

**REAL AND IMAGINED WORLDS: A STUDY OF THE
IMPERIAL STANCE IN THE NOVELS OF KIPLING,
FORSTER, ORWELL AND PAUL SCOTT.**

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Submitted in Fulfilment of the Requirement for
The Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy



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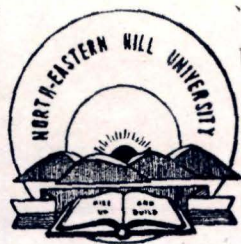
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Supervisor

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A C K N O W L E D G E M E N T

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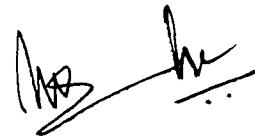
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INTRODUCTION

A comparative study of the imperial novel necessitates a recognition of the broad distinctions between some related terms such as "imperialism", "colonialism" and "race". In Imperialism, A Study (1902), Hobson defines colonialism - "in its best sense" as the ".... natural overflow of nationality"¹. Hobson endorses Professor Seeley's views on imperialism :

When a State advances beyond the limits of nationality its power becomes precarious and artificial. This is the condition of most empires and it is the condition of our own
.....²

Under imperialism, Seeley feels, rival nationalities cannot be properly assimilated and they remain a permanent cause of weakness and danger. He makes a neat distinction between the aggressive imperialism of the pre-war era and the earlier version of it. According to him, the new imperialism "differs from the older, first in substituting for the ambition of a single growing empire the theory and practice of competing empires, each motivated by similar lusts of political aggrandisement and commercial gain"³ The British empire acquired its largest territorial expansion during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. It also faced the threats of Prof. Seeley mentions. The

British literature of the nineteenth century that dwelt on the Anglo-Indian* experience, deliberately undermined the native character. It highlighted the fathomless depravity of the natives and the impenetrable mystery of the land. In the post-Mutiny era - during the period of new imperialism - many novels were written strictly from the British point of view. They highlighted the East-West confrontation in terms that were hardly complimentary to the indigenous people. The writers used special methods to capture the Indian reality. They underlined the innate superiority of the Whites and subverted the native character in an inverse proportion to justify the authority that the master race exercised. Prof. J.R. Seeley, Regius Professor of History at Cambridge, and a popular historian of the time, even went so far as to claim that India did not resent the presence of a foreigner because she had no sense of national identity; and, since there was no India, there was no foreigner in the place. The fiction that British India produced in the years following the Mutiny, generally used the Indian reality as a referent - as a symbol of dark mystery and "otherness". Such a representation also allayed the fears of the ruling race.

Racism and racialism remained the ideological planks of the empire fiction. The British in India felt

* The term 'Anglo-Indian' refers to the British residents in India during the raj - not the children of mixed marriages.

that the natives were racially inferior (physiologically and otherwise). Thus, the obvious task of the empire builders was to civilize them. This was the attitude that was chiefly responsible for the segregation of the races and the strained relations between them. The fissures in race relations became more pronounced when the Indians began to show signs of political restiveness. The Anglo-Indian community sometimes dismissed the stirrings with the sort of contempt they thought it deserved. But, at other times - with the memories of the Mutiny days looming large in their minds - they felt besieged and threatened by the turn of events. They almost felt compelled to preserve their rule, authority and identity by sequestering themselves in the civil lines, the cantonment, in the messes and clubs.

The protagonist of Kim, the English characters in A Passage to India, Burmese Days and the Raj Quartet, are shown as existing in a highly tensional state - torn between their affiliation to their race and their commitment to the natives, or, alternatively, their attraction to the Indian way of life and thought. Kipling tries to overcome the problem by making Kim - the orphan child - a racially indeterminate figure. But, even he is shown as being troubled by his ambiguous identity and keeps shifting his affiliations; he sometimes responds to the claims of the Lama, while at other times tries to relate to the ambitions of the British

power in India. The question of race relations also occupies an important place in A Passage to India. The protagonist-Aziz, and the other articulate Indians are antagonistically positioned vis-a-vis the English characters. In Burmese Days, Orwell highlights the bankruptcy of the Club/~~Populace~~ relationship and the sham behind the White Man's **Burden** humbug. He also reveals the corruption of the British who are forcibly holding on to an Empire despite the overwhelming reasons that called for an immediate dismantling of it. The Raj Quartet analyses the condition in India just prior to 1947 that led the British retreat. The agonies of the Anglo-Indians torn between a nostalgic oneness with India and the need to make a quick exit are examined in great detail in the Quartet novels. Scott also captures the dilemma of westernised Indians (like Hari Kumar) the loyalist congressmen and the I.N.A. recruits to show how some sections of the Indian community experienced discomfiture, helplessness and tragedy. Among all the British characters in the Quartet, the most authoritarian stance is the one exhibited by Merrick. He represents the evil forces of British Imperialism. His malignant presence is felt by all, and especially by those around him whom he chooses to define adversely. Kim, A Passage to India, Burmese Days and the Raj Quartet mirror the factitious Indian reality. They underline the fact that segregation in British India was based on the colour

factor. The natives are denied access to the clubs - those citadels of power. Aziz, Veeraswami and Hari Kumar despite their relative anglicization are denied entry, into what they consider to be a position of privilege and are forced to undergo the sufferings that follow from their peculiar placement within the imperial order.

Alan Greenberger holds the view that certain historical and political developments in the latter part of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth accounted for vast attitudinal changes among the British novelists writing on the imperial theme. He groups them in three categories. He calls the first era - "The Era of Confidence 1880-1910"; Kipling is the towering literary figure of the age - when British expansionism had reached its peak. "The Era of Doubt" began in 1910 and continued upto 1935. While the writers of the "Era of Confidence" exhibited, in their fiction, their complete faith in the permanence of the empire, the writers belonging to the latter phase - who were cognizant of the rise of Indian nationalism - began to question not only the beliefs that sustained the imperial hegemony but even the permanence of the empire. Forster's and Orwell's fictions adumbrate notes of dissent and protest. Greenberger calls the last phase in the imperial psychology - "the Era of Melancholy" (1935-1960) - when

the dissolution of the empire had become a foregone conclusion and the novels of the time reflected the pathos of many minds. The Raj Quartet captures the feelings of bewilderment and anxiety of men and women on both sides of the imperial fence.

Literature and social reality are inter-active categories which continually modify each other. Literary constructs do not encompass the entire reality referred to, nor do they wholly reflect or contain it. The fact is that nothing in human experience has direct access to anything else. Even if one were to experience something directly and in sensuous terms, one would not know the thing directly - without the mediation of some other factor. Therefore, the novels about the empire do not merely refer to the conflict on the socio-historical plane; they also mirror the submerged anxieties of the writers and their position with regard to art, literature and life itself.

Kipling's writings are informed by the imperial ideology that made a deep impression on the minds of several generations of English schoolboys including Leonard Woolf and George Orwell. His popularity was mainly with the English middle class to whom he became a household name. Orwell had written: "For my own part, I worshipped Kipling at thirteen"⁴ The distasteful thing about his work is

the imperial strain in it, but the construction and economy of its style makes it one of the best examples of good writing. It also becomes a ready reference for cliches, slogans and catchy phrases. In Orwell's view, "Kipling is the only English poet of our time who has added phrases to the language"⁵. Orwell points out that phrases are consciously used as cliches by others. Kipling had the gift for packing "picturesqueness" into words and phrases even when he dealt with matters that are of serious import. Forster, Orwell and Paul Scott are among the writers who made use of Kipling's pithy turns of phrase - even while they tinged them with their own brand of irony and sarcasm.

In his fiction, Kipling located heroism in the Anglo-Indian quarters. He firmly believed that the natives had to be "changed" for their own good and for the good of the British themselves. The two great agencies of change in British India in the nineteenth century were evangelicalism and utilitarianism. Kipling's fictions have to be seen within this context. They are less condemnatory of the non-whites than the Mutiny novels and, in Kim, he seems to lean towards the Indian side. He is fascinated by the variety and colour of the Indian life-styles. There are alternating currents of fascination and repulsion in his work showing that while he was conscious that the natives

had a far richer culture, he felt that they also had a more depraved character than the Anglo-Indians. Imperial India turned into a mirror - reflecting at one level, the heroic and saintly self-images that the Victorians wanted to see, and on the other - casting ghostly shadows of guilt and regression. Such a mentality was sustained by the ideology of the empire. As religion became a less powerful force in Victorian England, the empire became the corner-stone of set beliefs and prejudices.

In Kim, Kipling is chiefly concerned with his protagonist's "Process of Becoming" - in which Mahbub Ali represents the road to activism and the Lama the road to contemplation, while Kim seeks to synthesise the two ends and so find his own identity. The narrative romance also works out, in imaginative terms, the happy memories of Kipling's early childhood spent in India. He romanticised the real because running concurrently with the happy memories were the unhappy ones - of his schooling in England. Kipling skilfully blends the three elements of the plot - the spy story, the picaresque romance and the search for transcendence. The author's imperial standpoint is made available through his approbation for a soldier who had fought the Mutineers, his sympathetic portrayal of a Babu engaged in the service of the raj and, most of all, through his protagonist's adherence

to the rules of the Great Game. The picaresque nature of the plot allows Kipling to investigate the diversity of the Indian reality along with his hero and the theme of transcendence elevates his art to the level of an aesthetic experience. The traditional criticism of Kipling's writing tends to associate it with an unequivocal and inflexible imperialist ideology. Such an approach overlooks the complexities of the British position in India - a fact that the Bard of the Empire acknowledged in Kim.

One of the common charges against Kipling is that he gave currency to existing assumptions of the British empire without subjecting them to critical scrutiny. The other British novels selected for scrutiny here examine and criticise the assumptions of Kipling. George Orwell realized that in Kipling's time it was still possible to be an imperialist and a gentleman. He felt that Kipling's position is not altogether indefensible because the redeeming point is its emphasis on the imperial work - ethic. "The nineteenth century Anglo-Indians were at any rate people who did things....."⁶

Kipling backed up the man of action in his fiction. The empire represented for him an extended field of action, a space for imagination and legend. His myths were absorbed uncritically by the readers of his generation,

though afterwards, a lot of literary energy went into tearing those clouds of glory from his image of the empire and the empire builders. It was his image of the empire that inspired the ideological opposition to it in the novels of the empire-the genre that he had created. In A Passage, Burmese Days and the Raj Quartet, the English officials who represent Kipling's ideals and values are shown in a negative light. "What was a serious doctrine in Kipling becomes ironic"⁷ in the novels of Forster, Orwell and Paul Scott. They record in their fictions the decline and demise of British imperialism just as Kipling had celebrated its greatness. Though Orwell felt that the English could not have maintained themselves in power even for a week if the normal Anglo-Indian outlook had been that of E.M. Forster, his anti-imperial novel - Burmese Days - shows the influence not just of Kipling but also of Forster. Both A Passage and Burmese Days examine the relationship between an Indian doctor and an Englishman. There are Club scenes in both which show a cross-section of the Anglo-Indian society and its attitudes. The theme of race relations is treated in both with the authors examining the theme of the lack of understanding and friendship between the English and the natives. Forster remarks on the physical deterioration and the moral corruption of his Heaslop, Turton and McBryde. This view is further buttressed by Orwell in Burmese Days. But, to Forster's credit it must be admitted that for some of his characters in A Passage, the question

of transgression remains a possibility - even if the outcome is by no means clear. In Orwell's novel, "the official failures are not redeemed by successful personal relations. There are no characters like Fielding and Mrs. Moore, who are able to prevail against the overwhelming cruelty of the English and maintain a civilized standard of behaviour."⁸ In A Passage, Fielding invites the wrath of the Whites and defends Aziz when he is charged with assaulting Adela; in Orwell's novel, Flory cannot muster the courage to stand by his convictions and support the nomination of Veeraswami to the Kyauktada Club. Therefore, Burmese Days remains a much more pessimistic novel than A Passage. Flory's moral cowardice makes transgression impossible for him. While the last scene of A Passage highlights the discordant strains in the Aziz-Fielding relationship, the final scene in Burmese Days is very bleak. It reflects Orwell's sense of despair when he was forced to relate his criticism of imperialism with his knowledge of the innate inability of man under stress to be anything than sickeningly selfish. To use an expression of Frank Kermode in a slightly different context, Orwell's hero "mimes transgression but never crosses the boundary"⁹ and he, thereby, renders his dangerous subject quite safe. There are autobiographical strains in Burmese Days. Orwell had seen the paradoxical situation in Burma from close quarters. He recalled the floggings, the ruthless

treatment of the Burmese inmates in jail, the strained social relations between the English and the Burmese and even a hanging. He began to feel ashamed - like his protagonist Flory - of the intolerable bad manners of the Anglo-Indians. Flory is shown as having a sure knowledge of his own culpability; this is why he cannot bear to hear Westfield, Ellis and Mrs. Lackersteen preen themselves on their "Englishness". His birth mark, as Jeffrey Meyers points out, is

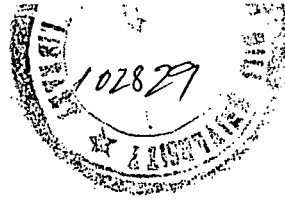
as much a sign of guilt, a mark of Cain as an indication of his isolation and alienation. He is unable to mediate between the three worlds of Burma : the English, the native and the natural world of the jungle¹⁰

Orwell arranges to conclude the novel with Flory's suicide but the questions that he raises about the propriety of the imperial 'set-up' remain unanswered. If tragedy - as Orwell defined it - shows man defeated in a way that marks him out as being nobler than the forces destroying it, then Burmese Days is not a tragedy. It is a sad saga of the shameful capitulation of humanism to the forces of authoritarianism. The pessimism of the novel is due to Orwell's failure to reconcile imperialism with humanism. The connection between colonial history and literature is too strong to be merely wished away. The

transition from the confident imperialism of Kipling's times to its demise, amidst violence and brutality of the nineteen-forties, is palpable in the changes of tone and emphases in colonial fiction.

As Kipling was a firm believer in the superiority of the British race, he felt that they had a divine right to rule over the Indians. Kim's greatest legacy is his English blood. He carries a baptismal certificate encased in leather and worn around his neck which gives his father's name as Kimball O'Hara. He is brought up by a low caste Hindu woman and is burnt as black as any native. He associates freely with the darker race and even runs errands for them. British India claims him back later on the basis of what his baptismal certificate says. Then, steps are initiated to educate him and convince him about his responsibilities as a Sahib. His sunburnt skin does not hinder him in the attainment of the goals that a white man in British India would naturally aspire for - during the hey days of the imperial rule. Kipling develops a fantasy narrative that achieves a precarious balance between the claims of Creighton (representative of the British authority in India) and the magnetic attraction of the Lama's spirituality. Kipling depicts the Indian reality in all its colour and diversity. There is no noticeable didactic strain in the novel. Kim experiences

the best of both worlds - "he absorbs much of the Sahib's knowledge, when his holidays come he resumes native dress and disappears again into the sea of Indian Life".¹¹ Kipling does not impose any restrictions on the movement of his hero. Instead, he shows his preference for a new system of education and upbringing based on a sounder understanding of the realities of the Indian situation. Kipling's imperialist voice is somewhat muffled in Kim. In "The Galley Slave" Kipling writes about a soldier who takes pride in his bondage. For Kipling, power implied responsibility. His Anglo-Indian characters are not masters exercising unbridled authority; they are in effect only privileged slaves. He was acutely aware of the differences in the strains of thought between the old Anglo-Indian servants of the empire and the arm-chair utilitarians formulating the imperial policy in Britain. Kipling began to feel before long that western values should not be imposed on Indians; they should be ruled in accordance with their own. In Kipling's fictions of the nineties, a few characters - including Kim - surrender themselves wholly to the Indian experience. Trejago and McIntosh Jellaludin cross over to the Indian side and are also punished for their transgression. This is suggestive of Kipling's ambivalent stance towards the Indian reality. He popularised the myth of the White Man's Burden. In Orwell's view, Kipling was a romantic who had never really entered imperialism.



He only made occasional forays from the sidelines. So he was unaware of the economic drive behind imperialism. He never realized that the empire was essentially a money-making concern. He only saw it as a kind of forcible evangelising.

Kipling believed in British paternalism and in the sanctity of Law which, in its loosest form, becomes a network of obligations with each individual doing the job appropriate to him to the best of his ability. Kipling's fictions depict the complex interrelationships between the rulers and the subject race. He concludes, like Forster, Orwell and Paul Scott after him, that the races do not usually "connect". The only difference between Kipling's views and theirs is that while he derives his views from his imperial standpoint, the others write on the basis of their realistic assessment of the fate of imperialism. A Passage shows the futility of trying to form a friendship by overcoming the harsh realities of the colonial encounter. The question of friendship between Aziz and Fielding becomes a complex one and remains unresolved till the end on account of the situation in which the two of them are trapped. Forster made two visits to India in 1912-13 and in 1921 which provided him material for A Passage. His fictional characters represent a cross-section of Indian and Anglo-Indian societies. Even when he first visited the country the stirrings of nationalism

were palpable. British authoritarianism was invoked when the Delhi Durbar was held in 1911. Then, in 1919, the government passed the Rowlatt Act. It aimed at crushing the Indian intransigence. The Act was strongly resented by Indians. There were mass demonstrations, strikes and unrest in the different parts of the country. The government met the situation with more force than was necessary. On April 13, 1919, General Dyer ordered the massacre of innocent people at Amritsar. The tragedy widened the rift between Anglo-Indians and the natives. Gandhiji launched the Non-Cooperation Movement in 1920. So, by the time Forster came to India on his second visit the political atmosphere had undergone tremendous changes. He sensed the bitterness and the strained relations between the British and the Indians. A Passage contains resonances of the changed social and political equations, though, ultimately the novel does not confine itself to just that. As Benita Parry puts it:

To read the book as a social document about the British in India, and the Indians in British India does stunt an appraisal of its complexity of meaning; but the political insights should not be ignored, for the fissures of imperialism are very much involved in the development of characters and relationships and in the shaping of the area and nature of contact between the civilizations represented¹².

The novel develops mythopoeic strains and eventually, vaults over the socio-political reality so accurately depicted in the earlier sections of the novel. In response to the question whether Aziz and Fielding can be friends, the earth in its hundred voices, says "No, not yet". The sky also interposes with the words "No, not there", as if to remind us that the timing of their reconciliation is not dependent on India's political independence. In "The Ballad of East and West" Kipling had remarked on the impossibility of friendship between the races prior to the meeting of the earth and sky on the Day of Judgement.

Oh, East is East, and West is West,
and never the twain shall meet,
Till Earth and Sky stand presently
at God's Great Judgement Seat;
But there is neither East nor West,
Border, nor Breed, nor Birth,
When two strong men stand face to
face though they come from the ends of the earth.¹³

Forster denies even such a possibility in A Passage. He wrote to Masood on 27 September, 1922:

When I began the book I thought of it as a little bridge between East and West, but this conception has had to go, my sense of truth forbids anything so comfortable.¹⁴

Forster's contention is that in the colonial set-up personal relations and codes of conduct and decency are undermined. This is why Ronny can say - "We are not here for the purpose of behaving pleasantly"¹⁵. Forster underlines the differences in the attitudes of Mrs. Moore and her son, Ronny. Like the 'Turtens and Burtons' Ronny has lost his grace and humanity in the perverse situation of imperial India. Forster's quest in A Passage is for the values that have been undermined by the imperial system.

This tale becomes a passage to enlightenment for Forster's surrogate, and ultimately for us ¹⁶

India is not just a metaphor for British imperialism, it is also an area of mind-boggling diversity which forces us to realize that "the caves are a metaphor for the non-verbal world that precedes and will survive mankind".¹⁷ Forster highlights the situation in imperial India by examining it in terms of inter-personal relations as he felt that the repercussions of the British rule were most noticeable on the social front :

The decent Anglo-Indian of today realize that the great blunder of the past is neither political, nor economic, nor educational but social; that he was associated with a system that supported rudeness in the railway carriages and is paying the penalty¹⁸.

He also felt that the crisis in the British-Indian relations were the "result of years of undetected personal incidents that grow up like a coral reef"¹⁹. But, he admitted that his purpose in the novel was neither political, nor sociological. His artistic vision transforms the reality into a symbol of a cosmos in which his characters enact their fictional roles. He underlines the antiquity of India.

The choice of theme and treatment in Forster's masterpiece ... represents an act of sublimation ... By translating his locale to India and the social discriminations between the raj and the natives, Forster can now express the full gamut of his protest against snobbery, against the shallow cruelty of status and inherited privilege²⁰.

The characters of the novel - both English and Indian - "are subordinate to a psychic - physical world that is both India and the enormous chaos of life itself"²¹. The possibility of friendship between Aziz and Fielding is rejected in the context of a diversified India - the India of a hundred voices. Such a reality denies reconciliation. India is not a promise but an appeal to men to aspire towards the possibility - in the abstract. Here, we have the core of Forster's humanistic message. India is his objective correlative - the seat of muddles and with an aura of mystery about it that thwarts the attempt of rational western minds to

comprehend it. "It is a muddle on such a scale as to constitute mystery"²². It defeats Adela's wish to know the country. The lone figure of the punkahwallah, mute and majestic of form, seems to rebuke the flurry of activity in the court. The intensely realized physical setting of the novel lends significance to Forster's theme.

For Forster India is real, very real albeit one that has little of the ferocity or glamour of Rudyard Kipling²³.

In the final analysis, A Passage to India is not just about India. Its concerns go far beyond the theme of race relations in imperial India. Forster, who saw no possibility of salvation in the world of politics, does not foresee a future in which "all things will come right, dear comrades, though we shall not be there to see (it)"²⁴.

Orwell's Burmese Days satirises the myth of the White Man's Burden -

As he appears in several poems, in novels like Kim, and in too many catch-phrases to be an ironic fiction, Kipling's White Man, as an idea, a persona, a style of being seems to have served many Britishers while they were abroad²⁵.

Burmese Days has been called an anti-imperialist novel which draws upon Orwell's experiences in Burma as a police officer when he saw the insidious intent of the Anglo-Indians and all the blemishes of the imperial rule. At the end of five years his feelings were - as he disclosed later- "I hated the imperialism I was serving with a bitterness which I probably cannot make clear it is not possible to be a part of such a system without recognising it as an unjustifiable tyranny I was conscious of an immense weight of guilt which I had to expiate"²⁶. He felt compelled to resign his job. He also attempted to exorcise his feelings by writing about them in his fiction :

.... the landscapes of Burma, when I was among them, so appalled me to assume the qualities of a nightmare, afterwards stayed so hauntingly in my mind that I was obliged to write a novel about them to get rid of them.²⁷

David L. Kubal rightly comments that a close scrutiny of Burmese Days shows that what Orwell was doing here was much more than writing a satire or an indictment of British imperialism. He is more concerned with the delineation of the psychological and ethical effects of the system both on the English people and the Burmese. The alien quality of life there threatens the mental equilibrium of the English

officials. At one point in the story, the insistent yelping of a dog at night nearly drives Flory crazy. Through an array of images, Orwell shows the burden of living in a truly alien world and the way it corrupts the men physically and morally. Flory tries to relieve his boredom by drinking and philandering. The other Anglo-Indians also seem to be lacking in stamina and motivation. Incidentally, even Flory's trenchant criticism of imperialism loses its sting because he can only do it on the sly. The protagonist is a weak, ineffectual figure and through him Orwell shows the perversion of character in a totalitarian atmosphere. Such situations bring out the animal in man. Flory relies on Elizabeth to provide him with strength. For him, she represents ".... the air of England - dear England where thought is free and one is not condemned forever to dance the danse du pukka sahib"²⁸. Elizabeth stands for the values of the older colonial world and it is this world that rejects Flory and drives him to suicide:

Flory believes that if he could combine the best of England and Burma, then he could revive within himself the power of England that he associates with Elizabeth. He is, of course, doomed to failure²⁹.

Flory does not undergo any transformation because he cannot renew his commitment to the empire. Orwell said that the

real futility of the White Man's dominion becomes apparent when, by turning tyrant, he destroys his own freedom. In "Shooting an Elephant" he remarks on the "Sahib mask" that a white man is sometimes compelled to wear to hide his fears and deficiencies. The beatitudes of the pukka sahib that he lists in Burmese Days are:

Keep up our prestige
 The firm hand (without the velvet glove)
 We white men must hang together
 Give them an inch and they'll take an ell and
Esprit de corps³⁰.

He went to Burma believing in the White Man's Burden, but in subsequent years became bitterly disillusioned with the imperial order. Despite his reservations, he went on to romanticise the raj and its mystique. His early admiration for Kipling had left its mark on him. He felt that imperialism was morally wrong but it was technically necessary. He also knew that within its broad spectrum the possibilities of variations in practice remained. He considered the imperialists of Kipling's day as tough, resilient and uncompromising men who managed to do some good work, despite earning the wrath of others in some respects. Orwell applauded the work done by the empire - builders:

What is more distasteful in Kipling than sentimental plots and vulgar tricks of style is the imperialism to which he chose to lend his genius. The most one can say is that when he made it, the choice was more forgivable than it would be now.³¹

The failure of the imperial mission was to a great extent due to the mistakes made by the latter day officials. But Orwell knew that the British rule was relatively better than the domination practised by some other nations. As Forster puts it:

All Nations are odious, but some are less odious than others, and by this stony, unlovely path he (Orwell) reaches patriotism³².

Burmese Days underscores Orwell's thesis that the empire was motivated by greed. The English have developed the country, (in a way), so as to further their own interest. Orwell's novel is a bleak one. Jeffrey Meyers comments that Burmese Days is Forster's A Passage to India with all its decency and niceness squeezed out.

Paul Scott's Quartet novels deal with the Indian situation during the closing years of the British raj. They span a period of five years - from the launching of the Quit India movement in 1942 to August 1947. Scott

said that India provided him with a metaphor. He uses a historian's approach to lay bare the socio-political reality of those years. He relates the individual experiences to the demands of history. He called his first visit to India (as an army cadet) - his second birth because it was here that he found a reference for his personal experiences at Southgate, with its social divisions and subtle forms of coercion. The situation in India which affected the lives of millions of Indians and Anglo-Indians, made Scott acutely aware of the condition of uncertainty that rendered many people rootless. He went on to recreate the period even from the point of view of the ordinary, elderly memsahibs - such as Miss Crane, Sister Ludmila and Miss Batchelor. Hari Kumar is, to some extent, a self-portrait in whom Scott feeds his own devastating feelings of loss, helplessness and rejection. He was sensitive to the plight of half-castes and hybrids - people who were accepted neither by Anglo-India nor by their own people.

When he came to India for the first time in 1943, the Quit India campaign was already on. In The Jewel in the Crown, Scott delineates the mood of unrest in the country - the violence and the mob scenes that shocked the British community in India and forced them to come to terms with the overwhelming crisis. Towards the end of his

military apprenticeship in 1944, Scott joined the air supply unit in Bengal and in course of his posting at the frontier he began to sense a thing or two about the actual role of the Indian National Army of Subhas Chandra Bose in India's freedom struggle. Scott uses unheroic characters - who are shown pursuing ordinary occupations in mundane settings to recreate in imaginative terms the turbulent picture of the times. He shows how the Indian antipathy towards the British later metamorphosed itself into communal hatred and brought about a human tragedy of gigantic proportions. The Quartet also depicts the helplessness of the ordinary citizens - on both sides - who are caught in a situation which is not of their own making. The Jewel - the first novel of the Quartet series starts with the rape of Daphne Manners during the Quit India riots and the last novel - A Division of Spoils ends with the train scene when a vengeful Hindu mob drags Ahmed out of the train and cruelly hacks him to pieces. Scott draws a parallel between the "greasy and evasive" motion of the train and the greasy and evasive British retreat from India.

Scott examines the traumatic years of the British rule in India, just prior to 1947. Few writers before him had examined the situation with any degree of seriousness. There is a tremendous range in Scott's characterisation. Almost every group within the Anglo-Indian

context is represented, and through them, he maps the reality that was submerged and inaccessible even to historians. He refused to make his India a referent for strangeness and mystery; that task he left to the writers of the popular pulp-fiction like M.M. Kaye. But, he did not subscribe to the view that imperial India ought to be left to the romantic and adventure novelists, or to the opinion in the literary circles that Forster and Kipling had already said the last serious word on it long ago.

