Eve Tavor Bannet, *Empire of Letters: Letter Manuals and Transatlantic Correspondence, 1688–1820* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).
- 7 Poskett, *Materials of the Mind*, 118.
- 8 Francesca Orsini, ed., *Love in South Asia: A Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 234–235.
- 9 *Ibid.*, 220.
- 10 *Ibid.*, 235.
- 11 See, for instance, Gauri Viswanathan's analysis of the relationship between the institutionalisation of English and the exercise of colonial power. Gauri Viswanathan, *Masks of Conquest: Literary Study and British Rule in India* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015), 3.
- 12 See Sabyasachi Bhattacharya, *Talking Back: The Idea of Civilization in the Indian Nationalist Discourse* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2012), on a representation of this discourse emerging out of a colonial elite. Homi Bhabha writes on this more tellingly, on how hybridity arises out of colonisation and creates forms of cultural collusion and conflict. Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, Routledge Classics Series (New York: Routledge, 1994), 159.
- 13 I use 'bilingual' in the sense of English and one vernacular language; there were, of course, vibrant traditions of non-English bilingualism in the subcontinent, but the colonial importance of English remained a constant factor.
- 14 Munshi Ram Vaj, later Swami Shraddhanand, was a major leader of the Arya Samaj movement, active in the early twentieth century. He founded the Gurukul Kangri school in Haridwar in 1902 to train young boys in austere conservatism; C. F. Andrews visited Munshi Ram and his school when serving at the Cambridge Mission in Delhi. Munshi Ram later rose to prominence as a Hindu nationalist leader, at the forefront of the *shuddhi* (re-conversion) and *sangathan* (organisation) movements. He was assassinated in 1926.
- 15 Rolland, *Inde*.
- 16 *Ibid.* Parts of this text have been translated variously by Martin Schauss, Andrew Burchell, Matteo Mazzamurro, Paloma Perez Galvan, Pierre Botcherby and Natalie Hanley-Smith.
- 17 This was also a time of the plague epidemic in Calcutta, and Nivedita joined in the relief work, along with Vivekananda's followers, especially Swami Sadananda. Nivedita to Josephine McLeod, [5 April 1899?], *LSN-I*, 99.
- 18 Andrews to William Rothenstein, [?] September 1916, Hugh Tinker, *The Ordeal of Love: C. F. Andrews and India* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 129.



- 19 Tinker, *Ordeal of Love*, 45–46.
- 20 Rabindranath Tagore became the first Asian recipient of the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1913, when India was still a British colony.
- 21 Andrews to Tagore, 18 March 1913, Original Letters from C. F. Andrews to Rabindranath Tagore, Visvabharati, Shantinikentan, Rabindra Bhavan Archives. Henceforth, MSS/CFA/RBVB/F/4-11.
- 22 Pearson to Tagore, 17 December 1912, Folder 287(ii), Letters from William W. Pearson to Rabindranath Tagore, Rabindra Bhavan, Visvabharati. Henceforth, MSS/WP/RBVB/F/287(ii).
- 23 Tagore to Andrews, 13 May 1915, File No. 1, Original Letters from Rabindranath Tagore to C. F. Andrews, CFA PAPERS, File: 1-26, 28 (ii), CD No: RBVB-018. Henceforth, MSS/RT/RBVB/F/1-26, 28 (ii).
- 24 Vide the publication of Rolland's book: Romain Rolland, *Mahatma Gandhi: The Man Who Became One with the Universal Being*, trans. Caroline D. Growth (London: The Swarthmore Press, 1924).
- 25 Madeleine to Gandhi, 29 May 1925, Tridip Suhrod and Thomas Weber, eds., *Beloved Bapu: The Gandhi–Mirabehn Correspondence* (New Delhi: Orient Blackswan, 2014), 11–12. All letters between Gandhi and Mira/Madeleine Slade are taken from this volume unless otherwise stated.
- 26 Ibid.
- 27 Vivekananda to Nivedita, 23 July 1897, *Letters of Swami Vivekananda (LSV)*, Advaita Ashrama, Almora, 1944.
- 28 Vivekananda to Ole Bull, 19 August 1897, *LSV*.
- 29 Josiah J. Goodwin (1878–1898), sometime journalist, stenographer and British disciple of Vivekananda. He is credited with transcribing most of Vivekananda's impromptu lectures. Goodwin is an underexplored figure in the Ramakrishna–Vivekananda tradition. Enlisted as a stenographer by Vivekananda's wealthy patrons in America, he went on to become one of his staunchest followers. In India, though, he could not fit in with Vivekananda's Indian disciples. For the only proper reference to his life, see Pravrajika Vrajaprana, *My Faithful Goodwin* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1994).
- 30 Vivekananda to Nivedita, 29 July 1897, *LSV*.
- 31 Noble to Vivekananda, 13 January 1900, *LSN-I*, 297.
- 32 Sarah Poustie, 'Re-Theorising Letters and "Letterness"', Olive Schreiner Letters Project, Working Papers on Letters, Letterness and Epistolary Networks, no. 1 (2010): 12.
- 33 Vivekananda to Nivedita, 20 June 1897, *LSV*.
- 34 Noble to Vivekananda, 15 December 1899, *LSN-I*, 265.

