

## Undergraduate Research Symposium May 17, 2013 Mary Gates Hall

### Online Proceedings

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#### POSTER SESSION 3

**Balcony, Easel 87**

*2:30 PM to 4:00 PM*

**Imagining a Novel Nation: The Indian English Novel and the Indian Independence Movement**

*Kali Swenson, Senior, English*

*Mary Gates Scholar*

*Mentor: Raj Chetty*

*Mentor: Jose Antonio Lucero, International Studies*

*Mentor: Carolyn Pinedo Turnovsky, American Ethnic Studies & Law, Societies and Justice*

*Mentor: Simon Trujillo (svtrujillo@gmail.com)*

How did the Indian English novel function within the Indian independence movement? Literature illuminates unique narratives not necessarily communicated by other forms of print media like newspapers and history books, and these stories exert a very different kind of influence. In the particular instance of Indian English novels around the time that India gained independence from Britain, literature established power through its inherent cultural capital, its role in imagining nations, and its critical abilities. These novels embodied traits of both the colonized and the colonizer, allowing them to occupy a position of notable political and cultural influence. Drawing on theories on literature and nationalism, this study employs close readings of novels by Rabindranath Tagore and Mulk Raj Anand within the context of historically evident politics and cultural phenomena of the time period to explain the role Indian English novels played in revolutionizing India. An understanding of the factors enabling the novel's influence will illuminate how India's independence was imagined and realized. Situating Indian English novels of the Indian independence movement in their historical and social context may yield further understanding to the way historical events played out and reveal more of literature's effect on the societies in which it is produced.