Scott came to India for the second time in 1964. During that visit he stayed for some days in the house of one of his subordinates at Timmapuram and he was struck by the primitive living conditions there. He hated almost everything that he saw and experienced. He later acknowledged that his hatred had sprung from fear. He remarked on the "Sahib's Face" - the mask of superiority that he felt compelled to wear on occasion. He called it a harsh, illiberal mask which seemed to be his only protection against the paranoid delusions that he suffered from. The experiences of Daphne, Robin White and Miss Crane capture strains of Scott's own predicament.

Scott felt that India's social and political problems had resulted from the thoughtless British attempt

to graft a layer of sophisticated political behaviour and thinking onto the other layers of poverty and want. He read A Passage to India first in 1947, and again in 1964, and was appalled to find the antiquated Anglo-Indian attitudes still flourishing in India - even twenty years after her independence. He noted the prophetic element of A Passage which had prefigured the future.

Scott decried the attempt by many Britishers to shelve the disturbing thoughts about British culpability in the matter of more than a quarter million deaths in Partition riots and the subsequent subcontinental wars. Scott insisted that responsibility could not be shirked - just because it no longer suited the British to acknowledge the imperial connection. His novels drive home the message that the past cannot be detached from the present and the future. The Quartet explores in the fullest detail, the ramifications of the British - Indian affair, an affair that did not really end in 1947. The later history of the acrimonious relationship between the subcontinental neighbours and the mounting racial tension in Britain jointly testify to this fact.

Much first-hand historical research was needed to depict the last great confrontation between the East and West in India. Scott, however, had no intention of

becoming a historical novelist. The first time he had attempted to write about contemporary London, he had failed. He traced the disturbing situation in the subcontinent to the failure of the British to unify India. He does not romanticise the past in the Quartet. The novels are written from a vigorous sense of history that systematically "prunes the element of nostalgia". Scott believed that history is an active force that counters complacency, misrepresentation, hostility, ignorance and fear.

An early discerning critic and historian, Sir Max Beloff lauded Scott's achievement in the Raj Quartet. Writing in the Encounter (May, 1976), he praised the breadth of Scott's canvas, the range and complexity of his characterisation and the subtlety with which the tragedy of Partition had been tackled. He appreciated Scott's technique and felt that unlike him, a mere historian may not have been able to do complete justice to the subject. Beloff also noted with approval the two points of emphasis in the Quartet - its focus on the day-to-day labours of the imperial officials, and the prominence it gave to women - the submerged section of the people whom conventional representation had either glamourised or overlooked completely.

A close look at the relevant Indian novels of Kipling, Forster, Orwell and Paul Scott, throws much

light on the imperial novel both as a literary and a historical construct. Each novelist evolves his own paradigm to capture the diverse nuances of the imperial theme. Though India is at the centre of their fictional concerns, they offer interestingly different versions of its reality. For Kipling, India is the brightest jewel in the British Crown. For Forster, nothing in India is identifiable. George Orwell found the British-Indian reality a scene of disturbing social inequities. Scott considered the events in India in the concluding years of the British raj to be of far-reaching consequence.

The real world is interpreted and made available to us by novelists through their imaginative perception of it. Art demonstrates the universality of human imagination. All men are motivated by some conception of a "world" they want to live in, some mental model of an imaginatively possible experience. It is an impulse towards what Aristotle calls telos - it works dialectically, separating what is wanted from what is not wanted. The meaning of human action is encoded in the comprehensive mythical patterns which novelists impose upon their material. When such patterns emerge, the polarity between the historical and the poetic tends to collapse.

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CHAPTER - I

Kipling's Imperial Stance in Kim

The Process of Mythicisation:

Kipling's Kim centres around his vision of the Indian reality. India was a formative influence on the author, a source material, but she was only a part of Kipling's life. He left her shores when he was twenty-four and came back on a short visit two years later. His best work Kim was done when he had put India behind him. The character of the Irish boy born in India who becomes an instrument of the great imperial design was, if not directly inspired, at least deepened in detail, by Kipling's Boer war experiences. Many young men who had died in defence of the empire were resurrected in Kim. The novel is a masterpiece of descriptive writing. Oscar Wilde had described Plain Tales as giving the effect of sitting under the palm tree watching life by flashes of inspired vulgarity. George Moore accused Kipling of describing an oriental sunset by following the evening around like a detective in a divorce suit. But the ordinary readers of Kim are not left with the impression that it is overwritten. They enjoy Kipling's loving and authentic description of the sights, sounds and smells of India. He used different modes to create alternations between realism and fantasy. This novel, which as Carrington puts it, had been "so long on the anvil"¹, had its origins in some of

Kipling's early work. Early in his career as a writer Kipling had toyed with the idea of a novel. In July, 1885, he had written to his aunt Miss Edith Macdonald:

Further I have embarked to the tune of 237 foolscap pages on my novel - Mother Maturin - an Anglo - Indian episode. Like Topsy 'it grewed' while I wrote it and I find myself committed to a two volume business at least. It's not one bit nice or proper but it carries a sort of a moral with it and tries to deal with the unutterable horrors of a lower class Eurasian and native life as they exist outside reports and reports and reports ...²

He never completed the novel but some of its material went into Kim. Kipling's last visit to India was in 1891 but by that time India had entered his soul and remained the richest source of his work for another decade. During this time he was in residence at Vermont where Lockwood - his father - visited him in 1893. The peaceful and serene life did much to evoke a mood of heightened creativity that animates his work belonging to the period. Perhaps his father's visit served as a catalyst. The older Kipling was a man of considerable genius. He was knowledgeable in Indian affairs. His Beast and Man in India, published in 1891, shows the depth of his understanding of Indian myths and religions. Kipling's portrait of the wise curator of the 'Ajaib ghar' at Lahore

is based on his father. The sketch of the man serves to underline his responsiveness to the Indian psyche as evident in his reaction to the Lama. The old Buddhist urges him to join in the search for the River of the Arrow but the Englishman who has merely tried to enter the Lama's visionary expectations can just speak out his concern about the practicality of the search. A rational western mind experiences bafflement when faced with the other - worldly utterances of an oriental mystic. The curator deferentially admits the fact that he does not know -

'I do not know, I do not know'. The Lama brought his thousand - wrinkled face once more a hands-breadth from the Englishman's.

'I see that thou dost not know. Not being of the Law, the matter is hid from thee.'

'Ah-hidden-hidden.'

'We are both bound, thou and I, my brother. But I' - he rose with a sweep of the soft thick drapery - 'I go to cut myself free. Come also.'

'I am bound' said the Curator, 'But whither goest thou?'³

It is reasonable to imagine that at about this time, perhaps under his father's influence and away from India, Kipling had come to understand the Hindu - Buddhist - Jain mind. He has already come to terms with the Muslim psyche and his Lahore pieces bear testimony to the fact. Soon after

his father's return to England Kipling confided to his wife "that he had received the 'return of a feeling of great strength...'" Lord Berkenhead believes that it was Lockwood's presence that accounted for Kipling's heightened creativity:

(Lockwood) whose alien presence soon made him a familiar figure trudging the dusty roads of Brattleboro, was able to give Rudyard timely advice with the work at hand at this time such as The Bridge-Builders. He had always valued advice from this source more highly than from any other. It was this period, too, which saw the birth of The Jungle Books begun at Bliss cottage with the story of Mowgli's Brothers. And after his father's departure, the new creative impulse of which he had spoken to Carrie produced the poems collected in The Seven Seas, the two Jungle Books and the short stories assembled in The Day's Work.⁴

Kim's precursor - if only a shadowy one - is Mowgli, the wolf boy of the jungle. But Kim is Kipling's richest Indian dream and according to Marks Kincaid-Weekes, "the answer to nine-tenths of the charges levelled against Kipling and the refutation of most of the generalizations about him".⁵ This evaluation seems a trifle stretched because the authoritarian strains are still present in Kim and what actually happens to mute them is Kipling's deliberate venturing out in the world of fantasy where the imperial thesis can exist side by side with the ideals of brotherhood and tolerance. Kim continues the journey to fantasy begun in the The Jungle

Book. The latter is an animal fable - really a collection of stories about beasts who act like men with the key figure of Mowgli developing a relation with them the same as the British hold vis-a-vis the Indians. The book opens with Mowgli's abandonment - a situation in which one is free to recognise the author's own childhood predicament. Mowgli is nevertheless too much of a child to experience a feeling of desolation. He is happy to play with the wolves and they do him no harm. This is because Mowgli belongs to a community that is more powerful and advantageously placed. In actual fact, the wolves are proud to have him in their midst. The other animals of the jungle such as Baloo - the Bear, Bagheera - the Panther and Kaa - the Python also welcome his presence. The man-cub has little cause to feel lonely and deprived (unlike Punch in Baa Baa Black Sheep). No harm can come to Mowgli because -

Man-killing means, sooner or later the arrival of white men on elephants, with guns ... Then everybody in the jungle suffers.⁶

It is reminiscent of the imperial policy of swift reprisal that came in the aftermath of the Mutiny of 1857. Mowgli is a resourceful child who retains his independence and perspicacity even in adversity. He assumes the role of a superior being who is not averse to taking revenge on those

who threaten him. Mowgli exists on the borders of the human and animal worlds - bound to neither, and consequently free to take whatever course he chooses. He has a unique way of enforcing compliance:

Mowgli stared, as he had stared at the rebellious cubs, full in the beryl -green eyes till ...the eyes dropped lower and lower and the red rasp of a tongue grated at Mowgli's instep.⁷

John A. Mc Clure is of the view that The Jungle Books contain Kipling's blue print for the change he envisages in the new educational programme for the imperial officers which would equip them for the task of governing India. Kipling invents the mode of realist - fantasy and by some classic methods of substitution, and distortion, subverts the social and historical inter-relations. He moves further and further away from the realistic mode of his earlier work and, by sleight of hand transports his thesis into the realms of fantasy. Neither The Jungle Books nor Kim are pure holidays from the task of keeping the British flag flying. They reinforce the theme of imperial rule while disguising the attempt. Indeed, in Kipling's work, realism and fantasy illuminate and strengthen each other. In 1907 he was awarded the Nobel Prize for "the most distinguished work of an idealistic tendency." The term which might have described much of his work better is "fantastic-realism". Perhaps the reference in the citation was to the fact that many of his fictions

were intended to instruct, to entertain and glorify the British way of life. His heroes are mostly personifications of the ideal Englishman - hardworking, full of initiative and utterly confident of eventual success. Even the jungle animals (not to speak of Mowgli) prove staunchly British.

Kim had first inspired Kipling's imagination in the early days of his married life at Vermont when he seemed to have scaled the summit of his happiness with the birth of his baby daughter Josephine. He persisted with the writing even after the untimely death of his daughter and the shattering of his American dream. It had taken him eight years or so - perhaps the longest time he took to write a book. It may have subsumed the unfinished novel, Mother Maturin, and after he had finished it, he recalled the happy family times at Lahore, his father advising him on Buddhism and his mother teasing him on his failure to invent a plot. Kipling describes the situation in Something of Myself:

In a gloomy, windy autumn Kim came back to me with insistence, and I took it to be smoked over with my Father. Under our united tobaccos it grew like a Djin released from a brass bottle, and the more we explored the possibilities the more opulence of detail did we

discover. I do not know what proportion of an iceberg is below the water-line, but Kim as it finally appeared was about one-tenth of what the first lavish specification called for.

As to the form there was but one possible to the author who said that what was good enough for Cervantes was good enough for him. To whom the mother replied. Don't you stand in your wool-boots hiding behind Cervantes with me. You know you couldn't make a plot to save your soul.'

.....

At last I reported Kim finished. Did it stop, or you? the Father asked. And when I told him that it was It, he said: 'Then it oughtn't to be too bad.'⁸

The novel has connections, as Kipling realized, with the work of Cervantes. Here the Lama and his Chela happily enact the picaresque relation that exists between Quixote and Sancho. Angus Wilson also notes the affinities Kim shares with the works of Dickens, with Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress and Chaucer's Canterbury Tales:

As to the rich and various Indian life of the Grand Trunk Road which is so vital a part of Kim's pleasure in novelty and variety, it owes to something, I think on the didactic

side to Kipling's loved Pilgrim's Progress but the didactic side of Kim is always played down - one of the reasons for the book's greatness - and the Grand Trunk Road owes more to another of Kipling's favourite works - Chaucer's Canterbury Tales. But I name these impinging masterpieces of the past not to suggest any derivative quality in Kim, for it is absolute originality which is in its making, but rather to suggest the sort of literary heights in which we are travelling in this strange work.⁹

The plot of the novel is rather halting and tenuous. J.M.S. Tompkins calls it "nakedly picaresque and plotless", "a thing imposed from without" and with a marked "absence of insistent patterns."¹⁰ In Rudyard Kipling: His Apprenticeship, Krishna Francine, similarly argues that much of the impression of looseness in Kim stems from the fact that there is a strong linear movement in the book:

The description of movement is continuous throughout as the major characters are almost always travelling from the moment they get into the railway carriage in the second chapter to the final descent from the hills in the fifteenth..."¹¹

Kim's experiences as he travels along the Grand Trunk Road and journeys up the high hills in search of adventure and intrigue contribute towards the linear movement of the plot. He has an insatiable desire to see and know things in his role as the Little Friend of all the World. Early in the

novel we are told that "He lived in a life as wild as that of the Arabian Nights, but the missionaries and the secretaries of charitable societies could not see the beauty of it ...he had known all evil since he could speak - but what he loved was the game for its own sake."¹² His two companions playing on the gun outside the Lahore Museum are a Muslim boy and a Hindu but his superiority to them both is at once declared when he kicks the Hindu boy off the trunnions - "Since the English held Punjab and Kim was English. Though he was burned back as any native; though he spoke the vernacular by preference, and his mother-tongue in clipped uncertain sing-song; though he consorted on terms of perfect equality with the boys of the bazar; Kim was white ..."¹³ Kim thirsts for fresh experience and is imbued with a love of the new. He befriends the strangely clad Lama while the Muslim boy despises the old man as an idolater and the Hindu boy is plainly afraid of the Tibetan. Kim is drawn to him because he is something new; in an impatient voice he asks him - "What is your caste? Where is your house? Have you come far?"¹⁴ Satisfied with the Lama's halting replies, Kim contemptuously dismisses his companion's doubts and fears with the words "Run to your mother's laps."¹⁵ John A. Mc Clure is justified in thinking that Kim represents at best only a partial victory for Kipling over the authoritarian elements in his own personality. Even this victory is gained not by grappling with the elements but by retiring into a fantasy world where

the principles of brotherhood and authoritarianism keep uneasy company. The whole thing is resolved at the end by the clever strategy of making Kim take up the role of a secret agent or spy. The panorama the novel unrolls is the life of the great subcontinent over whose government England had presided for over a hundred years.

Crucial to the study of Kim is the need to examine the imperial myth with the help of which Kipling constructed his social ethic in the novel. It is there in Kim's apprenticeship to "The Great Game" - the British espionage system in India. There is never any doubt that as a sahib's son in India he will serve the British cause. It is in this context that Edmund Wilson has criticised the "imperial strain" in Kim.

Now what the reader tends to expect is that Kim will come eventually to realise that he is delivering into bondage to the British invaders those whom he has always considered his own people, and that a struggle between allegiances will result.¹⁶

Wilson argues that Kim's activities constitute a betrayal of the cause of the Lama and Creighton's claim on him is allowed to supersede the Lama's. He takes advantage of the Lama's goodwill and uses him as a camouflage to hide his

activities in the cause of the Great Game. He also thinks nothing of endangering the life of the Holy Man. It is at this point in the story that Kim shows himself at his manipulative best and reveals his actual commitment.

Kipling's most unabashed expression of his imperial beliefs is contained in the poem "The White Man's Burden" (1899) in which he tells us how the best of the white man were sent in the service of the captive and sullen races - "half-Devil and half-child"; the Englishmen came to the distant shores to work for "another's profit/And to work another's gain"; they came to feed the famine-stricken and diseased people who forever undid the humanitarian work of the overlords; a lot of what they were doing in the distant shores went unappreciated - ports, roads and railway lines laid by them as part of their service to the cause of the hapless natives only served to earn the ingratitude of the unappreciative and hostile natives given to "Sloth and heathen Folly", but Kipling goes on to console them with the words that the masters are not to be deterred by the blame and denunciation as the only judgement they ought to value is that of their peers:

Comes now, to search your manhood
Through all the thankless years
"Cold, edged with dear-bought wisdom
The Judgement of your peers"¹⁷

Throughout his literary career, Kipling championed the cause of imperialism. His obsession with imperialist dogma and ideology was a significant facet of his activist creed. Critics have held two contradictory views on his imperialist position - some term it as jingoistic, while others view it as a powerful myth with the help of which he was able to unify and imaginatively order his experience. Present day critical opinion veers on the second. Kipling deliberately sidesteps history because the world in which Kim moves is supposed to be threatened by some outside powers. The novel presupposes that the variety and richness of the Indian life and the Lama's benign spirituality can only be preserved from destruction by the beneficent British power. This is directly revealed in the second chapter of the novel - where the Lama feels uneasy for having travelled so far from his native place - "Yes - and further from my monastery. Alas. It is a great and terrible world", he laments. But Kim - the mercurial boy - has a tremendous responsibility towards the hapless people. We are told about it in the next sentence'.

Kim stole out and away, as unremarkable a figure as ever carried his own and a few score thousand other folk's fate slung around his neck.¹⁸

What Kipling seems to imply here is that the Lama is blissfully unaware of the manifold dangers that threaten the society

and can safely retreat into the cocoon of his esoteric experience; but the young Kim, because of his involvement with the Great Game, has to play out his "Kismet" - and say:

"No man can escape his Kismet. But I am to pray to Bibi Miriam, and I am a Sahib.."19

This is when he starts questioning his affiliations -

'No; I am Kim. This the great world and I am only Kim. Who is Kim?" He considered his own identity, a thing he had never done before, till his head swam. He was one insignificant person in all this roaring whirl of India..20

The question of his identity, assumes importance because he is a 'sahib'- a member of the race that wielded power. He is firmly placed in the material world and while he is in a position to appreciate the Lama's spirituality he cannot aspire for it. Kim can change his outward appearance by dyeing his skin and wearing Indian clothes, but the subterfuge is only temporary and assumed for specific purposes. His "Indianness" is a mask that hides his real intention. In the context of Kipling's philosophy and the circumstance of the imperial rule, Kim's alley-catlike evasiveness is shown to be his greatest asset; with its help he can have access to secret information and defeat the designs of the enemies of his race. In Kim Kipling's moralising tone is

somewhat muffled because the novel is Kipling's self-indulgent individualistic dream in which the vision is one of an inclusive India - undisturbed by divisions, contradictions and anomalies. The novelist avoids all vexatious details and even goes so far as to remove every sign of the existence of pain and evil from the path of his child-hero. Though a gigantic effort of imagination, he creates a myth of a white man who has everything going in his favour.

It is true that events and actions referred to in myths often have no "real" historical evidence. Yet myths do refer to reality. They talk about a world symbolically and metaphorically. To read myths to discover the historicity of events may not be a meaningful exercise. But they do reveal a lot about the minds of those who produce them. They tell us about the values of the society which sanctions the myths and believes in them. Kipling's imperialistic position which finds expression in the myths he propagated through his work appeals to two distinct sets of audience. They certainly appeal to those who would be persuaded by the seeming "validity" of the mythical ideas and allow them to be the source of future action and they also appeal to those who would doubt the basis of myths but study them in order to reveal the "political incentive" behind literature. This study belongs to the second of these broad categories; while the English school boys of several generations who

allowed their opinions to be influenced by Kipling's writings belonged to the former. This reveals the intimate relationship between literature and history. Literature spreads ideas and images of things that may be unfamiliar to the reading public, and it thus serves to shape opinions and then, though it, policy.

Among the earliest of the British writers, writing on India, who brought his influence to bear on British minds was G.A. Henty:

Henty impressed a whole generation of English school boys (and presumably some adults) with his special image of British India. Since imperial policy in late Victorian times was usually made by an inner circle which came exclusively from the public schools, Henty's ideas fell on fertile soil.²¹

But, Kipling is the self-proclaimed minstrel of imperialism. He stands like a colossus, towering over writers such as Henty, perhaps because he, more than any other writer, provided the reading public with a construct of the empire which in addition to greatly influencing them subsequently embroiled this maker of imperial mythology in endless controversies. It threatened his reputation and generated doubts concerning the stature of his work. Kipling had an extraordinary genius

for creating prototypes. It may not be entirely unreasonable to suppose that the prospective British civil servants and those already in service often took these fictional types as models. We have only to remember the comment of Leonard Woolf who saw much truth in Kipling's stories:

The white people were also in many ways astonishingly like the characters in Kipling's story. I could never make up my mind whether Kipling had moulded his characters accurately in the image of Anglo-Indian society or whether we were moulding our characters accurately in the image in Kipling's story.²²

Kipling is credited with creating the central imperial myth - the most insolent expression of which is contained in the poem already cited. Though Kipling was referring to another place in another context, all the same, the myth reveals Kipling's firm belief in the innate superiority of the White Man who is firmly committed to duty. Imperialism and the myths of progress usually go hand in hand. The conquering races have always considered themselves superior to the vanquished people - even if the so-called superiority was only a contingent reality. Northrop Frye gives a lucid explanation of the situation that generates imperial myths:

If two cultures collide, the one that gets enslaved or exterminated in the primitive one. The victorious one is more progressive because it had better weapons and armies-that is it

was better organised socially for destruction. It can often, of course also prove that its people are more intelligent, because it is in a position to set the intelligence tests according to its own cultural pattern.²³

Kipling's myth of the White Man's Burden has in it elements of the stereotypical assumptions of the imperialists. His views evolved from the values of the English middle class of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Ironically enough, the myth of the White Man, in spite of Kipling's best intentions, becomes a parody of the Christ figure. Here the White Man is a martyr to progress. Kipling's religious beliefs had nothing to do with it. There is a jingoistic-catholic ambivalence lying at the core of his work. Kipling was inspired by his vision of the empire - as all his early critics such as J.S. Stephen, Francis Adams, Beerbohm and Buchanan saw it. He came to seize upon his vision because it was an ideology on which he could peg his opinions and ideas concerning the Indian reality. His lack of faith in religion perhaps accounts for his over-involvement with the theme of the Empire. Eventually, to him it came to stand for everything that was good and tangible in the greatly complex world of the Anglo-Indians. The Empire inspired in him a devotion to something greater than himself. It was a personal creed and he believed that "everyman has to work out his creed according to his own wavelength" while

politics was "a dog's life without a dog's decencies".²⁴

The creed of action that animates his stories is based on his ideal of the Empire. Most of his fictions on India and Kim were written well before the outbreak of World War I and, consequently, they bear little evidence of his later dilemma in the wake of the breakdown of the machinery of the Empire. His view of the Indian reality is coloured by his set bias and prejudices. To say this is not to deny the universal appeal of his work because, on the face of it, it must be recognised that Kipling had the genius to invent myths, persona and paradigms to explain reality and the explanations, in the final reckoning, become a statement of an existential situation. Kipling's pathological craving for authority was also shaped by his childhood experiences when a series of abandonments increased his feelings of isolation and impotence and confirmed his suspicion that the world was a hostile place that reduced to insignificance an individual's place in it. All these necessitated the formulation of an authoritarian stance - to obey orders, to seek the security of the herd and to reserve aggression in dealings with the weaker parties. Dominance and submission are seen as categories of human relations in which ethics, morality, and liberal opinions have no place.

The imperial mission being of supreme importance to Kipling, in his writings India and her people acquire significance and worth by virtue of their relationship with

Britain's political ambitions. Hugh Walpole characterised the fag-end of the nineteenth century in Britain's life as the 'hangover' period and, more specifically, as the "doomed Nineties". He surmised that never again would the world know so paradisiacal a mode of life as the moneyed classes enjoyed in England 1890 to 1910. They had all the good things of life and so the code of morality that they evolved was easy and, on the face of it, decent at least. With such a background behind him, Kipling naturally writes from the point of view of the English middle class - the harbingers of British nationalism.

Britain's colonial possession in the East was both a scene of vicarious adventure and a repository for the younger and more wayward sons of the ruling elite. They entered the bureaucracy and the army in large numbers and thereby obtained a social rank that would have been unimaginable at home. India was synonymous with the 'Raj' because as the oldest and largest colony she had a more substantial presence than any other Asian or African colony. The Indian Mutiny of 1857 buttressed the notion that the Indians were a barbaric people whom the British had to rule and civilize. The British self-image drew much of its strength from a radically unflattering view of the 'natives'. To drive home the point about the necessity of the British presence in India, the masters also invented the myth of an outside threat. As one critic points out:

... the North-West Frontier was the classical locus for the defence of civilization against another kind of barbarism, that of the mighty Russian Empire.²⁵

Considerations such as these led men like Kipling, Ruskin and Carlyle to sound their personal notes of intemperance and self-admiration. In 1849 Carlyle writing on the "Nigger Question" had this to say:

... Under the soil of Jamaica before it could even produce spices, the bones of many thousand British men had to be laid. Brave Colonel Fortescue, brave Colonel Sedgwick, brave Colonel Brayne - the dust of many strong old English hearts lies there; worn down swiftly in frightful travail, chaining the Devils, which were manifold²⁶

Ruskin's bias is more keenly felt in a piece written the wake of the Indian Mutiny. The comments occur in a lecture on art, and, when such outpourings are set against Kipling's articulations, the latter's one-sidedness is less odious. Ruskin writes:

We are thus urged to inquire what is the effect on the moral character in each nation, of this vast difference in their pursuits and apparent capacities? and whether those rude chequers of the tartan, or the exquisitely fancied involutions of the Cashmere, fold

habitually over the noblest hearts ... Out of the peat cottage come faith, courage, self-sacrifice purity and piety, and whatever else is fruitful in the work of heaven; out of the ivory palace come treachery, cruelty, cowardice, idolatry, bestiality - whatever else is fruitful in the work of Hell.²⁷

Carlyle's and Ruskin's comments are merely asides because neither of them, as also the majority of the members of the British public, was all that deeply interested in the expansion of Britian's colonial empire. In actual fact, the mission of empire-building had already become suspect in most eyes. No one appreciated the second Empire of Napoleon III and Charles Dilke, in his book Greater Britian mocked the imperial system in which one man rules and the rest are slaves. Kipling, however, was quite incensed by the apparent indifference of the British public to the work of the empire-builders and expressed his annoyance in poems like "The English Flag"; it begins with an exhortation:

Winds of the World, give answer.

They are whimpering to and fro

And what should they know of England

Who only England know?-

The poor little street-bred people that

Vapour and fume and brag,

They are lifting their heads in the stillness to yelp at the English Flag.

In Kim Kipling sets out to imagine the whole sub-continent. The novel is full of figures and images of Kipling's all-inclusive ambition; there is the "Wonder House" of Lahore, the curio shop of Lurgan, Sahib at Simla and, most spectacular of all there is the Lama's picture of the Wheel of Life that signifies not just the whole of the present world, but all possible worlds. The Lama draws and shows the picture to Kim with the words".. I will show thee my art not for pride's sake, but because thou must learn. The Sahibs have not all this world's wisdom." Then,

In cleanest, severest outline he traced the Great Wheel with its six spokes, whose centre is the conjoined Hog, Snake, and Dove (Ignorance Anger and Lust), and whose compartments are all the Heavens and Hells, and all the chances of human life. Men say that the Bodhisat Himself first drew it with grains of rice upon the dust, to teach His disciples the cause of things. Many ages have crystallised it into a most wonderful convention crowded with hundreds of little figures whose every line carries a meaning.²⁸

For Kim, heaven and hell, the myriad pictures of earth-bound life existed right in front of his eyes - "for by the roadside trundled the very wheel itself eating, drinking, trading, marrying, quarrelling - all warmly alive".²⁹ Kipling's India is a picture of a characteristically fantastic reality in

which India exists both as a "great and wonderful land" and as a secret place of a child's fantasy life safely protected from the destructive realism of adult eyes. Kim is the author's account of an imaginary childhood - one that he never had. His protagonist is not required to undergo the travails that he himself had undergone in England's Southsea. Kim learns his lessons from life. His education consists of a series of holidays in the company of either Mahbub Ali or the Lama. Kipling magically compresses the three years of Kim's schooling at St. Xavier's in Lucknow into a couple of paragraphs as if to underline his conviction that real education can take place not just in a shabby class room but even outside it.