- 35 See Leslie A. Fielder's comparable insight on inter-racial relationships: As long as there is no mingling of blood, love does not become a threatening enough force to reckon with in interracial relationships – '... soul may couple with soul in God's undefiled forest.' Leslie A. Fielder, *Come Back to the Raft Ag'in, Huck Honey, An End to Innocence: Essays on Culture and Politics* (New York: Beacon Press, 1972), 148.
- 36 Rolland writes of this in his Journal, Rolland, *Inde*, cited in Pravrajika Prabuddhaprana, *Tantine: The Life of Josephine MacLeod, Friend of Swami Vivekananda* (Calcutta: Sri Sarada Math, 1990), 217.
- 37 Gandhi to Kallenbach, 30 August 1909, *Complete Works of Mahatma Gandhi (CWMG)*, vol. 96, 25.
- 38 For instance, the agreement signed by both Gandhi and Kallenbach for 'more love, and yet more love ... such ... as the world had never seen', on the eve of Kallenbach's visit to his family in Europe on 29 July 1911 is particularly insightful (*CWMG*, vol. 96). Gandhi had destroyed Kallenbach's letters to him as he felt it would preserve the confidentiality of their relationship. We only have Gandhi's letters to Kallenbach, preserved by his family members and later taken in possession by the Government of India.
- 39 Gandhi to Kallenbach, 24 September 1909, *CWMG*, vol. 96, 28–29.
- 40 Gandhi to Kallenbach, 30 July 1909: 'I know that you do not want them to be read by anybody else.' *CWMG*, vol. 96, 21.
- 41 Gandhi to Kallenbach, 10 September 1909, *CWMG*, vol. 96, 26.
- 42 Gandhi to Kallenbach, 27 February 1914, *CWMG*, vol. 96, 166.
- 43 Gandhi to Kallenbach, Letters dated 7 April 1914, *CWMG*, vol. 96, 179.
- 44 Gandhi to Kallenbach, 12 April 1914, *CWMG*, vol. 96, 181.
- 45 Kallenbach's German nationality was a problem in his entering British India on the eve of the First World War. Gandhi consulted Andrews before writing to Viceroy Hardinge to see what steps could be taken. Gandhi to Kallenbach, 17 February 1915, *CWMG*, vol. 96, 202.
- 46 Gandhi to Kallenbach, 13 March 1915, *CWMG*, vol. 96, 205.
- 47 CFA to Mahadev Desai, 21 June [1920s?], Sabarmati Ashram Archives.
- 48 C. F. Andrews and Pearson were both sent as envoys to help Gandhi in South Africa by the Moderate nationalist leader Gopal Krishna Gokhale. More on this aspect in the ashram chapter.
- 49 General Jan Smuts, a major architect of racial apartheid in South Africa, and a key Cabinet Minister in the Union of South Africa established in 1910. A great believer in the idea of a Commonwealth as well as a policy of racial segregation, he helped write the Constitution of South Africa.