Kipling himself had to undergo two traumatic abandonments - one in childhood, when, at the tender age of five he was sent to England to begin his schooling. There he faced the tyranny of his foster parent. Many years later he revealed his childhood fears and anxieties in what he came to call the "House of Desolation". When he was recalled to India by his parents, because they could not afford to pay for his university education, it became the greatest abandonment of all. At the time of his recall, Kipling had come to like the familiar world of England; he was beginning to frequent the artistic circles to which he had been introduced by his uncle Edward Burne-Jones, and most important of

all -he had fallen in love. His return to India meant that he had to give up his hopes, comforts and love. A journalist's life in India - to which he returned - was a hard one. The harsh climate caused him to fall ill at regular intervals and work was heavy; he had to work eight to ten hours a day. During the seven years of his stay as a journalist in the country, Kipling suffered two nervous breakdowns and also bouts of "staleness and depression" which he attributed to "overwork, plus fever and dysentery".³⁰ He once referred to India as a place that sent out a stench.

..... a heavy foul smell of badly trimmed kerosine lamps ... combined with that of native tobacco, baked brick and dried earth, sends the heart to many a strong man down to his boots, for it is the smell of the great Indian Empire when she turns herself for six months in a house of torment.....³¹

Mc Clure draws our attention to the fact that Kipling's image of the widow at Swansea sometimes merges with his view of Queen Victoria who in Departmental Ditties and Barracks-room Ballads is often referred to as "the widow", "widow at Windsor"- showing that he had not really come to terms with the harsh realities of his childhood and youthful life. On the contrary, it reinforced the authoritarian rigidity of his own thought patterns which ordered in turn his need to impose his will on the characters of his fictional world.

He went on to create aggressive and intemperate soldiers like Mulvaney, Othesis and Learoyd in Soldiers Three & Military Tales; he invented plots that set in motion his manipulative free-booting gentleman such as Nick Tarvin - the American hero of the Naulakha whom the other British men envy "for coming to the state with his fresh eye and his lively belief in the possibility of getting something out of the land besides a harvest of regrets."³² Mc Clure identifies the colonial officials of Kipling's fiction as the third category of heroes who play a domineering and paternalistic role. The myth of the superiority of the White Man and the inferiority of the Indians is the illusion that Kipling does his best to defend. In "His Chance in Life" he delineates the colonial officials as Man baap while the Indian is labelled as a child who "is incapable as a child of understanding what authority means, or where is the danger of disobeying it."³³ In "The Head of the District", there is the paternalistic attitude of Orde Sahib -

"I do not know who takes my place. I speak now true talk for I am as if were already dead, my children, - for though ye be strong men, ye are children"

"And thou are our father and mother," broke in Khoda Dad Khan with an oath. "What shall we do, now that there is no one to speak for us, or to teach us to go wisely."

"There remains Tallantire Sahib.
Go to him"³⁴

In the Punjab and the Frontier, the British officials are shown as exercising unbridled autonomy and authority because the situation there was supposed to warrant it. Only the white man had the ability to rise to the occasion in which a Bengali such a Girish Chander De would have faltered.

"Political deviation" is a term which is still levelled against Kipling today. This makes it difficult for scholars and critics alike to make a proper assessment of his genius. At the end of World War I, T.S. Eliot threw his weight in support of the undervalued Kipling but even he had to admit to being somewhat puzzled. In a review - "The Years Between" in Athenaeum of May 1919, Eliot wrote: "Mr. Kipling is a laureate without laurels. He is a neglected celebrity ... Mr. Kipling is not an anathema; he is simply not discussed ... There are many to whom he is a gospel; there are few to whom he is a shout in the street, or a whisper in the ear of death, unheard. Both are mistaken...". Comparing Kipling with Swinburne, both of whom were "preachers" and "men with a few simple ideas", Eliot drew the attention of the readers to the quality of sentimentalism in Kipling's work - calling it a "peculiar cynical sentiment."

Kipling's imperial stance accounts for the extreme critical pronouncements on his work. Bonamy Dobree in an article in Monthly Criterion written in December 1927, pointed out that it is impossible to separate Kipling - the artist from Kipling - the politician. So, "Mr. Kipling cannot be disassociated from the British Empire." He believed that the Empire had to be cherished because "like old Rome, it is the most superb instrument to enable man to outface the universe, assert himself against vacancy. Since it unifies the impulses needed to do this, it is Mr. Kipling's Catholic Church Mr. Kipling's love of the Empire and his admiration of those virtues it brings out in men, make him apt to find qualities in Englishmen only, which really exist in all races, and this is a part of the deformation Mr. Kipling the artist has undergone in Mr. Kipling the man of action."

Kipling's imperialist stance is inextricably linked with his creed of action. Activism represented a significant strand of Victorian thought. A blueprint for dynamic and vigorous action committed to the belief in man's ability to transform society through dynamic action, activism "was a major assumption behind England's men of destiny, behind the architects of the vast citadels and ramparts of the Empire."³⁵ The philosophic dimension of the creed was postulated by Herbert Spencer who identified energy of force as the true source of the evolutionary process.

Energy brings about the endless mutation of human beings in the direction of perfection. The emphasis is on a meaningful application of energy. Tennyson's Ulysses expresses this idea and thereby articulates an important realisation of the age:

One equal temper of heroic hearts
Made weak by time and fate but strong in will
To strive, to seek, to find and not to yield³⁶

Carlyle - the prophet of Victorian activism, exhorted his countrymen to "produce" even if it is the pitifullest infinitesimal fraction of a product.

The Victorians found the sanction for their activist creed in divine power. Thus, by implication, the governance of the distant colonies became a moral responsibility. This background explains the fusion of the secular and the religions, the political and the moral and the finite and the infinite issues in Kipling's work. He praises the rule of Law in the context of the imperial order. His concept of Law sometimes takes the shape of divine law; operating at a lower level, it becomes the community law and the jungle law. Kipling's vision of the universe is rather bleak. He finds the Dark Powers of Disorder and Chaos Confronting man and he regards Law as the positive force that opposes the dark forces. According to Shamsul Islam (in Kipling's

Law: A study of His Philosophy of Life), there are three ingredients that make up Kipling's Law-moral values, the Imperial Idea and the doctrine of disinterested suffering and positive action. The Lama in Kim is also a follower of Law, "I follow the Law - the most excellent Law,"³⁷ he says. Kipling firmly believed that everyone should follow the Law. It is in this context that his appreciation of the followers of the Law - the district officers, the army men, the civilians, and child heroes like Mowgli and Kim-assumes significance.

In his writings Kipling consistently strove to portray the determination of the British to construct a bridge across the seemingly inscrutable land of lethargy, morbid traditions and an opium - dulled world of the supernatural. What was the dilemma that troubled the minds of men such as Kipling? The answer is that they saw a civilization which, according to western rationalism, lacked all coherence; India was not a nation; she was only an artificial creation of the imperial masters; she lacked unity and her vast land mass was peopled by myriad races, castes and sub-castes-all divided by regional loyalties and sectarian considerations. India, it seemed to the imperialists, was reserved for the men of the British bureaucracy to piece and hold together. Racism remains the ideological plank of imperialism attributing to it a set of norms and justifying its achievements. India appeared to Kipling thus:

From the well-ordered road we tread --
 And all the world is wild and strange
Churel and ghoul and Djinn and sprite
 Shall bear us company tonight
 For we have reached the Oldest Land
 Wherein the Powers of the Darkness range³⁸

Kipling's imperial attitude was shaped in part by the contemporary notions about the "superiority" of the Anglo-Saxon race. Ironically enough, a purely scientific treatise - The Origin of Species by Charles Darwin reinforced the patently false notion of the racial superiority of the whites vis-a-vis the darker races. Then, the so-called Mutiny of 1857-coming as it did - only two years before the publication of Darwin's work, added grist to the mill. It was seized upon by the detractors as another piece of evidence that the superiority and divine dispensation of the British in India ought to be defended at any cost. The literary representations of India in the Post-Mutiny years by the British writers had a certain commonality. The literary outpourings of the times gave currency to various myths which sought to explain the British position in India and justify the rule of the whites. They also had a therapeutic function in so far as they pushed all discomforts, doubts and fears out of the way. Commenting on the Mutiny novels, Steve Attridge writes:

The 1857 Indian Mutiny gave rise to a distinct sub-genre of fiction. There are about a hundred Mutiny novels including the recent works of M.M. Kaye and J.G. Farrell and over a third of these were written during the 1890s, the period of "the New Imperialism", when fears for a declining British Empire and an accompanying fear of racial decline frequently spawned novels and poems which are notable for their belligerence.

On Kipling, Attridge writes:

Kipling's works, though he is usually cast as a prophet of this tub-thumping phenomenon, often suggest a more sophisticated grasp of the realities of the Empire than those of many of his contemporaries such as W.E. Henley... and popular writers like G.A. Henty. Given the historical context of imperialism, late nineteenth century novels about India can represent a colonial style of domination in which literary devices and the administration of the Empire conspire.....³⁹

There is a marked softening of the racist stance in Kipling while it exists in a virulent and vituperative form in the works of many of his contemporaries. His writing has a dream like quality. There is something special about his India; his imperial perceptions never quite became the simple formulations of the exiled race in action. Kipling fervently believed that the British presence in India was necessary. He went

so far as to censure the British officials and politicians for their failure to understand their responsibilities and the land they governed. In "The Enlightenments of Pagett M.P." he criticised the idiots who misgoverned the land. He believed that he had seen the empire in action and know the disinterested devotion whereby much of the work was done. All this he projected in his work. Thus beyond their tendency to engage in moral inquisitions - sometimes even tiresomely, Kipling's literary work projects the experience of the participants in a historical movement. The movement was complex, diverse and typically self-righteous. It developed its own value system. It was both sublime and grotesque. Kipling, more than any other writer of his time, captured its dominant themes and curious ethics. As a true imperialist, he was critical of the official lapses. The White Man's Burden was an arduous duty - not an inheritance or privilege - and the white man must bear it not because he is white but because he is more qualified to do so. Thus, on the one hand Kipling eulogised all the work connected with empire building but on the other hand reserved his severest criticism for the negative empire builders. Thus, even while propagating the merits of imperialism, Kipling like all thus imperialists (such as Curzon), highlighted what he felt to be the defects of the empire.

Kipling's construct of the empire, therefore, contained two prominent strands - the realistic and the fantastic. The artist in him transformed the reality before him into a myth and a mystique.

Realism and the Imperial Idea in Kim:

Kipling's India in Kim is a vast imaginative construct informed by a political ideology which is reinforced by various myths to produce a complex view of the Indian reality. At a different level, it also captures the rationalisations, the bewilderment and the often pathetic search of the Anglo-Indians for glorification and, alternatively, a justification for all that they were doing in India.

It is true that Kipling's work is dominated by the conviction that the British had a right to rule India. His political beliefs hardened in favour of imperialism as late as 1899, when he actively supported the British government in the Boer War. His sentiments at that time were probably no different from that of his father - who was quoted in The Kipling Papers as having said: "Since we have an Empire, needs must we hold it; it is our existence that is at stake" Prior to that Kipling showed a marked tendency for soul-searching and equivocation. It is for this reason that in his early work such as Plain Tales From

the Hills he frequently questions the imperial rule and commiserates with the natives. As one critic puts it:

Kipling seems to be trying to have it both ways -- to enter sympathetically into the consciousness of the colonised person, and maintain his allegiance to the racial suppositions of imperialism. But the first endeavour draws him inexorably towards subversion.⁴⁰

An example of such subversion is the racial arrogance exhibited in stories like "His chance in Life" where Kipling eulogises the race-instinct of Michele whose "a drop of white blood" comes handy when a communal riot is at hand. The chance to prove it to the natives that he, as a Eurasian, was better than any of them came Michele's way when a Hindu-Moslem riot broke out at Tibasu:

Michele was working in his office when he heard the sound that a man never forgets all his life - the "ah-yah" of an angry crowd....The Babu put on his cap and quietly dropped out of the window while the Police Inspector, afraid but following the old race instinct which recognises a drop of White blood as far as it can be diluted, said, "What orders does the Sahib give?"⁴¹

Michele was terribly afraid but as the only representative of English authority about the place, he knew that he had

a special responsibility. He went out at the head of his army to meet the blood-thirsty mob and saved the day by firing at them. But in the presence of the Assistant Collector a pucca Englishman, "Michele felt himself slipping back more and more into the native It was the White drop in Michele's veins dying out, though he did not know it."⁴²

For Kipling, the colonial life constituted a moral enigma. Much as he loved India and admired the traditions and culture of her people, he was never in disagreement with the legitimacy and need of the British rule in India. The "smugness" with everything British probably came from a compensatory wish to order the reality in such a way as to overcome his own feelings of isolation and alienation in British India. Other factors that may have contributed towards his "cockiness" were the support that he received from his family, the encouragement of Kay Robinson who took over as editor-in-chief of the Civil and Military Gazette in 1886 and, perhaps, the absence of any serious criticism of his work in literary circles. But there is a difference in the Kipling of the eighties and that of the nineties. By the last decade of the nineteenth century, he abandons his earlier attempt at infiltration into the Indian community in the guise of a secret agent - like Strickland. In The Jungle Books, Captain Courageous and Kim, he puts forward the thesis that education is basic to the solution of the

problems of governing a colony. One reason for his interest in the theme was his desire to erase, in imaginative terms, his memory of the abuses he had suffered at Swansea. The other was his long - felt realization that he and his fellow imperial servants had been psychologically crippled by their upbringing - which had a negative impact on their ability to enact the role. The imperial dilemma - as Kipling saw it - was to evolve a pattern of education, which instead of repeating the mistakes of the past, would prepare the administrators for the task at hand.

The empire exposed its agents to a life of hardship. In "The Exile Line", Kipling describes the P&O Shipping Company as an exile line that sent a continuous flow of "the gypsies of the East" bound to the "wheel" of the Empire. As the British graves in India multiplied, the overlords came to grasp the realities of the situation more sharply than ever. There loomed the possibility of pain, suffering - even death due to various causes - cholera, malaria, enteric fever or at the hands of the fierce border tribesmen. The plight of the young British children forcibly sent away from the natural roots and the resultant distortions in their personalities with the tragic prospect of a young and sensitive boy turning into Kipling's Baa, Baa Black Sheep was a tragic though distinct possibility. The Indian experience and the public school background confirmed Kipling's feelings about the world as a hostile place of which the

individual formed only an insignificant part. Kipling therefore came to view authority as the supreme ruler; autonomy is only feasible within a matrix and Kipling's heroes - be they an orphan boy (Kim), a soldier (Barrack Room Ballads), a freebooter (Naulakha) or a district officer ("The Head of the District") - seem to exercise a considerable amount of autonomy but a closer examination reveals that they are merely the defenders of authority.

The chief attraction of the colonial world was the promise of autonomy and authority which Kipling's fictions, even Kim, does its best to belie. Kipling fervently believed that the imperial service created obedient officials - not men with despotic autonomy. So, however, much Kim might consort with the Lama and mix freely with the Indians in the bazaar, ultimately he has to submit to the authority of imperial India. His blood requires him to do so. Kipling eventually came to believe that the empire was the panacea for every conceivable ill. There is a world of difference between Kipling's colonial fiction and that of Conrad. The difference lies in their attitudes. While Conrad's experience of imperialism is that of an insider - he was a native of a colonised country despite having grown up as an exile - Kipling grew up in exile and experienced vicissitudes in course of his life; he deliberately cultivates a defensive posture in his fiction. His vision is shaped by his childhood

experiences and they are central to the formulation of his faith. Thus, while Conrad views the reality from the inside, a position from which he can question the issue of domination, Kipling evolves his thesis concerning the perfection of the machinery of domination. He wanted the empire-builders to love India and adopt the necessary measures to maintain their dominion.

Kipling needed to resort to myth-making and fantasy to forward his authoritarian view-point. His district officers are ideals, not representative of reality. The soldier, the spy in the secret service, the abandoned boys, and the officers in the distant places are all stereotypes specially created for the purpose of buttressing the authoritarian view-point. Even when he criticised the "travelled idiots who truly misgovered the land" ("Enlightenments of Pagett M.P.") and the liberal Englishmen who "derided" his "poor little gods of the East" (Something of Myself), he was only trying to preserve his conservative ideals.

Kipling dismissed the first signs of Indian nationalism quite out of hand. In 1885, the Indian National Congress held its first session in Bombay with seventy-two delegates from all parts of the country attending it. In Under the Deodars: "The Enlightenments of Pagett M.P." he wrote of all stirrings of Indian consciousness as "the work

of a limited class, a microscopic minority ... composed entirely of literary or clerky castes who have received English education." The movement, he believed, had no support at the grassroot:

Anywhere else they might be leaders but they have no social weight in this topsy-turvy land, and though they have been employed for generations, they have no practical knowledge of the affairs..... You see the writer class in India has never till now aspired to anything like command.⁴³

Kipling did not approve of the liberal views of certain British administrators and politicians. "You will concede", he argued, that the civilized people "who eat out of China... have no right to apply their standard of right and wrong to an unsettled land". Those who ran out of the bounds of "Decency and Propriety and make the jungle ways straight, cannot be judged in the same manner as the stay-at-home folk....."⁴⁴

B.J. Moore-Gilbert uses the term Orientalism to designate Kipling's imperialism. This system of thought is distinguished by its apparently differing standpoint from its better known counterpart in England known as Metropolitan Orientalism. The former is marked by a better tolerance

acceptance and understanding of the Indian way of life than the Metropolitan school. But it stops short of accepting the inevitability of India's eventual independence. The Anglo-Indian "Orientalists" - in their role as men of action - felt that they were the authorities on the subject of India's problems and their solution and the stay-at-home liberal politicians had no business to interfere with their work. Kipling's outburst against Mr. Pagett M.P. was the expression of a genuine pent-up feeling, accumulated over the course of a century.

There was something paradoxical about Kipling's imperialism and the dissonance can be traced to the contradictions inherent in the Indian situation:

On the one hand it sought to protect India against the programmes of reformation shaped by metropolitan ideologies; the virtues of tradition and cultural integrity were defended against insensitive westernisation. On the other hand, it rarely questioned the legitimacy of its own political control⁴⁵.

Lewis D. Wurgaft describes the genesis of Anglo-Indian conservatism thus:

The two separate and sometimes contradictory impulses that informed British rule in post-

Mutiny India seemed to call for more authoritarian and conservative political practices. The first of these, the restoration of an "Oriental" approach to Indian policy, was said to be justified by the Mutiny; it received intellectual sustenance from the racial theories popular in the latter half of the nineteenth century. The second, the appeal to an administrative over a political program of Indian reform, remained utilitarian in its broad outline, but reflected the impact of Indian conditions and the altered character of English liberalism by the 1860s⁴⁶.

The conservatives saw the Mutiny as a reaction to the pressure of Britain's reformist policies on a society that resented all changes. Thus, a grossly exaggerated image of India's immutability took hold of the British minds and reinforced the earlier view of the "Changeless East" - and steps were initiated to maintain a status quo in India. One example of the British "fear" of reform in the post-Mutiny era is the reinstatement, between 1859 and 1870, of the Indian "aristocracy" as the sheet anchor of Indian polity.

In his writings, Kipling ingenuously solved the paradox by the deliberate use of the metaphor of love and marriage. This was how he explicated the relationship of Britain to India. In a burlesque written for The Pioneer

(1888) entitled "An Interesting Condition" Kipling quite expectedly put Britain in the dominant position of the husband. India is represented as the female partner and being "unchaste" to boot, she required a firm masculine control:

The Englishman believes that he has married her. By the high mass of the rope and the low mass of the sabre. The others also believed. And she? Ask her. Her eyes upon the vague profound where dwell the shadows of her dead lovers. The Englishman has taken her by the arm. He promenades with her upon the Sundays. He laughs. He exhibits his teeth. He slaps his leg. He also pats her upon the back. These things are the marks of the husband English. But ask her.

She has seen many lovers. A woman who has seen many lovers will see more.

This woman will exist forever, and she will always be beautiful ⁴⁷.

India frequently changes her lovers, but she herself does not change. The suggestion is that her sexual promiscuity simply makes all political reformations impossible. The sexual metaphor is intentionally used by Kipling. But it carries no suggestion of intimacy because Kipling also believed that the gulf that separates the two races is quite unbridgeable. The "mystery" and "inscrutability" of India, with her almost fathomless "depravity" and above all unplumbed oriental

mind defeat all attempts at discovering meaning ;

You'll never plumb the Oriental mind,
And if you did it isn't worth the toil.
Think of a sleek French priest of Canada;
Divide by twenty half-breeds. Multiply
By twice the Sphinx's silence.

 There's your East,
And you're as wise as ever ⁴⁸.

In Kim Father Benett says - "My experience is that one can never fathom an oriental mind."⁴⁹ In a trenchant criticism of Kipling's work, Francis Adams remarked that in it Indians "are to be viewed merely as a huge mass of raw, brown, naked humanity to be manipulated by the civil and military officials for the arcane purposes of the great Indian Empire."⁵⁰ Kipling displays a biting contempt for the Russian spies in Kim who delude themselves into thinking - "It is we who can deal with Orientals".⁵¹ Kipling believed that all India had to be related to the imperial rule. In "The Man Who Would Be King" Kipling has written an allegory of the Empire. Here he defends the illusion of the superiority of the Whites and the inferiority of the Indians.

"The Strange Ride of Morrowbie Jukes" is an early Kipling monologue. In the story, Morrowbie is a civil engineer who stumbles on to an earthly limbo, where he finds

Hindus who have revived on the funeral pyre. These people live in greasy burrows and eat crows. Here among the half-starved derelicts, Jukes fights out his personal battle for survival. It is only the improbable escape of the white man that saves him. But it creates a false ending. The story is a fable about the Anglo-Indian fears of a republic in which the black and the white meet on equal terms. It is one of Kipling's most powerful portrayals of the nightmare of the ruling elite haunted by memories of the Mutiny. The story captures a dimension of Anglo-Indian life but "it equates India with ghastliness".⁵² Even Strickland - a man "who knows as much of natives of India as is good for any man" - is baffled by the alien East in "The Mark of the Beast"; "East of the Suez, some hold, the direct control of Providence ceases; Man being there handed over to the power of the gods and devils of Asia, and the Church of England Providence only exercising an occasional and modified supervision in the case of Englishman."⁵³

Kipling necessarily had to evolve a stance in his fiction which accommodated his obsession with the country with his insistence on British paramountcy. Despite the fact that his India was "married" to Britain, the country remained mysterious and unfathomable to him till the very end and whatever knowledge of the country he thought he had - he

deliberately used it to subvert native character, life-style and institutions. His imperialist dogma thrives on a wilful arrangement of moral opposites - good/bad, black/white, superior/inferior. It is for this reason that Kipling's English characters face trouble when they stray too far from their positions; "Without the Benefit of the Clergy", "Beyond the Pale" and "The Incarnation of Krishna Mulvaney" capture the transgressions of the English characters and outline their punishment. This feeling of the danger lurking in the native quarters leads Kipling to warn his countrymen about the possible reverses:

A man should, whatever happens, keep to his own race and breed. Let the White go to the White and the Black to the Black. Then whatever trouble falls is in the ordinary course of things - neither sudden, alien nor unexpected.⁵⁴

The 'dark' side of India enchanted, frightened and sometimes even repelled Kipling. It was something like the lure of Lalun ("On the City Wall"). The twisting alleys of the native quarters in "City of the Dreadful Night" symbolise the dark "otherness"; at times Kipling used references to Shiva, Kali, and even black magic to underscore the notion about India's limitless depravity.

Kipling's feelings of unease when faced with the Indian reality led him to order his experiences with the help of certain stereotypical counters. One such counter was his customary habit of satirising the Bengalis:

Huree Chunder Mookerhee, pride of Bowbazar,
 Owner of a native press, "Barrishtar-at-Law",
 Waited on the government with a claim to wear
 Sabres by the bucketful, rifles by the pair.
 Then the Indian government winked a wicked wink,
 Said to Chunder Mookerjee: "Stick to pen and ink."⁵⁵

Kipling's distaste for the nationally educated Bengalis was probably due to their modelling themselves upon England which he had not really been permitted to know. Another reason may have been his conviction that they were really irrelevant to the India he knew. In stories like "The Head of the District" Kipling sets out to explore the differences among the Indians. He frequently alludes to regional stereotypes with the typology of aggressive and passive characteristics as if to impress upon the readers the necessity of holding the country together with the help of the British rule; the fierce tribesmen of the Frontier are presented as courageous and dependable people while at the other end of the spectrum is the Bengali - the spoilt child of the empire. He thought that they have been spoilt by too much

westernisation. In "The Council of Gods" (City of the Dreadful Night) he writes - "The torrent of verbiage is ours. We have taught him what was constitutional when Calcutta smelt.... it is our fault absolutely".

Kipling's literary strategy was to evolve images of India and Indians - drawing heavily upon his instinctive knowledge of the anthropomorphic traditions - which Wurgaft calls "his personal reservoir of primitive knowledge." His social and political views are accommodated within his view of the Indian reality by a process of their reduction into certain determinants which are then shown in contention and this is especially so in his early work. By the time Kim enters the scene, the elements seemed no longer irreconcilable. The novel is an idealisation of imperial rule. It places the highest human values among the Indians. The European characters seem shadowy - even silly - by comparison. Only the Lahore Museum-keeper remains an effective portrait of Lockwood. Incidentally, Kim contains the only positive portrayal - in the whole range of Kiplingiana - of a Bengali 'babu'. This change in Kipling's attitude can be traced in part to his absence from India from mid 1890s; it gave him an opportunity to distance himself from the immediate context of British imperialism in India. The panoramic view of Indian life and the sympathetic treatment of the Indians reveals a Kipling come to terms with himself.

Writing to Charles Eliot Norton Kipling says:

I have done a long Asiatic yarn in which there are hardly any Englishmen. It has been a labour of great love and I think it is a bit more temperate and wiser than my usual stuff.⁵⁶

The story is really a child's fantasy which keeps expanding and eventually becomes coextensive with the sub-continent. Kim is full of rich descriptions which have impressed several twentieth century critics. Nirad Chaudhuri acclaimed it as the very best picture of India by an English author but the fact remains that is still Kipling's personal vision of India.

But rich and convincing though the varied Indian characters are, and splendid though the evocations of the Indian scenes are, it is yet Kipling's own street - arab and the Lama Kipling's own Buddhist.⁵⁷

A characteristic passage from Kim such as the following shows how much Kipling's treatment of the natives had altered:

They met a troop of long-haired, strong-scented Sansis with baskets of lizards and other unclean food on their backs, their lean dogs sniffing at their heels. These people kept their own side of the road, moving at a quick furtive

jog-trot, and all other castes gave them ample room; for the Sansi is deep pollution. Behind them, walking wide and stiffly across the strong shadows, the memory of his leg-irons still on him, strode one newly released from the jail; his full stomach and shiny skin to prove that the government fed its prisoners better than most honest men could feed themselves. Kim knew that walk well, and made broad jest of it as they passed. Then an Akali, a wild-eyed, wild-haired Sikh devotee in blue-checked clothes of his faith, with polished steel quoits glistening on the cone of his tall blue turban, stalked past, returning from a visit to one of the independant Sikh States, where he had been singing the glories of the Khalsa to College-trained princelings in top-boots and white-cord breeches. Kim was careful not to irritate that man; for the Akali's temper is short and his arm quick.⁵⁸

Kipling's love of colour and movement is obvious but as one critic puts it "he is still dealing here with the Indians en masse, the crowd."⁵⁹ There is no really 'individual' Indian character. Kipling, once again, stops short of accepting an Indian as an equal and seeing a particular member of the race as an individual. Arnold Kettle has commented that the two characters in the foreground of the novel - a British boy and a Tibetan Lama are both foreigners.⁶⁰ Most of the other Indian characters are types - the Jat

farmer, the Amritsar farmer, the grey-bearded Ooryas, the Kangra folk. The extent to which Kipling is willing to modify his customary imperialist stand is also reflected in his choice of the school to which Kim has to go. It is a catholic institution and is mainly attended by Eurasians. These boys have the advantage of knowing India far more intimately than the boys who have their schooling in England. Kim's initiation in the Indian life began in his early childhood - "he knew the wonderful walled city of Lahore was hand in glove with men who led lives stranger than anything Haroun al Raschid dreamed of and he lived in a life as wild as that of the Arabian Nights."⁶¹ But before long it becomes apparent that Kipling has only altered the parameters of his racism - not abandoned it altogether. His Kim does not "go native" in the real sense:

When tales, are told on hot nights, Kim did not sweep the board with reminiscences; for St. Xavier's looks down on boys who "go native" altogether. One must never forget that one is a Sahib, and that some day, when examinations are passed, they will command the natives.⁶²

These are the sort of subtle distinctions that Kipling makes in Kim. While he shows himself as being liberal enough to accept Eurasians in the public school, he finds miscegenation particularly offensive.

In Kim, Kipling focuses his attention on the more worthy representatives of the various racial groups who can serve the cause of the empire. Kipling emblematises the British rule through "The Great Game" - an anti-historical representation resting on the assumption that Tsarist Russia had the wicked intention to invade India. Kipling uses a fatuous term to refer to the counter espionage system evolved to combat the Russian threat. He seems to imply it is only the British rule which could guarantee the stability and security of India. Kipling believed only in a benign and powerful authority. The Indians in Kim are divided into two groups - one of ordinary men and women who are "unwittingly protected" by the British rule; the second group consisting of those who recognise the advantage of having the British and are therefore willing to collaborate to make the system more effective:

Kipling forced himself to swallow his own prejudices, and recognise that all India must mean all India. The despised Bengali Babus had to be integrated with the picture. And so Huree Chunder Mookerjee is shown to be a brave and resourceful agent, deserving the respect of Kim as of Creighton Sahib (Babu politics and the Indian National Congress were discreetly ignored: a safer strategy than direct attack).⁶³

But the fact remains that the white men supervise the work of espionage - the Great Game - which, according to Kim,

"runs like a shuttle through all Hind."

Kim evokes - most colourfully and vividly - an Indian world - "Such a river of life as nowhere else exists in the world".⁶⁴ This was the world that Kipling delighted in evoking - largely for his own and the family's pleasure; and this was the colonial world that was already beginning to crumble. Soon after the novel's publication in 1901, Queen Victoria died and a year later Lord Salisbury ceased to be the Prime Minister and with the disappearance of these key figures the curtain seemed to close on the stage of imperial machinations.

Kim is conceived as a pragmatic hero - a worthy representative of British India. He is the orphan Irish boy who is seduced by the Himalayas; he is attracted to Buddhist mysticism; he loves the natives and wanders almost aimlessly along the Grand Trunk Road to become a quintessential part of the landscape. But despite his knowledge of and proximity to the Indian way of life, he remains a white sahib. His lineage confines him to the comfortable square of British susceptibilities. "The first part of the novel leads to the discovery that Kim is a sahib; the second is concerned with discovering what it means to be a sahib".⁶⁵ Kim's knowledge of India is shown as his special qualification though his formal schooling also serves a purpose - it trains

him in espionage work and engenders his sahib-mentality. Kim is a country born and bred boy who is able to immerse himself wholly in the Indian situation. He assumes his place in the secret service and brings to it his own set of skills and knowledge. The paradox on which the theme of Kim's inclusiveness rests is that the dawning of the protagonist's sahibdom brings him closer to the Indian reality. Edward Wilson's contention that Kim deals with "the gradual dawning of (Kim's) consciousness that he is really a Sahib" is true; with Kipling it could never be otherwise; the child hero of "Wee Willie Winkie" has the authority to stop the onward march of the hostile Pathans with an almost instinctive assertion of superiority:

Then rose from the rock Wee Willie Winkie,
the child of the Dominant Race aged six and
three-quarters, and said briefly and emphatically
"Jao!" 66

Namgay Doola also preserves his apartness in quite the same way. He is shown as a man of calibre even after the dilution of his blood as a result of being mixed with that of the Asians over several generations:

Then Namgay Doola, son of Timbay Doola, which
is indeed Doolan gone very wrong indeed..... 67

The story shows the man with a drop of blood in his veins, with a metamorphosed Christianity guiding him, providing instinctively almost, the necessary leadership at a moment of great crisis. It was clearly a case of "once a sahib always a sahib."

The Englishman in India, Kipling maintained, was invariably a clever man. In "Thrown Away" Kipling writes that even the silliest woman could manage a clever man while the woman had to be clever if she was to manage a fool. An assignment in India demanded hard work and a steadfast application. The Englishman in India was expected to grasp her curious traditions and semi-savage rituals. He had to be like Kipling's Strickland - versatile, paternalistic, authoritarian and missionary. He is the prototype of a determined white man who was destined to defeat the evil powers and extend the rule of Law to the distant parts of Barbary. The thing that distinguishes Kim and Strickland is the former's love and respect for the people he meets and the land that he recognises as his own. But despite his proximity to the Indian reality, Kim's lineage causes him to stand apart from the rest of India. He refuses to succumb to the 'negative' and 'non-material' allure. He continues to remain a privileged member of the Indian family.

Thus, the delineation of Kim's character posed no threat to Kipling's imperial perceptions. To him the

white man was necessarily the ruler and the native the ruled. Kipling uses symbols and a highly suggestive imagery to show his hero existing between two tensional states - a threatened loss of identity among aliens, and an at-oneness with India which is based on affective ties. Three key symbols are used to chart Kim's inner growth - the River, the Road and the Wheel. Each symbolises movement - whether linear or circular and all of them are inextricably linked to the Indian way of life. The Road cuts across the flat, culturally varied plains of India. It also alternates as a symbol of Kim's "Becoming" - the dawning of his adulthood - when he would be required to assume the responsibilities he had inherited at birth. The River remains a myth, suggestive of esoteric experiences until the dramatic moment towards the end of the novel when the Lama's inability to find the River is resolved by the revelation of Immanence - that God is within and not without. The River, then, becomes an inwardly realised reality. The Wheel signifies a number of things - but at the most obvious level - it signifies a life of action.

Kipling cleverly interposes the spiritual and the temporal aspects of human pursuit, with the result that one often parodies the other. The Lama's search for the River of the Arrow is imitated by Kim when he takes

to the Road. This fact remains as a ready example of the fantastic-realism of Kim.

As Kim walks with the Lama, his eyes dart here and there, and he delights in everything that he sees. Beside him the Lama tells his beads, not seeing and not hearing, lost in inward meditation. It is an unlikely alliance, and can serve as a symbol of the precarious reconciliation on which the Indian English novel depends.⁶⁸

Richard Cronin argues that the Indian English novel cannot be written by a simple realist, but only by a writer who is willing to flirt with fantasy. Kim ends when the hero is only fifteen because its author cannot follow him into his life as a man. The novel is a product of fantasy rather than historical research. There are two threats that Kim faces - one of them being Russia which can be met by counter espionage and the other that of his dawning adulthood which Kipling evades by bringing the novel to a close.

In Kim, Kipling operates at different levels and this ability shows the range and depth of his vision in which the real and the ideal, the here and the hereafter, the body and the soul are all delicately counterpoised. Kim's growth is a result of the combination of abstract

and concrete processes. His character is shaped under the dual influence of the Lama and Mahbub Ali. The affinity between him and the Lama is a close one; the latter tells him - "to none among men, if thou art woman-born, has my heart gone out as to thee - thoughtful, wise, courteous; but something of a small imp." Kim's response to it is - "And I have never seen a priest as thou It is less than three days since we took the road together, and it is as though it were a hundred years."⁶⁹

But if the Lama is Kim's spiritual mentor, then Mahbub is his secular instructor. The Pathan is listed in the Indian Survey Department as C.25 1B. Between his tenth and his thirteenth year Kim comes under Mahbub's influence. Mahbub teaches him to spy, carry secret messages and perfect the Great Game. He also helps Kim to manage the ladies. In his company the orphan child begins "to feel mechanically for the moustache that was just beginning." In a lesser sense, Father Victor represents the third force at work in shaping Kim's personality. In him, appropriately enough, both the secular and the religious claims of British India meet. In a way, Father Victor is Britain's long arm offering to reclaim the Prodigal Son: "We'll make a man of you at Sanawar....." he says. The process of Kim's Becoming brings him closer to the imperial imperative .

"The pedigree of the white stallion is fully established" is the message that he carries to Creighton Sahib at Umballa, and by the time the novel ends Kim's identity has been fully established. The white stallion is representative of the vitality of the British power in India and there is also a reference to Kim as a pony in the Great Game who is in need of more experience and exposure.

Kipling uses contrast to lay bare the warring susceptibilities of his hero - one part of Kim is linked with the Lama's spiritual quest while the other is connected with the bases of imperialism. These two seemingly irreconcilable parts constitute the matrix within which Kim functions. The loose episodic nature of the novel is a part of Kipling's strategy to allow his hero to go through the whole gamut of experiments and subterfuges necessary to convey the whole truth about the Indian reality. Thus Kim, the vagrant hero, tramps through the heartland of India forever watching, forever questioning and in the end allows himself to be reclaimed by Anglo-India.

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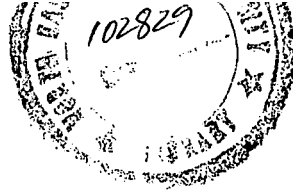
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CHAPTER - II

Forster's Accent in A Passage to India

Kipling's Kim is informed by his philosophy of imperialism. It is based on the author's colonial experience and portrays a reality viewed through the lens of a strong advocate of imperialism. The invention of the myth of the Great Game enables Kipling to compose his own version of the reality. In this sense, Kim is much more of an authorised testament of the British perceptions than a fictional odyssey into the Indian reality.

There is a world of difference between Kim and A Passage to India. Forster legitimises his fictional representation of reality by refusing to take sides in what is obviously a vexed issue. The novel does not confine itself to the known sterilities. It repudiates the western urge to probe the contours of reality with the help of reason and ideology. A Passage takes note of other worlds. Forster seems to suggest here that in this ephemeral world reality cannot be systematised; it can only be experienced. The only thing of value that survives the threats is the bond that exists between man and man. Reality is quite incomprehensible to the human mind: there are worlds beyond this world - like arches beyond arches stretching into infinity. Forster evolves a dialectical pattern to explore the emergent



nature of reality. He uses it to explore the ontological questions at various levels: the quest implicates Adela, Aziz, Godbole and Mrs. Moore. Here, Forster does not attempt to legitimise either the colonial or the Indian standpoint because he had stopped believing in "Causes" long before.

He departs from the standards fixed by the writers of British colonial fiction even in the title of the novel. A Passage to India (emphasis mine) suggests that other 'passages' are also possible. Borrowing the title from Walt Whitman's poem "Passage to India", Forster conducts his own passage in a tentative and richly suggestive way. India offers him a focus:

Passage indeed, O soul to primal thought

.....

Passage to more than India.¹

What was the reality that Forster viewed? What is his India? To Fielding - the urbane Anglo-Indian - "India is a muddle" - evasive and arcane by western standards. It goes against his idea of equipoise and proportion. India is teeming with complexities. She baffles reason and confounds the minds of those who attempt to construct a meaning out of

her muddle. In the words of Phillipa Moody "..... it is a thin filling, sandwiched between the sky and the land to which all forms of life are only a moment between pre-historic and, one might say, post-historic time." Here eternity ceases to be an abstraction and becomes a part of reality that dwarfs man. The caves are prehistoric and precede everything. They represent the cosmic void and serve to juxtapose in cosmological terms, the two concepts relating to the supreme: the self and the not-self. India exists as a metaphor for an incomprehensible universe. That was Forster's intention:

Taking my title from a poem of Walt Whitman's - I tried to indicate the human predicament which is not so far comprehensible to our mind.²

India supplies him with an appropriate mythology with the help of which he could work out his experience of life and truth. It had to be India, and not any other country because -

She knows of the whole world's trouble to its uttermost depth. She calls "come" through her hundred mouths both ridiculous and august.³

India challenged and confounded him and he hoped that the readers would understand him:

I hope that the reader may share my bewilderment and pleasure at plunging into an unknown world and meeting an unknown and possibly unknowable character.⁴

The references broaden out steadily in A Passage - as Forster moves from the material to the spiritual plane, from the concrete to the abstract, from the 'form' of the mosque to the 'formlessness' of Hinduism.

The opening of the novel makes everything fall in perspective. Forster's focus is on the vast sweep of the undulating land and the immensity of the sky to underline the impossibility of achieving any significant relationship with the universe. He began writing the novel before the war only to abandon it soon afterwards and it was not till 1922 (with Leonard Woolf's encouragement) that he took it up again. By then, the political situation in India and Britain had greatly altered and with the changes in the social and political spheres, the attitude and perception of the people had also undergone tremendous changes. Furbank believes that Forster solved his "problem" of maintaining contemporaneity by making the novel "out of time - neither precisely pre-war nor precisely post-war."⁵ He also avoided making any direct political references but

could not really prevent it from getting embroiled in controversies. It also compelled a considerable amount of soul-searching in many quarters:

..... it caused people to think of the link between India and Britain and doubt whether the link was altogether of a healthy nature. The influence was not intended. I was interested in the story of characters. But I welcomed it.⁶

In A Passage, Forster refuses to confine himself to the historical matrix. He even defies the compulsions of his own plot. While Aziz is rooted in his own culture and tradition and has ascertainable political motivations, his ideas do not derive from any particular ideology. It is the same with Fielding. Neither of them is interested in the politics of the day. So, beyond a certain point, politics ceases to matter as the novel develops meanings of its own. Forster definitely parts company with the writers of the Victorian domestic comedies even though his comic imagination is evidently at work in the way he presents vignettes of Anglo-Indian life. He is more interested in examining the Other World. The plot becomes irrelevant as Forster traces the opaque inner life of his characters. Mrs. Moore, Aziz, Godbole, Fielding and Adela are shown to be in tune - however

imperfectly - with the world of spirit. They transcend their immediate circumstances. Only the Anglo-Indian characters like the Turtons, Callenders and McBrydes have static personalities. The characterisation of Aziz, by comparison, is sensitive and even-handed. He embodies the spirit of a sensitive Indian. Forster's longstanding friendship with Ross Masood stood him in good stead here. Aziz is a well-rounded individual who responds to everything emotionally. Forster believed that the inability to do so would expose the individual to the risk of losing his bearings in a swiftly expanding universe or lead to a death of sorts with the consciousness succumbing to "echoes". The universe is bigger, much bigger than what human experience can make of it:

Beyond the sky must not there be something
that over-arches all skies, more impartial
than they? Beyond which again ⁷

Only the spiritually inclined Mrs. Moore and Godbole possess the quality of understanding that the Indian reality requires them to have.

The caves are crucial to Forster's scheme. They are the seat of muddles; these scoured out cavities of the earth rob the sky of its vastness and the world of

its meaning. Incomprehensible to the human mind, a primal chaos, they represent the heart of India and the country is a metaphor of the universe. Forster's vision of the Indian reality becomes a testing ground for his image of Life and Truth. This is the point that some critics miss. They accuse him of sidelining the burning issues of the day, and, in a remarkable volte face, of marginalising historical truths. Like Aziz, Forster preferred to interpret life sensuously. He avoided Ideas just as he shunned causes. Aziz harbours a Pan-Islamic dream but is shown as living the life of an ordinary, inconsistent and emotionally volatile Indian. Then, there is Godbole who articulates the Hindu attitude to life and works out his own salvation with it. This Hindu professor later takes up the job of starting a High School at Mau "on sound English lines." He believes that good and evil are both aspects of the Lord; only he is present in the one and absent in the other. Yet, absence implies presence; it is not non-existence and one is therefore entitled to repeat "Come, come, come, come".⁸ His analysis of the cave incident is also equivocal:

'I am informed that an evil action was performed in the Marabar hills, and that a highly esteemed English lady is now seriously ill as a consequence. My answer to that is this: that the action

was performed by Dr. Aziz.' He stopped and sucked in his cheeks. 'It was performed by the guide.' He stopped again. 'It was performed by you.' Now he had an air of daring and of coyness. 'It was performed by me.' He looked shyly down the sleeve of his own coat. 'And by my students. It was even performed by the lady herself. When evil occurs, it expresses the whole of the universe. Similarly when good occurs.'⁹

If each part is a member of the whole and all parts exist in the Divine, then, any person could have been the agent. Godbole's pantheistic vision achieves an integration of all the diverse parts.

The evil released by the Marabar event is neutralised during the Dionysiac festival of love celebrating Sri Krishna's birth when:

all sorrow was annihilated, not only for Indians, but for foreigners, birds, caves, railways and the stars, all became joy, all laughter, there had never been disease nor doubt, misunderstanding, cruelty, fear.¹⁰

The dissonant sounds of Marabar are drowned in the riotous celebrations in a spirit of Infinite Love which takes the

form of Sri Krishna and saves the world. In the midst of all this Godbole has a vision in which he sees Mrs. Moore and a wasp. The vision serves to exorcise the evil influence of the caves.

The caves represent an ordeal for Mrs. Moore that her immense fund of goodwill cannot overcome. Her responses seem too feeble at one stage. While she has a deep sympathy for India and Indians, is willing to extinguish her self before the echo - "au boum", she lacks a complete understanding. It is only her oneness with the Hindu world view that leads to her apotheosis:

The tumult increased, the invocation of Mrs. Moore continued, and the people who did not know what the syllables meant repeated them like a charm. They become Indianised into Esmis Esmoor, they were taken up in the street outside. In vain the magistrate threatened and expelled. Until the magic exhausted itself, he was powerless.

To Ronny "It was revolting to hear his mother travestied into Esmis Esmoor, a Hindu goddess. But the crowd kept chanting:

'Esmis Esmoor
Esmis Esmoor.....',¹¹

Mrs. Moore's only limitation is her lack of faith in the power of love. She recognises the parts as belonging to the whole - the caves, the sky, the railways, the wasp, the worm but she does not appreciate love - the emotion that fills every rift and bridges every distance. Thus, even the partial meaning that she makes of Life escapes her and she relinquishes her hold on it after proclaiming her nihilistic vision.

Forster's interest lies in presenting the convolutions of personal relationships, not in their intellectual content, but dramatically, in emotional and sensuous terms. While the traditional novels emphasise action per se through linear plots, Forster is content to work out the interrelation between characters and events. His novel gains in vastness and depth because he has the ability to work simultaneously on different planes. In a piece published in 1924 (the year A Passage was published) titled "The Breakup of the Novel" Middleton Murray writes that a "truly great novel is a tale to the simple, a parable to the wise and a direct revelation of reality to a man who has made it a part of his being". A Passage to India is a 'direct revelation'. Here, Forster uses the technique of expansion to circumvent time and comprehend the over-arching nature of reality.

The two important perspectives that he offers at the start of the novel is that India is both a mystery and a muddle (Mrs. Moore says - "I like mysteries but I rather dislike muddles"). A new comer is at once conscious of the mystery because India is a country of mind-boggling diversity which thwarts all attempts at knowing the meaning of things. Muddles arise as a result of the western adventure to order the reality without making room for exceptions and anomalies. Muddles generate confusion and misunderstanding. The English are particularly troubled by it. The Indians, of course, have their own ways of countering the confusion. In this contry, where things happen accidentally and life is a river, no one is responsible for anything. They say things that they do not mean; they forget what they promise - like the Bhattacharjees. Even Aziz, who boasts "There'll be no muddle when you come to see me",¹² is appalled when Adela takes him seriously. Indians cannot keep appointments, they cannot catch trains either - but Forster sees some merit in this failure: Indians make only small mistakes, never gigantic follies. It is only in trying to organise and coordinate that one can make momentous errors.

The "beyondness" of things in India is brought out by the cosmic disorder in the place where all things

exist both disparately and together. So, India exists for everything and nothing. Like the Supreme Being of the Upanishads, the caves can be described only negatively - "Neti, Neti (not this, not that)".¹³ They show up the limits of human understanding. As the seat of delusions, they give rise to the central conflict in the novel. What happens to Adela in the caves? A prim candidate for marriage, she has come to India to get a first-hand knowledge of the land and her husband-to-be. In the words of Mrs. Moore "She is very, very fair-minded".¹⁴ Adela wishes to know the "real" India:

Miss Quested who always said exactly what was in her mind, announced anew that she was desirous of seeing the real India.¹⁵

She is thoroughly shaken by her experience in the caves. Nothing in her upbringing had quite prepared her for the "diabolical assault on her senses." She interprets the experience in the only way she can: as a physical assault by Dr. Aziz. The conversation between her and Dr. Aziz just before they enter their caves, give us some clues. At about that time Adela had suddenly realized that she did not love Ronny. Her being with Aziz at that time seems to be the most significant fact because a seemingly related idea began to form in her mind -

.....she guessed that he might attract women of his own race and rank and she regretted that neither she nor Ronny had physical charm. It does make a difference in a relationship-beauty, thick hair, and fine skin.¹⁶

Her thoughts become more and more sensual as she wonders just how many wives the Indian had. The circumstantial evidence points to the fact that Adela could have been a victim of her own delusions, her 'id', her private fantasy. But whatever the actual situation, the cave episode accords with the intense preoccupation of the Anglo-Indian novelists with the idea of the sexual depravity of the Indians. It runs like a thread through their writings. Forster alone gives the episode an odd twist by confining it to the area of equivocation and half-truths. He seems to underline the point he had already made - that the Marabars resist all attempts at finding meanings. He raises epistemological questions when he shows Adela's moment of contact with reality as the moment when she loses her powers of reasoning and judgement:

Nothing, nothing attaches to them, and their reputation - for they have one - does not depend upon human speech.¹⁷

The significant word here is "nothing". The flame connecting by way of its image, with its reflection on the polished walls of the cave, signifies the fruitlessness of trying to achieve a personal contact with others:

Immediately another flame rises in the depths and moves forward to the surface like an imprisoned spirit: the walls of the chamber have been marvellously polished. The two flames approach and strive to unite, but cannot, because one of them breathes air, the other stone.¹⁸

After the expedition to the caves, or rather as a consequence of it, East and West are driven further apart. The echo keeps on expanding. Fielding begins to believe that though the original sound may have been harmless, the echo is evil. Forster seizes upon Adela's inquiries about the Indian reality to highlight the baffling complexity of India and the universe. The landscape - "a group of fists and fingers thrust through the soil"¹⁹ - seems to beg the question: "How can the mind take hold of such a country?"²⁰ The rational curiosity of the English characters is quite meaningless as "nothing in India is identifiable, the mere asking of a question causes it to disappear or merge in something else"²¹ Hinduism alone seems capable of making the necessary connections.

Using the symbolism of the caves, Forster seeks to unify dialectical opposites such as reality and illusion, knowledge and failure of knowledge, good and evil. The caves at one level remind one of the Cow Mouth Shrine in Kipling's Naulakha. The difference lies in the fact that whereas Tarvin flees the "nothingness" of the place, Forster's characters cannot retreat into the comfortable world of Anglo-India - perhaps because, unlike Kipling, Forster was not sure that the solution lay in positive action.

Since Forster believed in the reality that expands itself in terms of meaning and significance, Mrs. Moore, Aziz, Godbole, Fielding and Adela show a capacity to go beyond the "here and now". The first two become mythic characters: Mrs. Moore at some stage becomes a state of mind; Godbole becomes a part of the Ancient Night - the inheritor of India's anthropomorphic traditions, accepting everything in the abstract. Finally, he is the only character in the novel to attain "the secret understanding of the heart". But, so preoccupied is he with the life of the spirit that he is often out of step with the present though the breadth of his vision is shown as compensating for all his pragmatic failures. He is the only person within the novel's telos who views Aziz's trial with some measure

of objectivity. This attitude, as also the fact that he has "known", add to his stature.

In Where Angels Fear to Tread - the very first novel that Forster wrote - he highlighted the inefficacy of speech as a mode of communication. Speech, in his view, is not always a blessing; it often obstructs the free flow of feeling. It is likely to fail the user at crucial moments. Even though Philip spills a great deal of verbiage - "He did not know that he talked a great deal of nonsense." Harriet is often seen at her hectoring best but her words are as unfinished "as a lump of coal."²² Then, there is Mrs. Herriton who has perfected the art of double-speak. These are only a few examples to show how speech is misused. Forster, therefore, feels that the unspoken word is more effective than the spoken word and slowly the more sensitive characters come to realize that there is a deeper and a more satisfying bond that does not require speech. The Italian word for it is "simpatico":

The person who understands us at first sight, who never irritates us, who never bores, to whom we can pour forth every thought and wish, not only in speech but in silence - that is what I mean by simpatico.²³

Forster also refers to the filtering role played by words and he thereby adds a third dimension to the issue: words often let pass "What is good". This leads him to bless, with supreme irony, the barriers of language. The lessons of his Italian experience were never far from his mind and Fielding - who often speaks in Forster's voice - finds Italy a point of reference for the India that he views:

To regard an Indian as if he were an Italian is not, for instance, a common error, nor perhaps a fatal one, and Fielding often attempted analogies between this peninsula and that other, smaller and more exquisitely shaped, that stretches into the classic waters of the Mediterranean.²⁴

Forster pursues the same line of reasoning in A Passage. Whether it is the Bridge Party which degenerates into a farce as the rival parties get polarised along communal lines or Mrs. Moore's feeling of futility when her words fail to find any response ("She was only recommending universal brotherhood but as soon as it is put into prose it becomes untrue")²⁵, the inadequacy of words is proved beyond all doubt. Words can expand and go out of reach - a fact that quite unsettles Mrs. Moore when her innocent words "Pretty dear" only serve to increase the disquiet of the night.

The Marabar expedition also highlights the inexactness of words as emotional counters. Adela's questions repel Aziz and their feeling of camaraderie is totally lost. Later, during Aziz's trial, a mass of verbiage is released and it is the lone punkahwallah who remains inviolable. Forster describes him lingeringly, lovingly almost -

.....naked and splendidly formed, he sat on a raised platform near the back, in the middle of the central gangway, and he caught her attention as she came in, and he seemed to control the proceedings..... Something in his aloofness impressed the girl from the middle-class England, and rebuked the narrowness of her suffering.²⁶

Adela breaks down whenever she is questioned about her experience in the caves; words fail her and she becomes physically ill. Her life in suburban England had not prepared her for it. "Talkative" Christianity is doctrinaire: it is too reliant on words such as "Let there be light" and anybody owing allegiance to it finds it impossible to relate to the meaningless echo - "au boum". Mrs. Moore is just able to go a little further than her compatriots on account of her tremendous fund of good will for India and her people. But even she suffers from the handicap of being a cultural

alien. She also becomes aware of her failing and being averse to the idea of manufacturing a false meaning, she escapes the trial. The caves had pushed her to the state of "spiritual..... muddledom for which no high-sounding words can be found." ²⁷ Something dwelt in those caves -

What had spoken to her in that scoured out cavity of granite? What dwelt in the first of the caves? Something very old and small. Before time, it was before space also. Something snub-nosed, incapable of generosity - the undying worm itself.²⁸

The paradoxical idea that she had "heard its voice" - grips her mind. The limits to her rationality are exposed as she slowly begins to realize that there is no knowing the universe, not even intuitively. The knowledge of her own failure disturbs her and she succumbs to a pathetic death.

A Passage to India does not end with her death; rather it ends with a negative affirmation of an order that is sanctioned and accredited by the Hindu concept of God. "Good and Evil", according to Godbole, "are both of them aspects of my Lord." Forster's paradigm for reality integrates, in a similar way, two diametrically opposed visions - Godbole's pantheistic one and Mrs. Moore's nihilistic vision - both

of which become aspects of his novel. This integration is achieved in course of the description of the Dionysiac Festival of Love - an occasion that witnesses the submergence of small individual differences in a general flood of feeling. Unfortunately enough, this mood of harmony does not endure. The rhythm of life necessitates changes. The ending of the novel assumes significance inasmuch as it establishes the primacy of the contingent world - a place of small aberrations.

A Passage recounts a human experience in symbolic terms. The caves precede everything and have no human or divine connections. They pose the challenge of the still moment in all its horrific emptiness. Forster seems to highlight the folly of trying to "order" reality with the help of the intellect. The caves threaten the concept of a well-defined plot. It is as if Forster has deliberately placed his characters against a backdrop of primeaval matter. In so doing he underlines their impotence and insignificance. The caves and the celebrations to mark Lord Krishna's birth are fictional devices used to circumvent the rigour of plot, time and action. Consequently, there is a huge opening-out in the last section of the novel. Godbole's "Come, come, come, come....." ²⁹ expresses a fundamental openness. It marks the progression from the temporal world to the

spiritual one, from the here and now to the there and later. In technical terms the movement is from plot to theme, from Reality by way of symbolism - to Dream and what Forster himself called "meditation".