- 50 Andrews to Tagore, 6 January 1914, MSS/CFA/RBVB/F/4-11.
- 51 Andrews to Gandhi, 5 April 1914, MSS/CFA/RBVB/F/1-26, 28 (ii).
- 52 Andrews to Tagore, 14 January 1914, MSS/CFA/RBVB/F/4-11.
- 53 Ibid.
- 54 Andrews to Gandhi, 13 April [1914?], MSS/CFA/RBVB/F/1-26, 28 (ii).
- 55 Gandhi to Andrews, 6 August 1918, *CWMG*, vol. 17, <http://www.gandhiashramsevagram.org/gandhi-literature/mahatma-gandhi-collected-works-volume-17.pdf> (accessed on 29 September 2018).
- 56 Andrews to Rudra, 4 May 1915, C. F. Andrews' File, F. F. Monk's File, St Stephen's College.
- 57 Andrews to Tagore, 27 January 1914, Fraser–Tagore Collection, Press Clippings 91–200, University of Edinburgh.
- 58 CFA to Mahadev Desai, [undated, 1919], Sabarmati Ashram Archives.
- 59 As, for instance, Uma Dasgupta's framing of the relationship between Tagore, Gandhi and Andrews as lofty 'friendships of largeness and freedom', formed in the shadow of colonial rule and India's freedom struggle. Dasgupta, *Friendships of 'Largeness and Freedom'*.
- 60 Rolland, *Inde*, cited in Prabuddhaprana, *Tantine*, 217.
- 61 Gandhi to Mira, 27 December 1926.
- 62 Gandhi to Mira, 4 April 1927.
- 63 Gandhi to Rukminidevi and Benarsilal Bajaj, 8 January 1933, *CWMG*, vol. 52, 1932–1933, 400.
- 64 Gandhi to Mira, 11 December 1926.
- 65 Andrews to Tagore, 8 May 1913, MSS/CFA/RBVB/F/4-11. All letters from Andrews to Tagore are from this series unless otherwise stated.
- 66 Andrews to Tagore, 2 October 1913.
- 67 Andrews to Tagore, 8 March 1913
- 68 Andrews to Tagore, 15 May 1913.
- 69 Andrews to Tagore, 8 May 1913.
- 70 Pearson to Tagore, 6 May 1913.
- 71 Andrews to Tagore, 5 October 1915.
- 72 Andrews to Tagore, 28 July 1913.
- 73 Andrews to Tagore, 13 December 1913.
- 74 While Hindu in a broad sense, Tagore himself belonged to the reformist Brahmo Samaj, generally seen as distinct from conventional Hindu orthodoxy. Detractors often castigated the Brahmo Samaj as Christianised. The Brahmo Samaj, started by Rammohun Roy in 1828, underwent much splintering over the next century. Tagore's father Debendranath advocated a return to Hindu

- orthodoxy, which led to further divisions in the already dissipating movement. Tagore did identify as Hindu in a broader civilisational sense.
- 75 Andrews to Gandhi, 13 April [1914?].
- 76 Andrews to Tagore, 28 July 1913.
- 77 Mira to Gandhi, 15 May 1927.
- 78 Gandhi to Mira, 2 October 1927.
- 79 Vivekananda to Nivedita, 29 July 1897, *LSV*.
- 80 Nivedita to Josephine Mcleod, 12 March 1899, *LSN-I*, 82. Tagore's biographer Prasanta Pal has observed that it was Vivekananda's ignorance of Tagore's corpus that made him dismiss Rabindranth's literary work as erotic. See Prasanta Pal, *Rabijibani*, vol. 4 (Calcutta: Ananda Publishers, 2012), 230. At stake here, however, is Vivekananda's quest for manliness and what he perceived as lacking in Bengal due to the 'effeminate' poetry and attires practiced by members of the Tagore family, especially Rabindranath.
- 81 Gandhi to Mira, 24 January 1927.
- 82 Mira to Gandhi, 29 January 1929, Muzaffarpur.
- 83 Monique Scheer, 'Are Emotions a Kind of Practice (And Is That What Makes Them Have a History)? A Bourdieuan Approach to Understanding Emotion', *History and Theory* 51, no. 2 (2012): 194.
- 84 Vivekananda to Nivedita, 1 October 1897.
- 85 Gandhi to Mira, 24 June 1929, 233.
- 86 Gandhi to Mira, 22 March 1927.
- 87 See letter from his Brother Disciples to Vivekananda, March 1894, *LSV*, about rumours spread by the Brahmo preacher Protap C. Mazoomdar of him 'committing every sin under the sun in America – especially "unchastity" of the most degraded type!!!' Marie Louise Burke, *Swami Vivekananda in the West: New Discoveries*, vol. 2 (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1984), 90.
- 88 Jacob Copeman offers a comparative insight on the powerful role of the guru in influencing disciples' sacrifices around donating blood for the Indian armed forces in post-colonial India, and how this has been embraced by some sects influenced by reformist Hinduism. See Jacob Copeman, 'Violence, Non-Violence, and Blood Donation in India', *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 14, no. 2 (June 2008): 278–296.
- 89 Gandhi to Tagore, 30 April [1918], *CWVG*, vol. 14.
- 90 Tagore to Andrews, 7 July 1915.
- 91 Andrews to Rothenstein, 3 August 1916, Tinker, *Ordeal of Love*, 129.

- 92 Edward P. Thompson, *Alien Homage* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1993), 33. Thompson received an uneven response from Tagore throughout his engagement with the poet. He was also a literary aspirant desirous of translating Tagore's works from their Bengali originals.
- 93 Tagore to Thompson, 15 February 1914, Edward J. Thompson – General Correspondence – Tagore, E. J. Thompson Papers, MS. Eng c 5318, Fols 1–40.
- 94 Tagore to Rothenstein, 4 April 1915, Mary Lago, ed., *Imperfect Encounter: Letters of William Rothenstein and Rabindranath Tagore, 1911–1941* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1972).
- 95 Andrews to Leonard Elmhirst, 18 March 1924.
- 96 Tagore to Pearson, 23 December 1920.