The strategies that Forster deploys to ensure maximal creative freedom are the later categories mentioned in Aspects - such as Fantasy and Rhythm. He explains how the novelist, despite the inherent limits of his telos, enjoys more freedom than either a poet, a dramatist or a short-story writer. This enables him to go beyond his traditional commitment to social realities in order to elevate his work to the level of a spiritual revelation, or a sublime piece of music. Forster prefers the "musical aesthetic" to the "dramatic aesthetic". He criticises Henry James for preferring the latter. He considers War and Peace the greatest example of a vast, discursive and musically ordered fiction. In Aspects, Forster progressively dissociates the novel from drama. He prefers to compare it instead to symphony - perhaps because this type of music is most flexible as it permits themes to appear, disappear and reappear in echoes. Since he considers story-telling a trivial pastime and has serious reservations about the constructions of plot, he attempts to transcend all formal categories in A Passage. Forster believed that life is

not a matter of straight progression and reality is not something "given" at the start - like a premise. He frowns upon the story-element because it is time-bound and merely records what happens without pausing to consider the significance of the experience. It does not create any sense of life by values. In A Passage, Forster stresses the importance of the unconscious life: there are moments in man's intellectual life when he becomes aware of his own ignorance and his incapacity to stand up to a situation. Such is the experience of Mrs. Moore who meets her "shadow face-to-face" and begins to withdraw into herself. She is shocked to discover the eternal worm so close at hand in India. This country is not "Romantic and manageable"³⁰ like Grasmere. Here:

.....the inarticulate world is closer at hand and readier to assume control as soon as men are tired.³¹

Mrs. Moore cannot revive her flagging energies to assert herself. She would rather rest and doze. She has no interest in the Ronny-Adela relationship and rather shockingly declares-

.....that through people are important, the relations between them are not and in particular too much fuss has been made over marriage; centuries of carnal embracement, yet man is no nearer understanding man. ³²

Personal relations are even more precarious in the Indian context because here the land is vast, and as such, it is riven with more tension and conflict. "How can the mind take hold of such a country?" ³³ seems to be a logical question to ask. India is more like a jigsaw puzzle made up of "objects ridiculous and august." Nothing, nobody (not even the great Mughal Emperor Akbar who tried and failed) can embrace the whole country.

Forster never tells us what really happened in the caves, neither does he propose an inquest. The only suggestion that he seems to make is that Aziz is probably innocent; Mrs. Moore is convinced about it, Fielding is also quite certain about it, and even Adela is not too sure of his involvement. Meanwhile, however, things have gone out of hand and it is at this point that Forster turns his kaleidoscope on the rapidly changing social equations and cross-currents that the incident has generated. The Anglo-Indian characters, with the possible exception of Fielding and Mrs. Moore, are shown as rallying round their "abused" compatriot and smaller differences are sunk in a general mood of animosity. The Indians also come to the aid of Aziz; both parties close their ranks politically and reason and commonsense cease to matter. G.K. Das refers to the socio-historical resonances particularly in this section

of the novel to support his claim that A Passage is a "sensitive" novel on a major socio-historical event of the century - viz, the dissolution of the British raj in India. Comparing it with the earlier Anglo-Indian writings (such as those of Kipling) and the latter-day ones (those of Paul Scott), G.K. Das highlights the nature of Forster's success. According to him Forster was writing about the "transitional moment of British India's transformation into new India." ³⁴ Seen against the "muddle" - which almost becomes the synonym for India one is compelled to disagree with Das's reading. The socio-historical observations made by him suggest a subjective reading of the text. They cannot be taken too seriously because the novel does not confine itself merely to a study of Anglo-Indian society. Forster's intention is not to delineate a socio-historical reality but to explore the chequered course of personal relationships through the mysterious caves. He interrogates the dominant discourses of the raj. His liberal-humanist ideology informs the novel. India becomes a paradigm of the universe - a destroyer of meanings. A Passage is not merely a historical account. It is a broad human document in which Forster uses a richly modulated ironic style to comment on the hollowness of cognitive knowledge. The West uses its strategy of "knowing" to perpetuate and perfect its rule. The structure of the novel and the time-scale that it creates are a part of Forster's design to escape the strait-jacket of colonial perceptions and attitudes. The Indian background is an amorphous mass.

This is the twilight region where all social and historical connections dissolve. Forster also departs from the domestic-realistic fictional mode as he enters into the arena of Imponderables. However, one cannot deny the fact that Forster makes good use of his almost prolific knowledge of India accruing from his one-and-a-half year stay in the country. He visited India twice - first in 1912 and again in 1921 and remained in touch with the country for as many as eighteen years. Many incidents, situations and characters in A Passage are drawn from his personal experiences in Dewas - some of which are recounted in The Hill of Devi. Forster made a liberal use of his experiences because he needed the trammels of "real" India. In Aspects he acknowledges the need to create a representative and coherent image of reality. They are in the nature of circumstantial evidence because "A novel is based on the evidence + or - x....."³⁵ But there is also an "unknown quantity that modifies the effect of evidence and sometimes transforms it entirely." The unknown quantity is the vision of the novelist. Such a transformation does take place in A Passage. The question of personal relationships is shown to be more crucial than the question of politics, and according to Wilfrid Stone it "subsumes the whole question of politics."³⁶ It shows the crisis that exists at the individual level for which there is no solution because neither rationalism nor mysticism

can provide the complete answer. Consequently, Forster is unable to continue the largely escapist flight to the mystical Otherness. The ending of the novel shows a return to pragmatism and commonsense. So, when critics like G.K. Das and N.C. Chaudhuri examine A Passage for socio-historical vignettes and views, they are disregarding the issues that concerned Forster more urgently at the time, issues that refer to his views on society, man, aesthetics, religion and the art of fiction. In this novel, he was not trying to gather in a net, as it were, the fragmented reality that he saw around him. Conscious as he was of the heterogeneity of the universe and of human experience, he knew that man has no control over the governing forces and can hardly relate to the cosmic sweep of reality. He also realized that it is impossible to know reality by viewing it from the social or political angle. Such an attempt would only show up the fissures, highlight its fragmented nature.

By the second decade of the twentieth century liberal-humanism was already a spent force. Its decline is adumbrated in A Passage. It bears the impress of the author's disillusionment with all Creeds, Beliefs and Causes. Forster felt that hope existed only at the individual level though it also exposed him to some risks. He realized that

the striving for excellence at the individual level would be increasingly threatened by the larger social, political and economic compulsions. The post-war scene seemed to drive home the point that group action had become necessary. A Passage is unique because it effects a precarious balance between the old and discredited liberal view of the sanctity of the individual (a microcosmic view) and the new-born ideas taking hold of people's mind concerning the need for social collectivism (a macrocosmic view). Mediating between the two view-points, Forster insists on the need to preserve the individual good for the larger social good. An order that denies the individual his rights is necessarily a repressive order. But, Forster is careful not to advocate any philosophy in A Passage. He probably had none to offer because at that time he had begun to consider himself incapable of any abstract thought. Again to profess a philosophy would amount to denying himself the amplitude that is available to a novelist. Forster had become wary of causes, faiths and systems. A Passage is poised somewhere between total objectivity and total subjectivity. Adopting a half-ironical posture towards the Indian reality, Forster seems to favour subjectivism in experience. Fully alive as he was to the uselessness of empirical enquiries into a disoriented and infinitely varied reality, he deliberately focuses on the inner life of an individual - a smaller sphere of order.

He goes on to show how these small spheres unite with the little help generated by personal relationships. He writes:

(It).....is comparatively solid.....
starting from them I get a little order in
the contemporary chaos.³⁷

Forster's view of man existing in inter-relation with one another in a fragmented universe, is a pessimistic one. In "What I Believe", he writes -

No millenium seems likely to descend.....no
change of heart will occur.³⁸

But even then, he refuses to give way to despair and fatalism. He recognises the power of love which may, in future, bring men like Aziz and Fielding together. So, when he uses the disclaimer "No, not yet" - he is using the language of deferred hope. Writing to Darling on 15 September, 1924, Forster underlined his thesis:

Kings stands for personal relationship, and these seem to me the most real things on the surface of the earth, but I have acquired a feeling that people must go away from each other (spiritually) every now and then, to improve themselves if the relationship is

to develop or even endure. A Passage to India describes such a going away - preparatory to the next advance, which I am not capable of describing.....³⁹

Forster's belief in personal relationships stems from his reliance on the twin ideals of Love and Freedom. The two are interlinked because the one can be attained only in accompaniment with the other. In "Menace to Freedom", Forster argues in favour of combining the two in a situation in which Fear is absent:

If the two desires (love and freedom) could combine, the menace to freedom from within and the fundamental menace (of fear) might disappear, and the political evils now filling the foreground of our lives would be deprived of the poison that nourishes them.⁴⁰

"What I Believe" reiterates this very idea and also criticises the evil of Force:

O thou who lovest me - set this love in order I do not think that it ever will be, but here and not through a change of heart is our probable route. Not by becoming better but by ordering and distributing his native goodness will man shut up force into a box.⁴¹

Fear and Love are the two basic human emotions and they relate to particular social and political institutions. Fear takes hold of us in a situation of Tyranny and finds in the materialist culture of imperialism the right soil in which to grow and multiply. Love and Freedom foster personal relations within the overall context of social interrelationships. They engender creativity in private life and accountability in public affairs. But these finer sentiments are crushed under the wheels of imperialism's juggernaut. Forster found Kipling's public-school outlook too simplistic. He wanted the social order to be a non-manipulative, non-repressive one. He wanted individuals to co-exist in all their variety. Consistency, he felt, existed only at the level of human personality.

.....though A is not unchangeably A or B unchangeably B, there can still be love and loyalty between the two. For the purposes of living one has to assume that the personality is solid.⁴²

Forster is in favour of evolving a community of creative individuals:

The people I admire most are those who are sensitive and want to create something or

discover something they found religions great or small or they produce literature and art or they do disinterested scientific research, or they may be what is called "ordinary people who are creative in their private lives".⁴³

Though he hated all causes, he needed (in the post-War situation) something to comfort him. He needed to formulate an approach that would marginalise the forces of totalitarianism which were beginning to crush the individual. He called for a loose federation of creative individuals. He considered the state to be a tyrannical institution. This realization is clearly expressed in his writing:

.... if I had to choose between betraying my country and betraying my friend, I hope I should have the guts to betray my country.⁴⁴

He calls Love the great necessity, because in its absence the order of the creative individuals becomes meaningless. Personal values get precedence over social values in Forster's scheme and social order is considered valid only as long as it nurtures individuality. Under an exploitative system the relations between individuals suffer constant erosion. Thus, in actual terms, idealism in politics and the creativity

of the individual can be harmonised within the framework of a tolerant democracy. This deep concern for human values, explains Forster's preference for a harmonising religion. He dislikes the asceticism of Christ and prefers the humanity and playfulness of Krishna. The Hindu God represents divinity with a human face. Krishna's earthiness, his love for fun and frolic appeal to Forster because this human-God seems to embody the spirit of his ideals. In A Passage, he describes the Festival which:

.....by sacrificing good taste, ... achieved what Christianity had shirked: the inclusion of merriment. All spirit as well as matter must participate in salvation, and if practical jokes are banned, the circle is incomplete.⁴⁵

In course of the festivities marking the birth of Lord Krishna, all differences are resolved. Hinduism integrates the individual self with the collective self. It resolves the paradox of life. There is nothing certain about Forster's India. She may go along the same way or embrace new solutions. Forster is not interested in anticipating anything. He deliberately subverts the certainties of the imperial position and forwards, instead, a humanist critique of the dominant discourse patterns in colonial writings.

He counters the imperial thesis of positive action with his own concept of the still moment. The rhetoric of positivism, activism and moral assurance is abandoned in favour of the idiom of deferred hope. The rhetoric of imperialism is present but it is almost unrecognisable, so much has it been slighted through irony. Forster does not share the feelings of Kipling or of Orwell either. Kipling put his weight solidly behind imperialism, while Orwell used imperialism's own cliches to flay the system. Forster's position is more ambivalent, more evasive than that of either. The beginning of A Passage firmly locates the novel in a particular context but soon enough, it unfolds a larger area of contradiction which seems to mock the neatness of the opening. Operating in the mythopoeic mode, the novel goes on to create its vision of an ahistorical order within the anthropomorphic time span. This flight ends only when reality reasserts itself. The triadic structure of the novel not only makes it possible, but inevitable as well. As Forster returns to the area of known sterilities, he seems to indicate that neither materialism nor mysticism can provide a safe haven. Though he dissents from the beliefs and conventions of imperialism, he fails to arraign it in the way Orwell does - perhaps because liberal-humanism could not throw up a viable critique of it.

Whichever way one reads the novel the impression of its elusive character, its tentative suggestiveness, remains. One may read it as a realistic account of a human situation and as a symbolic rendering of certain states of mind, of human feelings, which exist outside the framework of the novel. Even the symbols tend to become opaque and critics are forced to read their own meanings into them. There is a tension between the two kinds of realities; on the one hand, there are the inanities of social conventions conveyed in a tone of sombre irony, on the other, there is the huge cosmic void which engulfs the characters and brings them to a state of near panic. A Passage is not a purposeful novel, rather it is playful one in which Forster only identifies the problems without suggesting any solutions. He takes us to a world where the pillar of a mosque develops a life of its own and begins to quiver. It is not the architecture merely which has a tendency to become fluid - the inhabitants of Chandrapore who seem to be "mud moving" suggest that both men and matter are made up of primal soil. The image of Chandrapore becomes complex as Forster compares it to a forest and city of birds. The deceptively simple opening exhausts most of the metaphors and relations that Forster evolves for his representation of the mystery of India. The problem shown in the novel is not quite the problem of the earth, nor of the sky. Forster's description of the locale is important because

it contains the embryo, the basic materials for his image of life. The duality of his attitude to the Indian reality is established in the very first chapter. Probably Forster is working neither in the realist nor in the psychological mode, but he has exploited the best of both before the novel ends.

Aziz and Mrs. Moore establish a relation by escaping their historical prisons. They attain "the secret understanding of the heart" albeit precariously. It passes away like a dream. Aziz is an exponent of the humanist ideal. But his ideal, alas, cannot solve all the problems. His bearings as regards political emancipation remain somewhat blurred - a fact that creates a thematic gap in the novel. But this serves to show that Forster does not believe in any solution at the historical and political levels. He also fails to create a commonplace character. All of them represent either the British bureaucracy or Indian aristocracy and the upper-middle class. There is none to represent the reality of the anonymous individual in British India. Whenever he mentions the millions of ordinary Indians, a veil drops and he resorts to vague generalisations such as-

.....and there were circles even beyond these - people who wore nothing but a loincloth, people who wore not even that, and spent their lives knocking two sticks together before a scarlet doll.⁴⁶

Forster is not interested in examining the Indo-British relationship and is quite cold about the future of India. He, in other words, does not visualise a future which will reflect the theme of the clash between the two races. The theme requires a more radical stand, a more moving conclusion. But in the end he shows that he is not interested in the Club-Populace relationship and in the political implications of the clash between cultures; he is not interested in the morality of things or even in the future of imperialism. What he tries to show is the individual's existence within a set conditon. He is interested in examining the duality of consciousness when it becomes difficult to read the hidden urge from the overt action. Life, he shows, consists in a vague correlation of Intention and Experience. How does Mrs. Moore's intention in coming to India relate with her experience? How do they work out in Adela's case? What happens to defeat the wishes of Fielding and Aziz? What strange truths do the caves reveal? At every point Forster shows the actual gap between intention and experience.

Only myths and symbols seems to be of some use in the task of exploring the mystery of life. Both defy attempts at easy reductions. This shows that Forster has a magical view life rather than a scientific one. Reality is made up of many unknowable forces and the human

mind strives to probe its nature. It is like going to the cave and lighting a match to get a peep into the darkness. This is also what Forster does - he affords us a peep into the darkness but refuses to lead us on. The experiences he delineates cannot be referred to any particular country, race and culture. It is human experience. Ultimately, A Passage is an inquiry into the nature of human experience to show how individuals of different cultures and ages have experienced horror, fear and exhilaration.

Forster does not believe in plot. He does not believe in history either. History is expressed through plot. The temporal development of the story is abandoned in favour of a psychic and obsessive view of reality. The movement of the story is further punctuated by the still moment. He makes no reference to the National Movement; he does not mention Gandhiji. He doubts all action. In the novel he attempts to imitate not action but inaction. In Chapter 14, Forster writes:

Most of life is so dull that there is nothing to be said about it and the books and talk that would describe it as interesting are obliged to exaggerate, in the hope of justifying their own existence. Inside the cocoon of work or social obligation, the human spirit

slumbers for the most part registering the distinction between pleasure and pain but not nearly so alert as we pretend. There are periods in the most thrilling day when nothing happens.⁴⁷

"Nothing happens" is the crucial operative phrase. Forster cleverly shifts an ordinary event to a metaphysical plane to sideline the claims of the philosophy of action.

The philosophy of inaction is perfectly expressed by Mrs. Moore. Through her, Forster, opens up a whole world of intuitions. The image of the punkahwallah existing in a state of perfectly self-consuming self-hood is also supportive of the theory of Inaction. Forster believed that to touch a stream at a particular point was to touch all of it. This metaphor can be used to show how all human beings are the same. Forster seems to suggest that the contemplative life is better than a life of action for the latter is more likely to delude or defeat a person.. This belief contradicts the basic tenet of a novel - that it must have a plot delineating action. The plot in A Passage is undermined by its visionary theme. The novelist seems to be at pains to reconcile the real and the visionary. Such an integration is virtually impossible within the

historical matrix. When the plot collapses under the weight of the subdued resonances and the fantasmagoria of the unseen world, Forster seems to link the problem of the novel with the problem of cognizance or cognition.

Notes

1. Walt Whitman : "Passage to India" in Christopher Gillie : A Preface to Forster (New York : Longman, 1986), PP. 193-194.
2. E.M. Forster : quoted in Santha Rama Rao's essay in K. Natwar Singh (ed) E.M. Forster : A Tribute (London: Hogarth Press Ltd., 1942), P.107.
3. E.M. Forster : The Hill of Devi (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1953), P.9.
4. E.M. Forster : A Passage to India (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976), P. 135.
5. P.N. Furbank : E.M. Forster : A Life (Oxford : OUP, 1979), Vol.2, P.106.
6. E.M. Forster : K. Natwar Singh (ed) E.M. Forster: A Tribute, P. 12.
7. E.M. Forster : A Passage to India, P. 40.
8. ibid.. : P. 286.
9. ibid.. : P. 175.
10. ibid.. : P. 283.
11. ibid.. : P. 219.
12. ibid.. : P. 68.

13. Robert E. Hume : (trans) The Thirteen Principal Upanishads (Delhi : OUP, 1988)
"Brihad-Aranyaka Upanishad" 3.9.27.
14. E.M.F. : A Passage to India, P. 34.
15. ibid.. : P. 27.
16. ibid.. : P. 151.
17. ibid.. : P. 124.
18. ibid..
19. ibid.. : P. 11.
20. ibid.. : P. 135.
21. ibid.. : P. 84.
22. E.M. Forster : Where Angels Fear to Tread
(Harmondsworth : Penguin, 1980),
P. 138.
23. ibid.. : P. 57.
24. E.M. Forster : A Passage to India, P. 61.
25. ibid.. : P. 143.
26. ibid.. : P. 212.
27. ibid.. : P. 203.

28. ibid.. : P. 136.
29. ibid.. : P. 286.
30. ibid.. : P. 136.
31. ibid.. : P. 111.
32. ibid..
33. ibid.. : P. 135.
34. G.K. Das : "A Passage to India : A Socio-historical Study" in John Beer(ed) A Passage to India : Essays in Interpretation (London : Macmillan, 1987), P.1.
35. E.M. Forster : Aspects of the Novel (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1987), P. 55.
36. Wilfrid Stone : The Cave and the Mountain: A Study of E.M. Forster (California: Stanford Univ. Press, 1969), P.320.
37. E.M. Forster : "What I Believe": Two Cheers For Democracy (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1965), P. 65-66.
38. ibid..
39. P.N. Furbank : E.M. Forster : A Life Vol.2 P. 124.
40. E.M. Forster : "The Menace to Freedom": Two Cheers for Democracy, P. 10.
41. ibid.. : P. 11.

42. Two Cheers for Democracy, PP.65-66.
43. ibid.. : P. 67.
44. ibid.. : P. 66.
45. E.M. Forster : A Passage to India : P. 285.
46. ibid.. : PP. 37 -38.
47. ibid.. : P. 132.

CHAPTER - III

Orwell's Critique of Imperialism : Burmese Days

The Fall of Kipling's Shadow:

Burmese Days closely examines a colonial situation to reveal the insidious perversions caused by the inequities in the distribution of power. Here is an odd convergence of two modes of fictional writing - the realistic and the allegorical. Many years after the novel was published, Orwell categorised this novel as a naturalistic one:

I wanted to write enormous naturalistic novels with unhappy endings full of detailed descriptions and arresting similes, and also full of purple passages in which words were partly used for the sake of sound. And in fact my first completed novel, Burmese Days is rather that kind of book.¹

As the naturalistic and the allegorical traditions converge here, many critics have been unfair in their criticism of Orwell's characterisation in Burmese Days. They have also found fault with his wilful arrangement of incidents (such as the earthquake that halts Flory's attempt to get Elizabeth to accept his proposal) and his liberal use of cliches and melodramatic dialogue. The naturalistic tenor of the

novel, however, makes for pleasant reading. Nature is obsessively present here - through a multiplicity of sights, smells and sounds. There are purple patches too - such as the description of the hunting scenes. But, more importantly, Orwell's novel is a politically-oriented piece of work in which the author employs imperialism's own icons and slogans to explode the myth of the White-Man's Burden. It is informed by Orwell's liberal-humanist ideology that sometimes complicates the design of the work and this is one of the pitfalls of writing political fictions. In the words of Howe:

The political novel is peculiarly a work of internal tensions it tries above all, to capture the quality of concrete experience. Ideology, however, is abstract.... and therefore likely to be recalcitrant whenever an attempt is made to incorporate it into the novel's stream of sensuous impression. The conflict is inescapable.... Yet it is precisely from this conflict that the political novel gains its interest.²

Orwell's novel has an immediacy that is partly due to its political thrust while his liberal use of allegory and symbolism add to the novel's meaning. The consistent use of animal imagery in Burmese Days prefigures Animal Farm. Here, realistic details and allegorical undertones

co-mingle and complement one another. Beginning with all possible explanations of Flory's birthmark and the sneaky quality of U Po Kyin's striking power, which is so reminiscent of a crocodile, Orwell goes on to evoke the mystery of the jungle which together serve to demonstrate a technique that makes it possible for allegorical representations to feel true as touch.

Burmese Days reveals the unease of a sensitive mind placed in the context of an exploitative social situation. Here, the hero is not a stock figure. He is an individual denuded of his individuality and freedom of choice. His parent culture demands conformity while his natural impulses incite him to rebellion. It is an enactment of the post-modern crisis in which the self and society exist unreconciled. Though the novel has all the ingredients used in colonial fiction, Burmese Days is not a straightforward rendering of the colonial experience. There is much about the novel that is oddly disturbing. Another fact is that Orwell does not write either in the Kiplingesque or the Fosterian tradition though he is influenced by both.

In The Wheel of Empire (1967), Alan Sandison traces the origin of the imperial viewpoint to the author's feeling of isolation. The idea is convincing. Writers

such as Kipling, Conrad, Buchan, Forster and Orwell could hardly afford to overlook their tensional existence at the cultural cross-roads. One way or another, all of them make their fiction serve a cathartic function. In Kipling's representation of the colonial world, the roles of both the coloniser and the colonised are defined with the help of symbolic resources which are ultimately projections of the author's own ideals and fantasies. Kipling invented the White Man persona and marked him out as a Man of Destiny. He invested his ideal with impressive attributes because he knew that "whiteness" alone would not suffice; so, he emphasised his devotion to duty, his unflinching faith in himself and the system that he upheld, and his readiness to make the supreme sacrifice for the defence of his sacred mission. Kipling's influence was salutary on most writers even if Orwell side-stepped the imposed regime. The latter emphasised the vulnerability - not the heroism of his protagonist. He took up the burden of revealing the other side of the story. To quote David Trotter:

-... the coloniser's strength is always prefigured by vulnerability.³

Flory's vulnerability makes him an anomalous figure. He is under a tremendous strain. In the end the

burden of having to preserve his identity proves too much for him. His problem is that he cannot bridge the gap between the alternate states of his existence. While he is easy with his Indian friend - Veeraswami, it is Elizabeth whom he actually needs to anchor him to his plane of reality. There is a ring of desperation in his words when Flory begins to tell her how much he needs her:

Have I made myself at all clear to you ?
 Have you some picture of the life that we
 live here ? The foreignness, the solitude,
 the melancholy ! Foreign trees, foreign
 flowers, foreign landscapes, foreign faces.
 It's all as alien as a different planet.
 But do you see - and it's this that I so
 want you to understand - do you see, it mightn't
 be so bad living on a different planet, it
 might even be the most interesting thing
 imaginable if you had even one person to
 share it with. One person who could see
 it with eyes something like your own...⁴

The tragedy of Flory's state of exile is palpable throughout the novel. The quotation from As You Like It given on the title page - "This desert inaccessible/ Under the shade of melancholy boughs" sets the tone of the novel. While Kipling and Forster had solved the problem

of authenticating their fictional worlds by writing stories about persons who undergo transformation (as in Kim and A Passage to India), Orwell makes a disabling lethargy come in the way of his hero's regeneration. This suggests that Orwell had no intention of renewing (in the established tradition) his commitment to the empire. Orwell refuses to allow his protagonist to rise to the occasion and discover a moral incentive for his role. Alan Sandison's comments help us to understand Orwell's position:

Orwell's problem reiterated again and again is loss of faith in immortality. Disbelieving in God, he nevertheless believes profoundly in the individual self - but bereft of the notion of immortality, how is faith to be sustained?..⁵

Sandison argues that in his preference for the 'doer' to the 'talker', Orwell resembles Kipling. Orwell admired the easy way in which Kipling eulogised the man of action. In appreciation of the heroism of Kipling's white characters Orwell wrote:

The nineteenth century Anglo-Indians were, at any rate, people who did things. It may be that all they did was evil, but they changed face of the earth (it is instructive to look

at the map of Asia and compare the railway system of India with that of the surrounding countries), whereas they could have achieved nothing, could not have maintained themselves in power for a single week, if the normal Anglo-Indian outlook had been that of, say, E.M. Forster.⁶

Orwell seemed to understand why Kipling's characters behaved the way they did even though he could not bring himself to applaud the thesis of imperialism on which Kipling's arguments rest. In an earlier essay on Kipling published in "New English Weekly" (23 January 1936) he wrote:

What is more distasteful in Kipling than the sentimental plots or vulgar tricks of style, is the imperialism to which he chose to lend his genius. The most one can say is that when he made it, the choice was more forgivable than it would be now. The imperialism of the "eighties" and the "nineties" was sentimental, ignorant and dangerous, but it was not entirely despicable. The picture then called up by the word "empire" was a picture of overworked officials and frontier skirmishes, not of Lord Beaverbrook and Australian butter. It was still possible to be an imperialist, and a gentleman, and of Kipling's personal decency, there can be no doubt.⁷

Orwell's fascination with Kipling's activist creed is apparent in his exaggerated description of Verall in Burmese Days:

...He was a youth of about twenty-five, lank but very straight, and manifestly a cavalry officer. He sat on his horse as though he were a part of it and he looked offensively young and fit. His fresh face was tanned to exact shade that went with his light coloured eyes, and he was as elegant as a picture with his white buckskin tops and his polo boots that gleamed like an old meerchaum pipe. Flory felt uncomfortable in his presence from the start.⁸

Verall's entry into the Anglo-Indian world within Kyauktada puts Flory at a clear disadvantage and the sight of the young man hitting it off so well with Elizabeth brings in him "a feeling of staleness and deadly ennui".¹⁹ Clearly, Flory is no activist. He is a blundering man who readily slips into the life of a lonely and helpless person. The problem is that he cannot surmount the difficulty of reconciling his sensitivity and love of Burma with his need for power. He is desperate to win the affection of Elizabeth because he has already identified her with the power of older colonial England. Till the end, he fails to realize

that Elizabeth cannot accept him unless he transforms himself. Ultimately, there is no compromising with power and this is what spoils his chances with her.

There seems to be some similarity between the world-view of Kipling and - that of Orwell. Both of them view it as a hostile place. Kipling begins his novels and stories with a promise of power and autonomy for his heroes. The promise, however, is never quite fulfilled because, to him, the social motivations of the characters seemed more important than individual ambition. Consequently, his heroes - whether it is the soldier, the free-booter, the secret agent or the district officer - are neither individuals nor are they free. They are fictional ideals. Kipling only succeeds in attributing some measure of autonomy to his child heroes - Kim and Brushwood Boy. These endearing child figures are able to identify themselves readily with the feelings, the aspirations and the psyche of the colonised race. The fun-loving Kim finds the Grand Trunk Road packed with excitement. There is nothing to impede his free movement along it or check his association with all categories of people:

All castes and kinds of men are here. Look! Brahmans and Chamars, bankers and tinkers, barbars and bunnias, pilgrims and porters - all the world is coming and going.¹⁰

The road reveals to him the "wonderful spectacle" of "a stately corridor, all India spread to the left and right..."¹¹ -- "such as no where exists in the world"¹². The road stands for Progress; it represents the benevolent side of the Raj. In many of his stories and poems Kipling uses such symbols and myths with a realist design. Several well known stories such as "The Bridge Builders", "Namgay Doola", "The Days Work" and "The Head of the District" hold up the picture of good governance and the progress made under the Raj. Kipling highlights the tremendous work done by the British. He needed - as Sandison points out - this kind of faith in society and custom to keep solipsism at bay. Hence the emphasis on the 'doer'. This sort of representation found favour with the reading public of those days and so Kipling was immensely popular in his time.

Kipling's creative years coincided with the period designated as the "high noon" of British imperialism. It was the Boer War which produced an outburst of jingoistic sentiments first popularised through the catchy refrain of a song - "We don't want to fight, but by Jingo, if, we do, we've got the men, we've got the ships, we've got the money too !" These nationalistic sentiments were reflected and enshrined in Kipling's literary work. His activism

was also buttressed by the active foreign policy of Disraeli, which on its part, reflected the changing international situation consequent upon the unification of Prussia and Germany. By the year 1890, the initial surge of "jingoism" had metamorphosed into nationalist imperialism to further escalate into a tremendous burst of xenophobic feeling. Against such background, the literature of the times abandoned its materialistic bias and searched for loftier goals; conscientiousness, forbearance and the will to glorify Pax Britannica were the virtues celebrated in the writings of the time. The psychological basis for the literary design was the desire to gloss over the hardships faced by the men stationed at the distant outposts of the empire. The writers found it necessary to disguise their vulnerability. The popular colonial writings of the period were usually the ones that reflected the social needs and also satisfied the reader's yearning for adventure stories set in exotic locales. Kipling urged the White Man to take up his 'Burden' and thereby he created a myth. He idealised the colonial situation and invested the imperialist mission with a unique mystique. Following the dictates of his public conscience he also went on to stir the spirit of aggression in the minds of the members of his race. The feeling that the whites were superior to the coloured races was deeply ingrained in his consciousness. The typical imperialist view of the

times was - as Huxley mentions in "Jesting Pilate" - "Superiority in India is a question of the epidermis". In Kipling's fiction even men of ordinary calibre are shown as scaling dizzying heights because their white skin alone compensates for every defect. The young man of Barrack room Ballads is born in a London suburb, comes to India in search of a career and finds himself a member of a small ruling elite fawned upon by lackeys - ranging from a coolie to a maharaja. The Anglo-Indian world formed an island within the larger Indian polity. The all-British club became a sacrosanct institution and a symbol of authority.

The Fosterian Connection:

A Passage to India focuses on the anomalous condition that outraged the liberal sentiments of E.M. Forster. He seems to question the role identities and protests against the evils of the colonial society. In the city of Chandrapore the British live like "Little Gods"; they consider themselves to be superior to all Indians "except one or two of the Ranis".¹³ Forster's novel is the outcome of his two visits to India. The first coincided with the stirrings of the Non-Cooperation Movement (1912-1913) and the second (1921-22) came in the wake of the mass protests in the aftermath of the Rowlatt Act - with the Jallianwalla tragedy still

quite fresh in public memory. It is through Fielding that Forster attempts to bring the two Indians together - the microscopic British population and the Indians, the Club and the Populace. Forster does not idealise either the characters or the situation. So, in spite of being located in the ambience of the Anglo-Indian world, A Passage to India is not a novel of the empire. It neither defends the British rule nor glorifies the servants of the Crown. Even on the vexed question of race-relations, Forster adopts an ironic stance. He seems only too conscious of the fact that the system was oppressive and thwarted individual relationships. The discussion at Hamidullah's house veers on this --" they were discussing as to whether or no it is possible to be friends with an Englishman". Aziz has fears that Fielding too may change -

Yes, they have no chance here, that is my point. They come out intending to be gentlemen, and are told that it will not do. Look at Lesley, look at Blakiston, now it is your red-nosed boy, and Fielding will go next.....
 I give any Englishman two years, be he a Turton or Burton, it is only a difference of a letter. And I give any Englishwoman six months. All are exactly alike.....¹⁴

Mrs. Moore echoes Aziz's sentiments. In India, Ronny is not the son she had known. She disliked seeing him posing as a God with the air of a self-satisfied man. "You never used to judge people like this at home"- says Mrs. Moore ticking off her son for his derogatory statements against the educated Indians. Ronny's rejoinder to it is: "India isn't home..."¹⁵ When they take up the discussion once again after the bridge-party, Ronny is even more direct: "We are not out here for the purpose of behaving pleasantly!" He says, "...We're out here to do justice and keep the peace. That's my sentiments. India isn't a drawing room."¹⁶ His words shock Mrs. Moore. Power had suppressed his sensitivity, his humanity. Instead of the complacent words she looked for -

One touch of regret - not the canny substitute but the true regret from the heart would have made him a different man and the British Empire a different institution.¹⁷

That Aziz's apprehension concerning Fielding is not a mere exaggeration is shown when Fielding reappears in the closing pages of the novel. Despite the fact that their misunderstanding has been removed, Fielding acknowledges, almost too readily, the fact that "socially they had no meeting place", because:

He had thrown in his lot with Anglo-India by marrying a countrywoman, and he was acquiring some of its limitations and already felt surprised at his own past heroism.¹⁸

Fielding's transformation is complete when he begins to use the odd clichés of imperial substance with the practised ease of a master:

Away from us, Indians go to seed at once...¹⁹

So conscious is he of his own social rootedness, that he dismisses all possibilities of being friendly with Aziz. It is no longer convenient for him to "defy" all his own people for "the sake of a stray Indian". Aziz understands the rift, feels betrayed, but cannot do anything to remedy the situation. It is too late for both of them to start afresh the process of getting to know and understand each other. Aziz now realises for sure that there can be no friendship between the Indians and the English:

We wanted to know you ten years back - now it is too late. If we see you and sit on your committees, it's for political reasons, don't you make any mistake... Until England is in difficulties we keep silent, but in the next European war - aha, aha! then is out time.²⁰

In this passage, Forster highlights the hollowness of imperial claims. A Passage to India recreates the unease of the Anglo-Indians trapped within the imperial edifice. It mirrors the waste, the aridness of feeling, even if, in the ultimate analysis, it does not remain a mere critique of the Raj. It goes on to develop other meanings by moving beyond the realities of the immediate context. Forster reveals the insignificance of human endeavour. The focus here is not on the mythical British hero in search of an eastern glory. Ultimately, the novel addresses itself to broader issues and seeks answers to teleological questions. It side-steps history because time marches ahead and today's heroes become figures of the past. This is why Forster said that his job, and the job of all those who felt with him, was an "interim one". A Passage to India tries to discredit the myth of imperial order. The novel is neither bound by time, nor by history. Forster evinces awesome creativity and great artistic subtlety in subverting so completely the imperial discourse. He later admitted that at the time of writing he had often felt like spitting and screaming like a maniac. Yet, so certain was he about the authenticity of his experience and vision that he categorically refuted the charge of inaccuracy brought against him by one H.H. Shipley of the ICS. In his rejoinder he wrote:

... Yet I believe that I have seen certain important truths that have been hidden from

you despite your eighteen years of service on the spot and despite your highly specialised training ...²¹

It is Forster's ironic treatment of the imperial myth that makes his novel so striking.

Orwell's Satirical Intent:

Orwell's Burmese Days may be called a socialist counterpart of A Passage to India. Read along with Kipling's literary ordering of the raj experience and Forster's ironic examination of the same in A Passage to India, it offers an interesting variation of the imperial stance. Burmese Days is an intensely realized individual satire of the imperial set-up that Orwell came to observe very closely in the years 1922 to 1927 when he served as a police officer in Burma. Orwell's canvas is smaller than Forster's, and his tone is more bitter. Critics have dwelt on the superficial similarities between the two novels. Even a cursory glance reveals Forsterian sentiments at work in Orwell. Fielding's liberal sentiments find an echo in Flory's; Adela's matrimonial ambitions are reworked in Elizabeth's desperate search for a suitable husband; and, of course, there is the ubiquitous Club, in both the novels, that sanctions a particular type of boorishness. In Burmese Days matters come to a head

over a proposal to include a native into the Kyauktada Club. This incident is central to the theme and action of the novel and determines the attitudes of the natives and the Anglo-Indians. As Orwell puts it:

In any town in India, the European Club is the spiritual citadel, the real seat of the British power, the Nirvana for which native officials and millionaires pine in vain...²²

Orwell brings out the centrality of the Club in the scheme of his novel and, thereby, demonstrates his ability to put the most glaring example of imperial hegemony in its place. The Club stands for:

....the paradoxical strangeness, the almost surreal inversions, which underlie the apparent simplicity of British Imperialism in Kyauktada. A tiny minority of outsiders, having established absolute dominance are resisting the intrusion of any representative of the great subjugated majority of natives. The outsiders have become the insiders, and the natives are now the outsiders, the 'foreigners'. Additionally the Club itself, because it is almost alone in rejecting Orientals, exists outside the norms. To compound this, there is an outsider within, the timber - merchant Flory.²³

The pukka sahib code determines the conduct of the Club. Even the members who have more liberal views than Ellis, the experienced Mr. Macgregor for instance, cannot reconcile themselves to the prospect of rubbing shoulders with a non-white member. Ellis, will not take the new regulation (which requires the Club to elect a native member) lying down, because he cannot stand the natives:

No, I do not... Nor my Mongolian brother...
I don't like niggers, to put it in one word.²⁴

Mr. Macgregor's opinion is just a shade different. He

... had no prejudice against the Orientals; indeed he was deeply fond of them. Provided they were given no freedom he thought them the most charming people alive.²⁵

The members participate in a discussion on the subject of including a native as a member and in course of it they betray their extreme prejudices. Mrs. Lackersteen says that the Burmese ought to be taught a lesson for their ingratitude and her rhetoric is almost an ironic inversion of Aziz's proclamations in A Passage :

We shall just go. When the natives come to us begging us to stay, we shall say, "No

you have had your chance, you wouldn't take it. Very well, we shall leave you to govern yourself. And then what a lesson that will teach them!²⁶

Such passages in Burmese Days recall Kipling's pronouncements against Pagett M.P.s. It was Kipling who laid down the parameters of the ideology of the raj. Burmese Days puts Kipling's ideas in perspective and arranges to make them serve as a counterweight to the intimations of change in Forster's A Passage to India.

As a policeman in Burma, Orwell had to mediate between two diverse claims. He became an arbiter and an internal critic of the raj. Orwell was uncomfortable and self-conscious in his role of a policeman and his emotional involvement somehow constricts his vision in Burmese Days. His impatience with the native way of life is palpable in the novel. Even when he criticises the imperial set-up he betrays the haunting knowledge of his own complicity. Colonialism corrupted all who came under its sway. Corruption was not always visible; it is more vicious when it is insidious. The social message here is very clear even if Orwell refuses to visualise an end of the empire. He underlines the fact that the colonies are at a low stage of development. They need the technical support that only the mother-country can provide. For this reason, perhaps, if not for anything

else, the wheels of the imperial juggernaut must continue to turn.

In Orwell's novel the hero is enmeshed in a situation which precludes his honourable escape and the crisis in Flory's life remains unsolved. Orwell does not provide any remedy for the situation. While Kipling found his panacea in the colonial work-ethic, and Forster proposed at least two cheers for democracy, Orwell leaves his world topsy-turvy and by a clever trick of finishing off his hero and his radicalism, abnegates his responsibility of envisioning a change.

Orwell's hero is without any heroism. He is a man given to a life of dissipation. He is a weak, ageing fornicator, damned by his birthmark, who is left with no option other than suicide when he is publicly shamed by his concubine. His birthmark is a sign of his moral torpor. It has a way of making his lapse into a self-conscious silence. It implicates him in everything that is foul in Kyauktada.

The first thing that one notices in Flory was a hideous birthmark stretching in a ragged crescent down his cheek, from the eye to the corner of the mouth... He was quite aware of its hideousness.²⁷

All his life, Flory had to contend with this hideous mark - that was nature's stricture against him:

It had begun in his mother's womb when chance put the birthmark on his cheek.²⁸

In the end, it is the mark - the most likely cause of all his subterfuges - that degrades him before Elizabeth and she exclaims:

Oh, the beast, the beast! ... Oh, what an unspeakable beast he was ! When she thought of his face as it looked in the church, yellow and glistening with the hideous birthmark upon it, she could have wished him dead. It was not what he had done that horrified her. He might have committed a thousand abominations and she could have forgiven him. But not after that shameful, squalid scene, and the devilish ugliness of his discoloured face in that moment. It was, finally, the birthmark that had damned him.²⁹

In school Flory was called "Monkey-bum"; the mark makes Ellis wonder whether Flory's quite pucca -

I shouldn't wonder if he has got a lick of the tar-brush himself. It might explain the black mark on his face.³⁰

Flory's opinions somehow relate to this discolouration and ultimately this very mark singles him out as a dubious candidate for honour. His pariah condition in the Anglo-Indian society is also underlined by the mark. It makes him indulge in a game of self-deception. He uses Ma Hla May in the most objectionable way and, finally, it is his callous philandering which gives him away. All his life, Flory walked sidelong to hide the vicious scar. It is not just his posture which is evasive, he is also a moral coward. Whenever he wanted to speak out against any sign of oppression, his voice went guilty and silent, all because of the birth-mark which denuded him of whatever authority he had. His faith in himself and in others is less than adequate. Flory sees in Elizabeth a partner and an accomplice - the one person who can, if she wants, return him to his roots - the mainstream of the English way of life.

Throughout the novel, Orwell relentlessly bares the corrupting effect of power. He also shows how a long stay in an alien world has a way of changing a man physically and morally, - a fact that Conrad explored with much subtlety in his writings. The "East has already corrupted"³¹ Flory. If he endures it, it is only because he has palliatives such as "books, his garden, drink, work,

whoring, shooting and conversations with the doctor".³² When he loses Elizabeth, he becomes, desperate. He had wanted to live a "civilized" life with her, he had looked for the possibility of becoming a decent person. After she finally rejects him, Flory has nothing to fall back upon:

Like a hallucination, painfully clear, he saw again their home as he imagined it; he saw their garden, and Elizabeth feeding Nero and the pigeons on the drive by the sulphur-yellow phloxes that grew as high as her shoulder, and the drawing-room with the water-colours on the walls, and the balsams in the china bowl mirrored by the table, and the bookshelves and the black piano. The impossible, mythical piano - symbol of everything that the futile accident had wrecked !³³

Had things been different, if only Elizabeth had agreed to marry him, all his problems would have been solved. In such a situation, he would have lived "with the stream of life, not against it".³⁴ He would not have had the urge to become just another version of Mrs. Wititterly or "A Hamlet without poetry".³⁵ Flory just abases himself in the most abject manner and reveals his total inability to sustain his protest. In the end, one wonders whether it is really a protest at all. There does not seem to be much of a

difference between Ellis and him. His death also fails to create a tragic effect because he does not die for the sake of a principle.

The pessimism of Burmese Days is due perhaps to Orwell's failure to find an alternative to humanism or make his faith in its supremacy serve as an arraignment of imperialism. Flory is forced to act out his role in felix culpa and denied the chance of finding salvation through penitence. Orwell seems to be trying hard to resolve the crisis that he himself had undergone in Burma - the conflict in a soul which recognised that non-egalitarian systems are evil and simultaneously felt uneasy about accommodating the alternative thrown up by a pro-native viewpoint. In "Shooting an Elephant" Orwell stated his dilemma:

I am stuck between my hatred of the empire
I served and my own rage against the evil-
spirited little beasts who tried to make
my job impossible ...³⁶

Attitudes such as these are set down candidly both in his documentary works such as The Road to Wigan Pier and "Shooting an Elephant" and in his novels such as Burmese Days and Nineteen Eighty-Four. The rhetorical convergence of Orwellian

"facts" and "fiction" often makes it difficult for the serious reader to determine his position vis-a-vis social and historical truths. In Burmese Days Orwell presents us with a formidable paradox : he may have begun with a desire to criticise the jingoistic sentiments of Kipling and others, but somewhere along the line he began to feel that there was a good deal to be said in favour of imperialism. His official position in Burma brought him into constant contact with the natives and left him seething with anger and exasperation:

Living among the Orientals would try the temper of a saint...³⁷

Orwell's literary position does not seem different from that of Leonard Woolf's (his contemporary). Like Woolf, Orwell was an internal critic of the Raj, though of occasions he could adopt an ambivalent stance, explanation for which can be found in history. Orwell had found imperialism existing side by the side with other forms of totalitarianism such as Bolshevism and Fascism. Viewed against such extreme forms of government, the empire may have seemed to him as the lesser evil exhibiting both benevolent and malevolent features and hence his surmise that "... it is a good deal better than the newer empires which are going to supplant it."³⁸

Leonard Woolf advocated the use of force (in Pearls and Swine) against the Oriental races so as to keep them in check. This was a way of teaching them a lesson. It would tell them who was the "top dog". In "Shooting an Elephant" and Burmese Days Orwell explores similarly rigid views. Most of the Anglo-Indian members of the Club feel that there was a good deal to be said in favour of Dyer. Ellis is full of praise for him:

Look at Amritsar ! Look how they caved in after that. Dyer knew the stuff to give them...³⁹

Mr. Macgregor, the most reasonable of the members of the Kyauktada Club also feels that Dyer had been wronged -

Ah, poor man ! Sacrificed to Paget M.P.s. Well, perhaps they will discover their mistake when it is too late..⁴⁰

Orwell does not repudiate the Kiplingesque position that the colonies needed British presence though the White Man was never to meet his eastern brother on equal terms (a fact that even Forster made no attempt to deny). When Dr. Veeraswami tells Flory the real reason why he seeks admission into the club even in the face of U Po Kyin's

covert machinations to thwart him, Flory feels -

...ashamed and uncomfortable when it had to be admitted between them that the doctor, because of his black skin, could not be received in the club. It is a disagreeable thing when one's close friend is not one's social equal; but it is a thing native to the very air of India.⁴¹

The club members make it a point not to speak to the two Eurasians. Only Flory has the courage to break the rule on occasion - "Just sometimes" when he has "the pluck not to be a pukka sahib".⁴² The "pluck" deserts him when it comes to signing the notice circulated by Ellis against Veeraswami. He can do nothing in the face of the group pressure. He tells the doctor:

...You don't realise what kind of pressure is put on one to make one do things like that. There was nothing to make me sign the notice. Nothing could have happened if I'd refused. There is no law telling us to be beastly to the Orientals - quite the contrary. But - it's just that one daren't be loyal to an Oriental when it means going against the others. It doesn't do...⁴³

Orwell was a keen observer of social manners. His political views grew out of his social commitments. The Road to Wigan Pier is loaded with sociological observations. There, he analyses the psychology of the English wastrels who came to India in search of social mobility. Here, they could fulfil their one ambition of being gentlemen. Moving up from their anomalous position in the "lower-upper middle class", they exhibited in India a different persona - full of "sniggering superiority punctuated with bursts of vicious hatred",⁴⁴ directed at the natives. In Burmese Days, Elizabeth tries to bury her humble antecedents and rise above her station. A potential 'memsahib', she has been conditioned by her previous experiences, to divide life into two categories, one which she considers as being lovely - "the expensive, the elegant and the aristocratic", and another beastly - "the low, the cheap, the shabby, the laborious".⁴⁵ She found the natives belonging to the latter category and Flory's attempts to "interest her in Oriental things struck her only as perverse, ungentlemanly, a deliberate seeking of the squalid and the 'beastly'".⁴⁶ Orwell goes on to conclude, in The Road to Wigan Pier, that the inferior status of the English characters in search either of a career or a match in the East, may have generated in them a compensatory wish to become the "tin Gods" of the East. The 'pukka sahib' code and the myth of the White Man's Burden were rooted in this complex.

Two classic accounts of imperialism were written at the turn of the century - those halcyon years of imperial expansion. One was written by Hobson in 1902 called Imperialism - the Highest Stage of Capitalism. Hobson distinguished colonialism from imperialism because the latter rests on the principles of exploitation and aggrandisement. According to him:

Colonialism, in its best sense, is a natural overflow of nationality, its test is the power of the colonists to transplant the civilization they represent to the new natural and social environment in which they find themselves.⁴⁷

The fictional representations of the colonial world by Kipling, Forster, and Orwell hint at the perversions and subterfuges involved, as if to suggest that the process of the transplantation of culture was neither invariable nor easy. Selfish motives often marred the altruistic principles. The clash of cultures inevitably spawned false ideas of racial superiority. Almost all the members of the all-white Kyauktada Club exhibit such self-deluding ideas. Mrs. Lackersteen reveals her myopic views at the time of making a working analysis of the restlessness of the natives. She likens their attitude to that of the working classes in

Britain. As she puts it:

We seem to have no authority over the natives nowadays, with all these dreadful reforms and the insolence they learn from the newspapers, In some ways they are getting almost as bad as the lower classes at home.⁴⁸

In course of his five-year service in Burma, Orwell saw imperialism at its worst. He saw hangings, floggings and filthy prisons and was forced to assert a superiority over the Burmese which he never felt. His deepest revulsions are expressed rather poignantly in Burmese Days and in a few of his short-sketches such as "A Hanging" (an early essay), "Shooting an Elephant" and also in The Road to Wigan Pier. Even if he could not identify himself with the natives in the fullest sense, Orwell found in his writings an opportunity to expiate his guilt by revealing his sympathy for the lower classes at home. This is how he describes his conversion:

I was not going to be a part of that evil despotism. But I wanted much more than merely escape from my job. For five years I had been a part of an oppressive system and it had left me with a bad conscience. Innumerable remembered faces - faces of prisoners in

the dock, of men waiting in the condemned cells, of subordinates I had bullied and aged peasants I had snubbed, of servants and coolies I had hit with my fist in moments of rage (nearly everyone does these things in the East, at any rate occasionally : orientals can be very provoking) haunted me intolerably. I was conscious of an immense weight of guilt that I had to expiate ... I felt I had to escape not merely from imperialism, but from every form of man's dominion over man. I wanted to submerge myself - to get down among the oppressed, to be one of them and on their side against tyrants ⁴⁹

Burmese Days, first published in 1934, records Orwell's dissatisfaction with the Indian Civil Service and he reserves his fullest contempt for his hero - the only 'decent' character in the novel in whom he discovers shades of himself. His characterisation is neither objective, nor detached. One is left with the feeling that Orwell did not quite know what to do with his hero and his radicalism. The masochistic suggestion that comes across was perhaps intentional.

The raj had spawned an officialdom made up of a few British officers and their native subordinates.

The relationship between the two was never one based on trust and good-will. Mutual antipathies vitiated the work-atmosphere. Being fully conversant with the working of the system, Orwell realized that there was something, a feeling perhaps, that prevented the white man engaged in the service of the raj from associating too freely with the natives. Maybe the white officials feared that free mixing would curb their style and rob their role of its imagined mystique. Orwell's novel gives a working analysis of the island of Anglo-India within India. Readers are introduced to a handful of sahibs who are attempting to govern a land that they do not understand:

....It is a moving picture of frustration and humiliation - the humiliation associated with social snubs, being rather more present and pressing than the frustration, which derived from the difficult (to Orwell even impossible) official relationship between the English and the Burmese...⁵⁰

The influence of Forster's A Passage to India (published in 1924, when Orwell was still in Burma) is clearly observable in Orwell's ironic treatment of the theme of imperialism. Jeffrey Myers has analysed the similarities between the two novels:

Both novels concern an Englishman's friendship with an Indian doctor, and a girl who goes out to the colonies, becomes engaged and then breaks it off. Both use club scenes to reveal a cross-section of colonial society, and both measure personality and values of the characters, by their racial attitudes. The themes of the lack of understanding between the English and the natives and the physical deterioration and spiritual corruption of the white men in the tropics are sounded by Forster and echo through Orwell's novel....⁵¹

Myers goes on to argue that of the two novels, Orwell's is more pessimistic because here, the official "failures" are not redeemed by successful personal relations. Again, Burmese Days does not have a character like Fielding or Mrs. Moore, capable of overcoming the piquant realities of the time and the situation, and, against all odds, striving to maintain "a civilized standard of behaviour".

Orwell's novel shows how Flory's relations with Dr. Veeraswami are marred by circumstances. Fielding has a similar experience in A Passage to India. With Kim, of course the situation is entirely different: his relationship with the Lama does suffer for lack of approbation. Siding with the Lama is never regarded as tantamount to rejecting his own people, because the old mystic has no

social affiliations. But Flory and Fielding realize, much to their chagrin, that their friendship with a native strikes their compatriots as rather odd. Of the two, it is Flory who cuts a more miserable figure because his protest is only a half-hearted cry in the wilderness. The system also does not reclaim him at the end. He is left to die a pathetic death. If he was a sorry figure earlier, bothered by the guilt of living a lie, his death underlines his unheroic nature. In this point Orwell may have gone just a little too far. In his comments on "Shooting an Elephant", Forster called Orwell "a bit of a nagger". He also suggested that Orwell "spent his life in foreseeing transformations and stamping upon embryos".⁵² This tendency accounts for the tragic dimension of his work. Orwell habitually creates unease in his readers' mind. He has no mystic vision to offer, that might encourage even a "slovenly" trust in the future. In this respect, he resembles H.G. Wells. Though Flory is, perhaps, the first of the Orwellian heroes to undergo infinite degradation, he is certainly not the last. In him we find traces of Winston Smith, the political hero of Nineteen-Eighty Four. In Hopkinson's opinion:

They (Orwell's novels) are all tales of solitary character, each in his way or another an expression of Orwell himself, seen against

backgrounds which are sections of his own experience. These solitary characters seek to make contact with one another but are usually rebuffed, slighted or betrayed.⁵³

Flory's position is that of a pariah - a few notches higher than that occupied by the two "derelict" Eurasians, Samuel and Francis. All the club members view him with suspicion and disapproval because Flory's bolshie ideas seem to militate against their choice of a role and an identity. Flory refuses to "hang together" with the rest of them. He associates freely with the natives - visits their homes, goes to their dances and admires some of their customs; he finds the Burmese good-looking in a way and has a sneaking sympathy for the Eurasians and in the past even had a liaison with one such girl - Rosa Mc Fee. As Elizabeth puts it, when Flory spoke about the natives "he spoke nearly always in favour of them... His attitude was a little too tolerant".⁵⁴

Orwell found no salvation in the world of politics. He preferred - in Forster's words - "the less bad to the more bad". Burmese Days does not decry imperialism to the extent of actually visualising its end. At the time of writing it, Orwell had not distanced himself sufficiently

from his experience under a totalitarian regime in Burma to be able to view it objectively or even consider the possibility of its replacement by an alternative order. Alok Rai's comment is:

It seems clear to me that Flory's suicide - his 'voluntary' abdication from the scene - allows Orwell an easier, cleaner conclusion to his 'anti-imperialist' novel than would otherwise have been possible. If Flory had not died, the novelist would have been compelled to alter the fictional - colonial reality to accommodate him.⁵⁵

Though he appears indifferent to the fate of imperialism he does not offer any radical blueprint of change. Burmese Days ends with the maintenance of a sort of status quo as Elizabeth begins to display her natural tendencies in her new role as the wife of the Deputy commissioner -

.. Elizabeth has grown mature surprisingly quickly, and a certain hardness of manner that always belonged to her has become accentuated. Her servants live in terror of her, though she speaks no Burmese. She has an exhaustive knowledge of the Civil List, giving

charming little dinner parties and knows how to put the wives of the subordinate officials in their places - in short, she fills with complete success the position for which Nature had designed her from the first, that of a burra memsahib.⁵⁶

In all this Orwell, seemingly, does not go very much beyond the predictabilities of mainstream colonial fiction.

However, in Burmese Days, Orwell adopts an ironic stance that separates his novel from the typical colonial fictions of the period. He exposes the flaws of the imperial rule and underlines its absurdity. The system had caused him much suffering. Bernard Crick, his biographer, is also of the view that Orwell's own bitter experience as a police officer serving in one of the smaller towns of Burma - such a Myaungmya and Twante - was sufficient to alter his initial admiration for Kipling into something approaching dislike:

I worshipped Kipling at thirteen, loathed him at seventeen, enjoyed him at twenty-five and now again rather admire him....⁵⁷

Orwell's colleagues felt that he was an "unclubbable man". Bernard Crick quotes one Beadon as saying "...he wasn't

what I would call socialite in anyway"; he did not like going to the club and usually stayed up in his room reading. Orwell enjoyed reading Kipling's writings while he was in Burma. He was lonely there; the place seemed strange to him and he got difficult postings. The epigraph in Burmese Days ("...this desert inaccessible/Under the shade of melancholy boughs") places the novel within the perspective of Orwell's personal experience. Kipling's stories, poems and sketches must have provided Orwell with some lively entertainment. But, by the time Orwell left Burma at the end of his five-year stay, he had developed a definite feeling of disgust with the state of affairs there. In that state of mind, he may not have been able to appreciate Kipling's unflinching faith in the empire and in the wisdom and sagacity of its agents. Orwell began to feel that Kipling had not really understood the mechanics of imperial domination and the motive guiding it all. The Bard of the Empire had avoided examining the colonial system too closely as it would have been uncomfortable to face the whole truth. Kipling never felt the need to justify imperialism because to him, it was a foregone conclusion that the empire existed for the good of all. As a result he missed out all the signs of economic manipulation, social exploitation and political oppression. All these were not lost on Orwell, who, in the role of a policeman, saw the dark side of the colonial

rule. In Burmese Days, written when the experiences which had originally compelled him to give up his career in the colonial police were still fresh in his mind, Orwell does not allow unnecessary cant to mute the tone of his denunciation. His moral position at the time of writing the novel is clearly enunciated in The Road to Wigan Pier where he writes:

The wretched prisoners squatting in the reeking cages of lock-ups, the grey cowed faces of the long-term convicts, the scarred buttocks of the men who had been flogged with bamboos and women and children howling when their menfolk were led away under arrest - things that are beyond bearing when you are in any way directly responsible for them.....⁵⁸

Orwell was by temperament a socialist and a liberal and this was the reason why he identified himself with the lot of the prisoners:

I never went into a jail without feeling..... that my place was on the other side of the bars.⁵⁹

The inequities engendered by imperialism were clearly visible to Orwell. He felt as disconcerted with the British contempt for the Burmese as with the Burmese hatred of all white men.

If the ruling race appeared to him as snobbish, arrogant, bigoted, cruel and rapacious, the Burmese (like U Po Kyin) also seemed to be wanting in integrity and decency. Orwell was far too honest and truthful to idealise the underdog. He found that the Burmese were not really paragons of virtue. Even if they did not have the courage to rise in revolt, they were not above spitting betel juice on the dress of a lone European woman frequenting the bazaar. Bernard Crick understands that it is for this reason that Orwell refrained from championing the cause of the Burmese and instead went on to equivocate like Mark Twain and say "God damn... (The Burmese) they are as bad as rest of us". Orwell also seems to be aware that disgusting social habits infected the behaviour of everyone existing under a totalitarian system. Even if there was no uprising by the Burmese, Orwell was aware of the fact that he was hated by "large numbers of people" and "in an aimless petty kind of a way the anti-European feeling was very bitter". The story in "Shooting an Elephant" is about the circumstances in which, against his better judgement, he shot and killed an elephant which had killed a man, but had at the time of shooting become quite subdued. He shot the elephant because the crowd expected him to perform such a manly task and he wanted to avoid looking a fool. The situation brings into focus the evasions and subterfuges resorted to under imperialism:

Seemingly a leading actor of the piece, I was only an absurd puppet pushed to and fro by the will of those yellow faces before me. I perceived in this moment that when the white man turns tyrant it is his own freedom that he destroys.⁶⁰

The author was afraid of being laughed at. It was a desperate attempt at saving his face because he could not risk exposing the sham behind his White Man persona. Orwell's feelings are echoed by Flory who suffers from a similar dilemma when he comes to know that there is a difference between a white man in England and one in Burma. "Everyone is free" in England -

(But Burma) is a stifling, stultifying world in which every thought is censored... even friendship can hardly exist when every man is a cog in the wheels of despotism. Free speech is unthinkable. All other kinds of freedom are permitted. You are free to be a drunkard, an idler, a coward, a backbiter and a fornicator; but you are not free to think for yourself. Your opinion on every subject of any conceivable importance is dictated for you by the pukka sahib's code... You are a creature of despotism, tied tighter than a monk or a savage by an unbreakable system of tabus(sic).⁶¹

Orwell opposed the system which encouraged the exercise of brute power because he believed in a code of conduct essentially democratic and egalitarian. Imperialism, he felt, sanctioned unseemly acts and boorish behaviour. Burmese Days is about the nasty side of the imperial domination. It reveals a situation which breeds bad manners. Orwell does not say anything in favour of the whites in Burma that might explain their bad manners. Force and brutality only serve to exacerbate racial tensions. Orwell believed that the English of the East - "the sahiblog are not to be idealized".⁶² The general notion, that the man-on-the-spot is able and hardworking, is patently false. They were really not needed, as any British official would privately admit to one he trusted not to quote him. Orwell mentions such an exchange in The Road to Wigan Pier:

The Anglo-Indian is haunted by a sense of guilt which he conceals as best as he can, because there is no freedom of speech and merely overheard making a seditious remark may damage his career. All over India there are Englishmen who secretly loathe the system of which they are part; and just occasionally, when they are quite certain of being in the right company, their hidden bitterness overflows.⁶³

He goes on to recall how he had opened up before a "safe" stranger in the Educational service whose name he did not know and how "while the train jolted slowly through the pitch-black night", and after having reinforced themselves with glasses of beer both of them "damned" it from inside, intelligently and intimately. It was a short-lived mood however because the morning saw them parting "as guiltily as any adulterous couple".

Like Elizabeth, all new-comers to the East had fantastic dreams about the place. Orwell's heroine begins to have delusions as soon as she boards the ship:

It was so lovely after these two graceless years to breathe the air of wealth again. Not that most of the people here were rich; but on board the ship everyone behaves as though he were rich. She was going to love India she knew. She had formed quite a picture of India, from the other passengers' conversation; she had even learned some of the more necessary Hindustani phrases such 'idher ao', 'jaldi', 'sahiblog' etc. In anticipation she tasted the agreeable atmosphere of the clubs with punkahs flapping and barefooted white turbaned boys reverently salaaming; the maidans where bronzed Englishmen with little clipped moustaches galloped to and fro, whacking polo balls. It was almost as being really rich, the way people live in India.⁶⁴

Orwell's description of Elizabeth's first taste of the Orient is redolent of the ambience that was so brilliantly evoked by Kipling especially in poems like "Mandalay" -

On the road to Mandalay,
Where the old Flotilla lay:

.....

Where the flyin-fishes play,
An' the dawn comes up
Like thunder outer China
'crost the Bay.

.....

When the mist was on
the ricefields' an the sun
was dropping low

.....

Elephants a-piling teak
In the sludgy pudgy creek,
Where the silence 'ung
That 'eavy you was
'arf afraid to speak

.....

"If you've 'eard the East
a-callin', you won't never
'eed naught-else".

No! you wont 'eed nothin' else
But them spicy garlic smells,
'An the sunshine an' the palm-trees
an' the tinkly temple-bells;
On the road to Mandalay...⁶⁵

Orwell sees the Orient through the eyes of Elizabeth:

This was the Orient. Scents of coconut oil and sandalwood, cinnamon and turmeric, floated across the water on the hot swimming air.... North of Mandalay the train.... crawled...across a vast parched plain, bounded at its remote edges by blue rings of hills. White egrets stood poised motionless, like herons, and piles of drying chilis gleamed crimson in the sun sometimes a white pagoda rose from the plain like the breast of a supine giantess...⁶⁶

His own sea-voyage (which first introduced him to the East) also acquainted him with the irredeemable bad manners of the British. He discovered that the pose of superiority cultivated by the whites was a sham. He narrated one of the shocking experiences in The Tribune (1947) : he had seen an European quartermaster - one of the "God-like beings" stealing a half-eaten custard pudding (from the table of a passenger) "partly concealed in his monstrous hands". For Orwell this incident was an eye-opener.

As Orwell saw it, the motive guiding imperial rule was simple aggrandisement. Colonies existed for the material advantage of the mother country and the imperial

ideology was invented solely to gloss over the bizarre facts relating to the exploitative system. It began to be imagined that the natives needed the foreign rule - which Kipling tried to prove for a fact in many of his poems, stories and sketches (as in "Namgay Doola", "The Enlightments of Pagett M.P." etc.). Ellis of Burmese Days also makes it his plank. He categorises the Burmese as -

... a set of damn black swine who have been slaves from the beginning of history... ⁶⁷

Orwell came to realize that empires were mechanisms for exploiting cheap labour. Flory says - "...if we are a civilizing influence, it is only to grab on a larger scale.." and thereby reveals the brutal economic facts about the empire; the knowledge of this made Orwell quite uneasy. It also tormented Orwell till the time he became a socialist.

Burmese Days touches upon Orwell's twin objections to the imperial rule; the first related to his firm belief that the economic milking of a colony cannot and should not be condoned. The second objection was to the bad manners that imperialism fostered. When Flory candidly says "...we are a civilizing influence.. only to grab on a larger scale..." ⁶⁸ he expresses Orwell's own

sentiment. Like the author the protagonist is a socialist and a disbeliever in the White Man's Burden humbug whose bolshevism is as futile as the conservatism of the other white characters. Orwell realized that there were class differences even among the proletariat. So, there were two proletariats actually - the British proletariat and the proletariat of the darker races. He considered it the ultimate in hypocrisy that the British proletariat should ride on the back of the other less fortunate group. He considered this to be the greatest weakness of the British labour movement. Orwell's views on the empire harmonise with his later leftist position and explain his eventual opposition to the British labour movement.

Orwell's objection to imperialism on the ground that it encouraged boorishness and illiberality was also sharpened by another voyage experience. This experience first awakened him to the realities of the British rule in the east; when his ship docked in Colombo, he saw a police serjeant kicking a coolie. It seemed symptomatic of a general malaise; it suggested that the imperial order rested on the foundation of force and brutality. In Burmese Days, Westfield is not the only character who seeks to silence the natives through coercive tactics. As he puts it:

...nothing save a full-sized rebellion and the consequent display of martial law could save the Empire from decay.⁶⁹

Ellis goes one step further and recommends the Jallianwalla treatment:

Dyer knew the stuff to give them. Poor old Dyer...⁷⁰

In the novel, Orwell turned his specific hatred for British imperialism into a more general protest against the suppression of individual freedom by autocratic regimes. He shows how the suppression of freedom of the majority group inevitably leads to inversions and subterfuges. In such a situation the masters propagate the view that they are indispensable because they are superiors. It is crucial to guard the role-identities and this is why Ellis becomes apoplectic with rage when he finds the butler speaking good English:

Don't talk like that, damn you - "I find it very difficult!" Have you swallowed a dictionary ? "Please master, can't keep ice cool" - That's how you ought to talk...⁷¹

More prejudices came to light when the club members consider how the restiveness of the natives has been fuelled by the 'democratic spirit' which also explains the insolence of the servants and their demand for higher wages. Mrs. Lackersteen remembers the old type:

And such a short time ago, even just before the war, they were so nice and respectful.⁷²

To this Mr. Macgregor adds:

The old type of servant is disappearing... In my young days, when one's butler was disrespectful, one sent him to jail with a chit saying "Please give the bearer fifteen lashes."⁷³

Flory's secret self recoils from such display of racial arrogance. He rushes to unburden his soul to Dr. Veeraswami - who is quite powerless (both politically and socially) to make anything out of Flory's seditious remarks. So Veeraswami can be trusted not to betray Flory's secrets. Immediately on his arrival at the doctor's house Flory gushes out in relief:

When I come to your house I feel like a Non-conformist minister dodging up to town and

going home with a tart. Such a glorious holiday from them...from my beloved fellow Empire builders. British prestige, the white-man's burden, the pukka sahib... Such a relief to be out of the stink... ⁷⁴

Flory has little illusion about white solidarity and he tells his Indian crony -

There is a spurious good fellowship between the English in this country. Its a tradition to booze together and swap meals and pretend to be friends though we hate each other like poison. Hanging together we call it. Its a political necessity. Of course drink is what keeps the machine going.... Booze is the spirit of the empire... ⁷⁵

Most of the opinions expressed by the club members seem specious to Flory, who finds Ellis's known position on the question of including a Burmese in the club ("Little pot-bellied niggers breathing garlic.." ⁷⁶) quite untenable. But then it is not just Ellis who is inflexible. After a while, even the moderate Mr. Macgregor commits a volte face and sides with Ellis on the question of social affront.

I may say that I disagree most emphatically. No doubt we all do. We who have to do the

actual work of government see things very different from these - ah - Paget M.P.s who interfere with us from above...⁷⁷

The message is further augmented by Ellis after Maxwell's murder. Not satisfied with Westfield's assurance that "...a couple of chaps shall swing for it. Two corpses against their one...", he makes his disproportionate demand for retribution:

Two! It ought to be fifty. We've got to raise heaven and hell to get these fellows hanged.⁷⁸

In passages like these Orwell satirises the ideals and attitudes that struck him as reprehensible. In the tradition of Swift, he mocks at the prejudices and misconceptions of his day.

The design is most obvious in the third chapter of the novel where, with a pen steeped in satiric gall, Orwell lampoons the whole imperial mission. Making a clever use of facetious arguments Orwell explodes all the slogans and myths of white domination. The diverse opinions are expressed in course of playful debate between Flory and Dr. Veeraswami. By a clever interchange of roles, Orwell

makes the Englishman the accuser - who questions the British rule, while the Indian speaks in defence of the system.

It was a topsy-turvy affair, for the Englishman was bitterly anti-English and the Indian fanatically loyal... ⁷⁹

All the three more developed Indian characters in the novel - Veeraswami, U Po Kyin and Ma Hla May - hold their own brethren in contempt and want to continue their profitable association with the whites. Ma Hla May's absurd denial of Flory's accusation - that she has a Burmese lover - is:

Ugh! To think of the horrible brown hands touching me! I should die if a Burman touched me...

It speaks volumes about the class equations under the colonial rule. As Michael Carter puts it - there is a "divisive hierarchy between the black and the black" ⁸⁰ because the favours of a white man add to the social prestige of a native. There is a similar pretension involved in the conjecture of the two Eurasians - Samuel and Francis - that their "drop of white blood", ⁸¹ exposes them to the dangers of prickly heat and sunstroke.

The pessimism of Burmese Days emanates from the author's own sense of despair because of his realization about the inadequacy of man and the erosion of human values. In the end, Flory's confessional statements sound hollow because they are addressed to Dr. Veeraswami who lacks stature and heroism. There is the same air of impotence in him that we find in Flory. Again, Orwell implicates his hero in unambiguous terms in the "plunder" that goes on in the name of imperialism. Burmese Days shatters the concept of the autonomous man. Flory's devastating attack on imperialism loses its edge when his own actions come under scrutiny. As he puts it, it is all a sham:

... a lie that we are here to uplift our poor black brothers instead of to rob them. I suppose it's a natural enough lie. But it corrupts us, it corrupts us in ways you can't imagine. There's an everlasting sense of being a sneak and a liar that torments us and drives us to justify ourselves night and day. It's at the bottom of half of our beastliness to the natives. We Anglo-Indians could be almost bearable if we'd only admit that we are thieves and go on thieving without humbug.⁸²

Flory is a party to it all. He has no moral authority to point an accusing finger at anybody. His vices are the

collective vices of the modern decadent generation. Flory is not the portrait of an individual because Orwell makes him stand as symbol of the bankruptcy of imperialism. Burmese Days is a subversive work. Flory's cardinal sin is his own philandering. Orwell denies him the chance to repent. He is forced to act out his role in the felix culpa and reprisal and punishment swiftly overtake him. The scene in which Ma Hla May denounces him reveals the Swiftian cynicism of Orwell. When Flory rejects Ma Hla May and seeks the affection of Elizabeth, he betrays his innate authoritarianism and the limitations of his humanism. Flory gives utterance to his secret feelings only on the sly; like Belial in Paradise Lost, he lacks the ^ucourage to try and change things. He says:

... I haven't the guts. I "counsel ignoble ease", like old Belial in Paradise Lost. It's safer. You've got to be a pukka sahib or die, in this country. In fifteen years I've never talked honestly to anyone except you. My talks here are a safety-valve; a little Black Mass on the sly, if you understand me...⁸³

The pessimism of the novel is primarily due to Orwell's loss of faith in imperialism and humanism. Flory, the heretic, has no cause to die for. Yet, he commits suicide and, in

passing away, seems to suggest the defeat of humanism. As he had said - one has to be a 'pukka sahib' or die. Flory dies because of his failure to be a 'pukka sahib'. British India was an enormous prison where "every word and every thought is censored" and every man is a "mere cog in the wheels of despotism." Flory has no existence outside the limits of what his society has sanctioned for him and in the end his "sahibism" and the "unbreakable system of tabus" (sic) ⁸⁴ break him. It enacts the familiar drama of the capitulation of humanism before the forces of authoritarianism. His death marks a return to the old orthodox pattern. Flory knows his corruption without having the additional comfort of knowing the way to his redemption. Burmese Days throws up the dismal picture of human wretchedness and draws attention to the inglorious fall of a man whose selfishness cuts across all his daredevilry and cant.

In the end, one is not quite certain whether Orwell viewed with greater contempt the myths of imperial rule or the ethics of its subversion by a few worthless and unintelligent men. Orwell's imperialist fiction shows his atavistic affinity with Kipling. He was torn between his loyalty to the empire (the cause that Kipling upheld in his writings) and his own knowledge that everything was not quite right with the system. Orwell's problem was that

he saw both the sides - on the one hand, he keenly felt the difficulties faced by the man-on-the-spot and, on the other, he sensed the hollowness of the giant ambition that sanctioned the imperial arrangement. In his review of Burmese Days Malcolm Muggeridge recalls how Orwell would "laugh that curious rusty laugh of his and change the topic"⁸⁵ whenever he was told that he had a lot in common with Kipling. Orwell had the chance to examine the working of the imperial administration from close quarters and he began to feel that while everything was not quite right with it, it was, at any rate better than the newer imperialisms (such as the Japanese model) that were threatening to supplant it. In Burmese Days, Orwell has it both ways : he raids the fertile ground of Kiplingana and searches out the icons of faith and belief and then proceeds to shatter them, one by one; at the same time, he examines his own feelings and finds them to be rather confused. There is, in the novel, a deep consciousness of the strain of governing a colony; running concurrent with it, is an awareness of the tremendous waste involved. The situation at some stage becomes reminiscent of the one invoked in "Shooting an Elephant" where the master is shown in the roles of both the tyrant and the victim.

Kipling's fault, Orwell felt, was rooted in his education and upbringing. In a penetrating review

(of T.S. Eliot's "A Choice of Kipling's Verse") published in Horizon (Feb 1942) Orwell wrote that much in Kipling's development is traceable to these two major areas and "with a slightly different background" he could have been a good novelist. Did Orwell have himself in mind at the time of writing this ? The facts are that Orwell was born in Motihari in Bengal, had his schooling in England and came back to serve in Burma where his maternal grandmother lived. In those days Burma was a part of India. The liberal Etonian background had instilled certain values in him. He had some sympathy for the underdog. But, it had not quite prepared him for the disturbed condition in Burma. His purpose in the novel is not to glorify the underdog but to highlight the dilemma of the white officials called upon to either sacrifice their integrity or damage their career. The last scene of the novel shows a return to a situation of perfect orthodoxy. So, the novel ends on a note of despair. Orwell shows the hollowness behind every attitude and overture generated under the stressful conditions of imperial rule. He underlines the selfishness that determines the actions and ambitions of most people.

In George Orwell : A Life Bernard Crick mentions a view that was vigorously propagated by Sir Herbert White - that British rule in India was not aimed at educating

the natives politically, but bringing "Law and order in parts of barbary and maintaining them there".⁸⁶ If this attitude was a reflection of the ideology of imperialism, then, there was obviously a wide gap - as Orwell realized to his discomfort - between theory and practice. The great war had also changed everything leading to a perceptible hardening of attitudes on both sides. Referring to the white officers in the armed forces, Orwell wrote:

They develop an attitude towards the niggers that was far more brutal than the officials and the businessmen.⁸⁷

Things may not have been quite different with the police force. The words of an American missionary, whom Orwell probably encountered when he was serving in Myaungmya, left him thinking hard about his job. This man, whom Orwell describes as "a complete ass but a good fellow", had told him quite bluntly that he would not care to have Orwell's job. The jibe went home:

It made me horribly ashamed. So that was the kind of job I had ! Even an ass of an American missionary, a tee-total cock-virgin from mid-west had the right to look down on me and pity me...⁸⁸

Yet, the same Orwell, while chatting with Christopher Hollis in Rangoon, showed no trace of liberal leanings. At that time, he had stoutly defended the practice of the beating and torture of native prisoners. He also revealed his special anathema - the Buddhist priests - against whom he thought violence as being particularly desirable. His opinions shocked Hollis a great deal and it was not till he had read Burmese Days and Shooting an Elephant that Hollis could fathom the basis for Orwell's animus; Hollis understood later that what Orwell had revealed to him was only a part of the conflict that was occupying his mind, the rest had to be expressed through his writings. Orwell was too honest a writer to suggest simplistic solutions to problems; he also could not accept things as "fait accompli". he rejected stock attitudes and racial theories. He refused to take recourse to fictive posturings. Time and again he repudiated the stock prejudices of his day in words such as:

In Burma I have listened to racial theories which were less brutal than Hitler's theories about the Jews but certainly not less idiotic....⁸⁹

It was believed, for instance, that no white man could sit on his haunches. Orwell read it as an untruth for he recalled that miners at home usually ate their supper seated in that

position. Another erroneous belief was that the craniums of the dark races were thicker than those of the whites (the thickness explained the level of intelligence) and for this reason alone, the native was better placed to withstand the relentless heat of the tropical climate; the whites needed topis. Even as a school boy Orwell had to learn this fallacy by heart. A good number of these stereotypical assumptions are parodied in Burmese Days. It is left to Flory to explode some of them. He tells Elizabeth:

Natives, you see, are not supposed to suffer from prickly heat - bosh, of course, but people believe it. It's the same with sunstroke. They (Frances and Samuel) wear those huge topics to remind you they've got European skulls. A kind of coat-in-arms. The bend sinister, you might say...⁹⁰

One cannot expect a similar scrutiny of the established traditions of imperial strategy from Kipling. All that he would accommodate a somewhat restrained admiration for some loyal men of action of native extraction. In "Fuzzy Wuzzy" he writes:

You're a pore benighted 'eaten
but a first-class fighting man

We give you your certificate, an'
 if you want it signed
 We'll come an' 'ave a romp
 with you whenever you're inclined⁹¹

In "Gunga Din" Kipling's refrain is:

The finest man I knew
 Was our regimental bhisti Gunga Din

 Though I've belted you and flayed you
 By the living Gawd that made you
 You are a better man that I am
 Gunga Din !⁹²

Orwell realized that Kipling's work suffered on account of the author's incomplete knowledge of the actual state of affairs in the East. Had Kipling gone deeply into matters, he would have had a better grip on reality. Orwell had come in contact with the reality of the situation. There was no reason for him to resort to slogans, cliches and myths to support a bias. Again, Kipling and Orwell both stood witness to two waves of imperialism. The economic motive behind it all became apparent in Orwell's time. So, Orwell could object to the "slimy whiteman's burden humbug" ⁹³ and recognise that the empire was

simply a device for giving "trade monopolies to a gang of Jews and Scotchmen." ⁹⁴ He called the whole racket - "Pox Britannica" and in the words of Flory:

"... this Godless civilization founded on whiskey, Blackwood and Bonzo pictures! God have mercy on us, for all of us are a part of it..." ⁹⁵

In Burma, Orwell found no white man endowed with superhuman qualities. He came across only feeble men like Flory or men like Ellis - clinging to the past and repeating worn-out cliches. Ellis belonged to a more familiar group:

He (Ellis) was an intelligent man, an able servant of the firm but he was one of those Englishmen - common unfortunately - who should never be allowed to set foot in the East. ⁹⁶

There is a great deal in common between Swift's Gulliver's Travels and Orwell's Burmese Days. In his epoch-making novel, Swift exposes the eighteenth century ideals only to mock at them. Using all the paraphernalia of a child's dream-world as a veil Swift criticises the so called age of Reason. He builds a rhetorical mad-house full of tiny

soldiers, houses for dolls and giants, castles-in-the-air, musical boxes and magic gardens, the child's world where a capricious fate turns giants into dwarfs. Orwell uses the same method to expose the hollowness of the imperial design. He delves deeply into the world of Kiplingiana and comes up with attitudes, slogans, myths and stereotypes and then proceeds to play a game of skittles with them.

Burmese Days reveals Orwell's ideological opposition to Kipling's image of reality. What was sacred and substantial in Kipling becomes, for Orwell, an object of sardonic commentary. But, on the fact of it, it becomes necessary to recognise the fact that Orwell's novel - more than Forster's, - brings intimations of Kipling's world and forcefully reminds one of the faded mystique of the imperial dream.

Notes

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CHAPTER - IV

Dialectical Patterns in Paul Scott's Raj Quartet

Memories and Predilections:

Paul Scott was sometimes asked why he wrote at all. His answer was that he wrote because he had the aptitude for it. According to him the aptitude had something to do with his genes, with the nature of his sensibility. One of the earliest signs of the creative instinct, he felt, is self-absorption : "The feeling that you are somehow separate from your environment and can't identify with it really satisfactorily - plus the feeling that this inability, far from being wrong, ought to be cultivated"¹ This self-absorption is a form of curiosity, which he calls, "a curiosity in other people."² An examination of his interest in his environment and the formative influences on him, does help us to understand his work, even if Scott himself discounted the importance of the biographical aspects - (They) "never seem to me to get anywhere near the actual fiction."³ In actual fact, he left behind so much material relating to the background of his work that he seems willing to allow researchers to investigate the sources of his novels.

Scott was born on 25th March, 1920 in a London suburb called Southgate. It was a narrow hierarchical society where one's social position was judged by such venal

categories as the company one kept, the cinemas one visited, the clothes one wore, the club one joined, the locality one lived in or the centre at which one shopped. Southgate was divided into two neatly demarcated zones; the Alderman's Hill housed the prosperous tradesmen and the quarters of the working classes. The cantonment divided the two zones. No well-to-do man cared to be seen in the working class territory. To them, it was as good as black town. The consciousness of the stark divide between people was one of the earliest tragic realizations of Scott. He wrote :

In Palmers Green when I lived there we were aware of social distinctions as they were in Mudpore.....to that extent India was never a surprise to me ⁴

Scott's mother, Francis, married a man who was her senior by sixteen years. For her marriage was a passport to a more privileged world. Later when her husband's business ran into rough weather, she took to fantasizing - in a desperate attempt to fulfil her deep-seated urges. She displayed the habit of Cinderella, who, in one version of the fairy-tale, had gazed long enough at the flames of the kitchen fire to trigger off her imaginative response to a real-life challenge. Scott gauged his mother's feelings of disappointment and despair with all the sensitivity of a child. The presence of two

sisters-in-law - Florence and Laura - who lived in a house that Scott's father, Tom, had rented for them a mile away, their subtle pride in their family position and in their artistic temperament - all these had a way of affecting his mother adversely. Scott himself had a great affection for his aunts and admired them for their strength of character and resourcefulness. His visits to them every Saturday in the company of his father was the treat of the week. His aunt's home was more elegant - another reason for his mother's jealousy - and housed a studio. Later, faced with a recession Tom had to take the economy measure of bringing the whole family under one roof. This had the expected fall-out : the house was divided, with Mrs.Scott on one side and her sisters-in-law on the other, and poor Tom and his two sons unable to side with one or the other.

Scott developed a life-long habit of sensitively probing into the contours of human predilections, more so in the case of women. As a result of seeing his mother wilting away before his very eyes - crushed under the weight of the societal demands - and also as a consequence of being a witness to her desperate attempts to override her destiny, Scott went on to create in his novels characters who lack social rootedness, children of mixed marriages, anglicised natives, half-castes, retired missionaries, widows and

Eurasians. He sensitively probed the minds of characters who suffer on account of their being born into one culture and brought up to aspire to another. Dorothy Gower of The Alien Sky and Hari Kumar of the Quartet are studies of the fall-outs of social displacement and rejection.

Scott showed a special tenderness of feeling for the dreamer he discovered in his mother. He had inherited her temperament - a downright, practical side and a dreamy wayward one. He was able to diagnose the split in himself when he visited their Fox Lane home after the death of his mother :

I was born in that room. March 25, 1920. An Aries. Impulsive, impatient but a hard worker. Head in the clouds. Feet in the ground. Sometimes. A practical dreamer.⁵

His novels often have two diametrically opposed characters, even two brothers, who are as different from one another as it is possible to imagine. One of them is brilliant, charming, impulsive and undependable - the "dreamer" with "his head in the clouds"; the other is a dull plodder with his feet firmly "in the ground". The second is usually rejected in favour of the first - who is also the mother's blue-eyed boy. This was how Scott dramatised the conflict engendered in him by the split in his personality. In the Quartet, the

strange relationship and undercurrents of antipathy between Kumar and Merrick re-enact the same situation and provide the novel with its emotional axis and underlying significance.

When he was fourteen, paucity of funds forced Paul Scott to give up his schooling. As he was doing well in his studies, the premature withdrawal from school caused him to suffer tremendously. He was forced to sit up and take notice of the harsh realities of life. Like Hari Kumar in the Quartet, he suddenly found himself cast out of his own circle and rendered unfit for any worthwhile occupation. Another shock awaited him now; he came to know that his parents wanted him to take up a career in accountancy. This suggestion appalled him because he had always wanted to become either a poet or an artist. It would take him many years to forgive his father for what he saw as betrayal. The Birds of Paradise which explores, as one of its central themes, a father's rejection of his adolescent son, recounts Scott's own story. Bill and he exhibit similar vulnerability and thereby experience the same disillusionment:

He thanks his father for organising his life in such a way that he grew up to have money and leisure. He thanks for saving him from the discomforts of the East.....but deep in his heart he regrets

never having had the splendid things which he believed would have compensated him for the discomforts. He is not blaming his father. He is genuinely paying tribute to his father's commonsense. But his heart does not quite agree with his head.⁶

If there was any quality that Scott was conscious of inheriting from his father - it was the ability that the senior Scott had of blanking out the present. After the collapse of his business, Tom retreated behind a wall of deafness - much like Mabel Layton in Towers. In "Scott's Raj", Paul wrote, "He lived in his past" and "I learned to live in it too." The strategy lay in pretending that the present ran into a richer past. Scott began to romanticise the past by investing it with a vigorous sense of history. Mildred, in the Quartet exhibits a similar ability of blanking out the present.

Scott was fascinated by the films he watched as a child - especially by Fredric March's role in Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde (1932). The actor's genius seized his imagination - when in one writhing motion - he effected a transformation from Jekyll's identity to Hyde's. Scott's fictional style was greatly influenced by his early fascination with the fluid changes of images in cinema where one image dissolved as another took shape, images could be contorted

and superimposed. The first stirrings of a fictional idea in his mind always generated moving images. With The Birds of Paradise, the image of the birds surfaced apparently out of nowhere; in Jewel, it was the image of a girl running.

On September 3, 1939, Britain formally went into war with Germany. For Scott the autumn of that year ushered in a period of tremendous creative activity. At about the same time, he came into contact with Clive Sansom, who introduced him to the poems of Auden, Isherwood, Cecil Day Lewis, Stephen Spender and T.S. Eliot. The last named was - as Scott was to acknowledge later, the most lasting influence on him.

When Scott joined the army as a private soldier, he showed signs of having a mental preoccupation with sex. In a letter to Ruth, Sansom's wife he declared his sexual preference:

It is true that women fail to interest me generally.....all my love poems are written to persons of my own sex.....but I think you will understand that it is a popular failing for people of my type!

For me sex is all - important - I should say the most important part of life. All emotions and creative instincts are (to me) based on sexual impulses in man.....

Life is very complicated but sex should not be the cause of complication but the simplifier.....⁷

In the first month of 1941, Scott seemed to have invited reprisal for what Hilary Spurling calls "a sexual stumble;"⁸ he was over-come by the fear of exposure, humiliation and imprisonment. This experience accounted for Scott's obsession (in his fiction) with the situation of sexual domination and blackmail - in the relationship between an authoritarian man and his victim. The connection that develops between Major Craig and Cadet Ramsay in The Mark of a Warrior, that between Major Reid and Lieutenant Sutton in The Chinese Love Pavilion and finally that between Merrick and Lance Corporal Pinker in A Division of Spoils are all based upon his own experience.

In 1942, Scott volunteered for service in India and sailed for Bombay in February, 1943 as an officer cadet Wrotham.

Entering the Situation : India 1943-46:

India provided Scott with the metaphor that he needed as a writer even though the choice was not a deliberate one. In "Scott's Raj....." he wrote - "I don't think a writer chooses his metaphors. They choose him." Until he came to India as a wartime cadet, he had

no connection with the place except for a great aunt whose husband built bridges for the raj. Yet, Scott's evocation of the Indian reality is so richly authentic that many readers assume that he had been born into an old Anglo-Indian family. He said that he was twice-born - the first time in London and the second time, when, at the age of twenty-three, he was shipped out to India as a soldier to fight in defence of Britain's eastern possessions during World War II.

Scott did not fall in love with the country right away. His initial experience of station life as a war cadet made him uneasy. He voiced his sentiments through Robin White in The Jewel in the Crown:

I hated India - the real India behind the.....myth.....I hated the loneliness and the dirt, the smell, the conscious air of superiority that one couldn't get through the day without putting on like a sort of purdah.....⁹

India, seething as it was with tensions and antipathies after the Quit India troubles, shook and disturbed him. He was reminded of the situation at home. At Belgaum he sensed the hostility and resentment of the local population and he narrated his feelings in "Scott's Raj" :

When we got to India in the middle of 1943, the Quit India riots were still fresh in peoples' memories. We weren't allowed to stray far from school - in case the locals chucked stones at us. You felt the strength of feeling against us right from the beginning.....¹⁰

Scott opened his first Quartet novel - The Jewel with the Quit India riots forming its background. In 1943, he had registered the ominous situation of threat and it would take him many years of study and involvement with India's problems to get a proper perspective on the political situation during the troubled times.

Scott was never very comfortable with the imperial attitudes. In a broad sense, his sympathies were with the Indians. Outside the cantonment walls, the land and the people appeared like a frieze. He found the falsely insulated cantonment life somewhat unreal. He felt restless because in the midst of the war he was living the old pre-war civil and military life - "I am terrified of stagnating in the Indian situation - be it in the plains or the hills,"¹¹ he wrote to Sansom from Lahore. It was a time of absorption. All that he sensed and saw - and also the agony he went through as he suppressed his sexual desire - would find a place in the Quartet.

In July 1944, Scott joined the air-supply unit in Bengal. Towards the end of 1941 and the beginning of 1942 the Japanese had overrun Burma and Malaya, which brought them right up to the doorsteps of India. In 1944, the Japanese and the I.N.A. led by Subhas Chandra Bose advanced on Imphal and Kohima, though they were beaten back eventually. During his service tenure in Burma, Scott witnessed the discomfort of the British officials consequent on the Japanese and I.N.A. successes. He also began to sense a thing or two about the way rival minds read the strange phenomenon of the Indian P.O.Ws fighting shoulder-to-shoulder with the Japanese troops and confronting their own brethren commandeered by their own British regimental officers. He examined the situation from close quarters in the Quartet and more particularly in the last novel, A Division of Spoils.

In course of his three-year stay in India, Scott had seen much of the country. In the end he fell in love with the place. When he had to go to Burma, he missed the India he had left behind; he missed the topographical vastness, the diversity, and longed for her sights and smells. India had entered his blood-stream.

Uneasy Self.: Inquiries and Reconstructions:

After returning to England in 1946 when the war had ended, Scott set about educating himself on Indian

history and British-Indian relations. He found in India, a reference for his own understanding of the rifts and fissures in the society at Southgate -

Returning I see images of India everywhere... the maidan, the club, the cantonment, the governor's residence. Only the names are different.¹²

Scott's range of experience may not have been very different from that of the several thousand war-time British officers. The distinction only became visible later when he undertook: "a lifetime's reading and reflection that would give meaning and extension to his experience.....What made him different was that he was a creative artist whose imagination had been engaged by India.....Scott was unique, the wartimer who became a novelist of the Raj in extremis."¹³

Back home he began dreaming of India. He retained his links with the country; he corresponded with Jim Corben, who was still in India, attended army re-unions and exchanged letters with R.I.A.S.C. officers and his two subordinates in the army - Nimu Purkayastha and Narayan Dass. By 1946, he began receiving disturbing news from Jim which indicated that the transfer of power to the Indians under the Labour Party dispensation was running into rough weather. That very year, the Cabinet Mission had failed to secure

an agreement between the Indian parties which drifted into irreconcilable positions. The protracted negotiations with the representatives of the different groups - the Congress and the Muslim League, with the leaders of the untouchables and the Sikhs, drew a blank. Sometimes Jinnah said "yes" to the three-tier cake of a constitution"¹⁴ - only to add the rider he would, however, keep his options open; at other times it was the Congress leader Gandhi who prevaricated. Ultimately, it was the Congress which proved to be intransigent when it came to feel that :

Jinnah had won from the Cabinet Mission both a disproportionately large share in the distribution of power and a centre so weak that their own ambition to rule an effective government of a united India would be frustrated.¹⁵

Jinnah's response to this was to declare August 16, 1946 as Direct Action Day. It passed off peacefully enough in the rest of the country but in Bengal - "There started in Calcutta that day an uncontrollable mass slaughter that spread across most of northern India and lasted for the next sixteen months."¹⁶

From one of Jim's letters dated July 17, 1946, Scott came to know about the ugly mood of hatred in Calcutta but, at that time, it was a demonstration against

the whites. In the next letter dated August 16, 1946, Jim wrote about Hell breaking loose as Hindus and Muslims fought pitched battles and engaged in rape and large-scale arson. Over the next three days more than 20,000 were killed or seriously injured in Calcutta. The violence was strictly intercommunal and the British were no longer the targets. India already presented the spectre of a divided country.

Scott experienced a sense of helplessness and bewilderment as he began to receive more information on the tragedy. The Hindu-Muslim divide - which he would later see as an evidence of the British failure to unify the country, and the senseless acts of vandalism, arson, rape and murder would all be recreated in the Quartet against the backdrop of a hasty and precipitate British retreat from India in 1947. In Punjab, "From the day Mountbatten announced the partition plan, murder spread like fire."¹⁷

The partition plan envisaged the division of Bengal and Punjab. Then came the question of partitioning the army, the civil service and dividing the possessions such as the army and the bureaucracy; finally there was the issue involving some six hundred small and large states ruled by the princes. These and other questions are examined in the Quartet.

In his letters to Dass, Scott had promised to visit his home in an Andhra village and, eighteen years after his first visit, he kept his promise. He spent the intervening years trying to remedy what he considered to be his ignorance of India. He began to resent the evidence of apathy, snobbery and ignorance that he detected in the Anglo-Indians he came in touch with; he also came to view with consternation the Powellian attitude of aggressive racism in some of his countrymen.

Scott read all the books he could get hold of on India. In 1947 he read A Passage to India (1924) for the first time; the same year he read R.K. Narayan's A Dark Room (1938). He began to build a sizeable collection of fictional and historical books on the raj. He read the work of Molly Hamilton (published under her maiden name M.M.Kaye) who set her stories in exotic locales. While he was fascinated by them, Paul also felt uneasy with her insensitive, racially intolerant and politically-anachronistic writing.

Almost all his novels belonging to the fifties draw upon his military experiences. The first to be published was Johnnie Sahib (1952) and Scott later commented - "That first frightful novel was.....autobiographical."¹⁸ It conducts an examination of the bureaucrati-

zation of the services. The Alien Sky (1953) unfolds its story against a background of turbulence just prior to India's independence. Scott is unsympathetic in his treatment of the Anglo-Indian community. The root of their troubles is traced to their lack of comprehension. Tom Gower - the British newspaperman who acts as the critic - represents Scott's own position. The plight of the Eurasians is examined through the person of Dorothy Gower. A Male Child (1956) casts the spotlight on a cadet officer who comes to India in 1942, but has to be repatriated when he is struck with an incurable tropical disease. The Mark of a Warrior (1958) provides the readers with a view of the kind of training provided for jungle warfare. Scott made Ramsay echo his own initial response to India - so he wrote : "Like Ramsay, I had not wanted to come out here, I was sent; like Ramsay, my ignorance was immense, as great as my disappointment at finding it, when I arrived, raining."¹⁹ The Chinese Love Pavilion (1960) uses India and the Far East as locales. The plot is complex and it foreshadows the multiple plotting pattern of the Quartet. The Birds of Paradise (1962) has been recognised as Scott's finest pre-raj achievement; in it images and themes fuse together to create its ambivalent core of meaning. His other two novels are Bender (1963) and Corrida at San Feliu (1964).

While he was writing The Birds, Scott was conscious of laying the foundations of three or four further novels on India -

The compulsion to engage in a really big novel about India - a kind of decline and fall if ever there was one, an Anglo-Indian war and peace bubbles away under the surface.²⁰

Extensive reading supported by a keenness to know all that could be known about the place added a new dimension to his personal experience. Between 1960 and 1977, Scott reviewed "over a hundred books - novels and non-fiction concerned with India.....Scott's reviews are crucial to the purpose of tracing the development of his understanding of the history of the Raj, and thus for revealing the interpretative backdrop to the themes of the Quartet".²¹ He approved of the fine distinction made by R.P. Masani (in British in India, 1960) between intention and outcome in the context of the policy outlines of the raj. In a review of Kusum Nair's Blossoms in the Dust (1961) Scott noted :

....there were two Indias. The British Raj helped to keep them separate.....The visiting card marked "Failed B.A." and the thumb-print on a deposition in a rural dispute are as much the marks left on India by the British as are the English language and the forms of civil administration.²²

In his review of Penderel Moon's Divide and Quit (1961), Scott cited the contradictions of the British rule as a likely cause for partition and bloodshed. He raised some pertinent questions :

.....Were the happenings in Bahawalpur typical of the disorders elsewhere ? Could the massacres and migrations have been prevented ? Could Pakistan have been avoided ? Could the Sikhs have been peacefully accommodated in some other way ? In other words who, if anyone, was to blame for (a) partition and (b) the bloodshed that marked it.

One day, it is to be hoped, someone - preferably an Englishman - will examine the whole situation in the light of our own failure to unify a country we were always eager to describe, publicly anyway, as a sacred trust.....Paternalism under the peepul tree may have appealed to men on the spot but it has a lot to answer for in our colonial history..... In the end the principal actors in this drama were powerless. That is one measure of its tragedy. Another measure is that no one, even now, is exactly sure how many people lost their lives.....²³

Some other books dealing with the theme of partition that Scott reviewed were Taya Zinkin's Reporting India (1962),

Michael Edward's The Last Years of British India (1963) and K.K. Aziz's Britain and Muslim India (1963). "His interest had thus been awakened in the relation between the mechanics of Empire and the tragedy of partition."²⁴

At times Scott felt impatient by the perspectives offered on the Indian question in some of the manuscripts submitted for publication. In 1960, he read the reminiscences of a Lieutenant Colonel and felt that the author was "a parody of himself, his type. And they are all dead from neck up and navel down."²⁵ In 1962, he read a cliché-ridden military memoir - another misrepresentation of the genre and knew exactly what those reminiscences had left out -

.....details of Anglo-Indian life, on the punkah (which he believed the unknowing thought was a drink), bungalows syces, servants, Residents and Political Agents. Beyond the myths of military reminiscences there awaited to be revealed the working lives of The Civil of commissioners, judges and district works and forestry services²⁶

In 1962, Scott was enraged when he read the manuscript of an Englishwoman writing about a terrain that he was familiar with. He always remembered his stay at the Lohardanga site with pleasure but the lady's account ran counter to his

memories. Her views seemed to epitomise the typical memsahib attitude.

Scott's novels upto The Chinese Love Pavilion were published by Eyre & Spottiswoode - the American Publishers. He switched over to Secker & Warburg in 1961 and they financed his trip to India in 1964. Initially, he had included East and West Pakistan in his itinerary but dropped the idea subsequently on account of his "distaste for military dictatorship"²⁷ and "a feeling that Pakistan was so much an English creation that to be there would burden (him) with guilt."²⁸

Scott's intention was to recover his sense of the visual reality of India. He knew that he would come to know more about the country if he stayed as a guest in Indian homes rather than in the impersonal hotels. Prem Manaktala - the Managing Director of Allied Publishers, distributors of Scott's books in India, arranged for him to stay with Indian families. So Scott was able to fulfil his initial desire of being "modest in towns and simple in the country."²⁹

He was the house guest of Mrs. Dorothy Ganapathy (the role model for Lady Chatterjee in Quartet) in Bombay. Ganapathy was a sophisticated and articulate Rajput lady with a proudly nationalistic outlook. Scott noted her quaint turns of phrase in expressions like "when

you have finished your breakfast, we'll bash off to the bank".³⁰ Lili Chatterjee uses this expression "bash off" quite frequently in Jewel. During his stay with Dorothy, lasting just over a week, Scott acquainted himself with Bombay's city life. He attended a number of parties and later told his hostess that "it would be interesting to see some English".³¹ When he actually got to see them he found a group of Anglo-Indians "rather noisily segregated at one end of the hotel lounge."³² Seeing that they rather preferred to keep to themselves, Scott realized that "Anglo-India is still alive and well and living in India."³³ His feelings were outraged and he began to wonder what had happened to Aziz's prediction in A Passage - that after having driven the British out, the two races would become friends.

Scott was to lapse into a similar state of insularity and insensitivity within a short while" in a fortnight's interval I had discovered the ease with which I could go into a state of shock just as deep and perhaps deeper."³⁴ It happened at Timmapuram when he arrived there on 10 March, 1964. He planned to spend three weeks in the rustic home of Narayan Dass. One of his first shocks was to find that he had to sit on an upright chair at the bus-stop waiting for a conveyance; on boarding the bus he found that he was expected to occupy whole rows of seats while his Indian host and his companions took the back seats; Scott

saw brooding hens hatching turkey eggs in the backroom; he met Dass' shy daughters but the wife could not be persuaded to come out. How different the Indian sense of hospitality was from his own, he found out when he came to know that Dass had not thought of putting off Scott's visit despite the recent death of one of his daughters. He realized that he was expected to eat alone using the only table and chair in his room. Though he found a freshly plucked scarlet flower beside his plate during his meals, the gesture did nothing to mitigate his feeling of alienation. The tea that he drank was watery and all the time he was conscious of being inspected and watched. He felt terrible having to take an interest in things, pat children on the head, crack a prepared joke or two and dutifully express his pleasure with whatever he saw. Years later he recalled his trauma :

Memory is kind. I recall the few pleasures more vividly than the miseries.....I recall what the miseries were, but mercifully don't feel them. I recall walking one morning from the bathing enclosure back to the house, pausing on the mud floor of the compound shutting my eyes and saying aloud "The whole thing is some awful sort of nightmare."³⁵

He was required to sit on the verandah and the entire neighbourhood would troop into the yard below to watch him.

He slept in the open; he hated going and squatting in the field every morning; another horrendous experience was being shaved by a nai.

In a lecture given in 1967, Scott recalled how his stay at Timmapuram had contributed to his understanding of Anglo-Indian attitudes :

In 1964 I went back to India.....I stayed in cities and for ten days in somewhat primitive conditions in a village. By primitive, I mean there was no formal arrangement for what polite people would call one's morning duties, but I call going to the loo. It was a comic, fascinating, highly emotional experience, and taught me a lot about the European's fear of black countries. It was a severe strain on my civilized liberal instincts. Towards the end of my stay I found myself shouting.....What happened really was that I had added to my knowledge - not just of the customs, the manner and the artefacts of an alien culture - but of the terrible dependence we have on our familiar way of doing things if we are to spare a thought and expend kindness on people apparently different from ourselves. I understood better therefore the physical and emotional impulses that had always prompted the British to sequester themselves in clubs, messes and forts, to preserve,

sometimes to the point of absurdity their own English middle-class way of life. It was a simple enough lesson. One could learn it from books. It is better for a writer to learn lessons from life.³⁶

Scott would recall his Timmapuram experience again and again - in fact, in fiction, lectures, essays, letters and articles. In a letter to his wife Scott wrote how he had been conscious of "wearing" his Sahib's face - "Odd how that defensive look comes back to you automatically."³⁷ This harsh illiberal mask was a protective covering as well. At Timmapuram when Scott had found himself in alien surroundings, he panicked; fear made him timorous and illiberal. He recalled hating the noise, stench and squalor of Elluru, its surging crowds, the sight of the lepers and the fly-ridden carcasses strung up in the market-place. His suspicions were roused to such a pitch that he even imagined that Dass was deliberately inflicting ordeals on him; at times, he even suspected that he was Dass' prisoner. When he looked back on his irrational fears two years later, he recognised them as paranoid delusions.

He would pass on most of his experiences to Daphne -

Daphne's visit, of course was mine (as was her suspicion that she had drunk cow's urine) : and Robin White seated

on a wooden chair being shaved and anticipating the razor cut that would blind him.....was me. Even Miss Crane, seated on a chair by the roadside on the morning she left Dibrapur with Mr. Choudhuri and feeling like "Something in a zoo" was me.....In a way, too, the children she taught were mine.³⁸

Like Daphne, Robin White, the liberal District Commissioner of Mayapore, also experiences a sense of alienation during the early part of his service tenure. Eventually of course, both these characters from Jewel undergo a change of heart. Their contact with Indians helps them to overcome their prejudices - just as Scott had finally come to know and understand India and fall in love with the country. In subsequent years he was to absolve Dass of blame and write:

.....to me poor people struggling to survive in hard conditions are not children. They always strike me as far older, infinitely wiser than myself. It is I.....not they who need the smile of approval, of understanding of recognition. The defence against poverty, underprivilege is dumb acceptance. India is a place of absorbent silence. Narayan, I think, felt it too, but he had his duties as a host.³⁹

Scott admitted that his memories of the market place at Elluru helped him to imagine the Chillianwallah bazar where Kumar

goes to live with his aunt. Scott's feelings of displacement and alienation, of being menaced and hemmed in are all recalled in Kumar's feelings on the night he wakes up and feels mangled by all the physical horrors of the place.

Edwina Crane's attempt to teach English with the print of "The Jewel in the Crown" functioning as a unique teaching aid, has its roots in Scott's own endeavour to coach Dass' son with the help of the objects available to him.

Scott left Timmapuram before time after inventing the excuse that he was scheduled to give lectures in Madras. He took the overnight train to Hyderabad. This is how he described his feeling of relief :

I arrived in Hyderabad next morning, still stunned and vicious I knocked the hand of a beggar woman off my arm, gave the tonga wallah less than he asked for, ignored his protests and stalked into the Ritz Palace, called for beer and complained about the price. And then sat down in the blessed privacy of a civilized bedroom with a bathroom attached - blessed, blessed bathroom with all the modern cons.

My relief was indescribable. But already in that relief there was the shadow of something that appalled me - the growing shadow of my ingratitude, my ridiculous irrational fears, my utter dependence upon the amenities of my own kind of civilization. But the sense of relief was enough to keep the shadows at bay, for a while.⁴⁰

Scott stayed for four days in Hyderabad. From there he went to Madras and then to Calcutta. At Calcutta his host was Neil Ghosh - arranged by Molly Hamilton. Neil was an anglicised, public school educated Bengali; he possessed good looks, charm and well-bred manners (which Scott called Eton-and-Oxbridge manners). Scott, however, preferred Neil's girlfriend - an Australian nurse Caroline Davies. Molly Hamilton's description of Neil to Scott was :

Lovely bit of copy I think, poor Neil. A man without a country if ever there was one. His family probably never visualised the Raj passing out in his day, and thought that if he was turned into an imitation Englishman he would rise to great heights in British India. Instead of which he is left stranded, black as your hat, speaking impeccable B.B.C. English and rotten bad Urdu (and probably worse Bengali) stranded with a foot in both countries and at home in neither.⁴¹

Unlike other westernised Indians, Neil had been completely cut off from all Indian influences in early childhood. He had shone in academics and cricket while he was in England. Neil was an irresistible charmer. Caroline plainly adored him and even Molly was not quite immune to his charms. Neil's tragedy hinged on the fact that he could not complete his education and enter the I.C.S. as he had hoped to do, because four years after his parent's death in 1934, his uncle ordered him to return home with his brothers and sisters. Neil joined Bird and Co. - an old and reputed house with large interests in coal and jute. Incidentally, it was Neil who told Scott about Mother Teresa - who picked up the old and dying from the streets of Calcutta and gave them refuge in her home. Neil supplied the Mother with coal and she was reported as having told Neil's sister that she never got quite the same amount of it after he retired. These accounts of the Albanian nun helped Scott to sketch the character of sister Ludmila in The Jewel.

Scott and Neil fell out eventually. He found the Indian's accent grating on his senses. Neil's assurance and arrogance offended Scott - whose instincts cried out against it. From the beginning his reaction to Neil was similar to the one he shows Merrick as having towards Hari; Neil seemed to cling on to the defensive mask of

superiority - something that Scott was also conscious of having done in the past.

In an inebriated condition Neil poured out to Scott his tragic story and this was when The Jewel "slipped within (his) grasp."⁴² When Neil read the novel he recognised himself in Hari. When Neil was summarily recalled to India, he had been forced to part from an English girl called Daphne; this is the name that Scott also chose for his heroine in Jewel; again, the description of the altered Hari, after his incarceration, is based closely on the account given by Neil of his brother who had suffered nervous breakdowns. But these correspondences, however striking, are only incidental because in the ultimate analysis, the confrontation was not really one between Scott and the anglicised Indian, but between the two sides of Scott's own nature. Hari's story mirrors his memories of his own suffering as a result of being prematurely withdrawn from school; the illiberal Merrick represents the core of authoritarianism within the author - a streak that he had struggled to defeat and overcome :

It's all a writer can do - expose himself each time he writes a chapter.⁴³

After having parted ways with Neil, Scott became a guest of Dr. B.D. Nagchaudhuri, whose wife Dipali was a prominent

singer. Their Behala home had a luxuriant garden, with many varieties of trees and flowers. Scott loved to hear Dipali's songs and was specially touched by a morning raga. At his request she translated it for him and he used it to embellish a situation in The Jewel. The Nag home grew into the MacGregor House. Scott remembered his stay with the Nags as the nicest part of his tour. He flew back home on April 9, 1964.

The Choice of the Metaphor : The Jewel in the Crown:

Scott said that his novels came to him as moving images. In "Notes for Talk and Reading at Stanford Grammar School (1975)" he wrote about his fictional images:

A series of images conveyed from me to you, in such a manner that my view of life is also conveyed.⁴⁴

He said that a novel can be started in two ways - first by having an "Image floating into the mind" and second by forming "an idea of writing a book on a particular subject".⁴⁵ Both these processes were at work when he wrote his first Quartet novel. Scott believed in the primacy of the imagination.

A novel is a sequence of images. In sequence these images tell a story..... images

are what matter. They are the novel's raw material. Images are what we are really concerned with - and they are infinitely complex.⁴⁶

He had the ability to recall his original image by concentrating really hard on any blank surface - a screen, a wall or a sheet of paper. His early initiation into the rudiments of film-making - he collaborated with his brother to make home-made films way back in 1929 - enabled him to use his imagination as a photographer would use his camera. With The Birds of Paradise, the birds surfaced apparently out of nowhere. The beginning was mysterious and he was to write:

I can't remember just what began it. It was probably the name itself, swinging up in the dark of a sleepless night and hovering there like a bar of trapeze, pausing fractionally for the grasp of my comprehension before sweeping down and away, taking me into the fabulous world where birds are called and mated.⁴⁷

His image for Jewel also came unexpectedly and apparently by accident - in the darkness of a sleepless night. The image was of a girl running, exactly as she

is pictured at the start of the novel -

Imagine, then, a flat landscape, dark for a moment, but even so conveying to a girl running in the still deeper shadow cast by the wall of the Bibighar Gardens...⁴⁸

He subsequently traced its origin to his traumatic experiences at Timmapuram and Elluru. His only thought then had been to run away from the dangers he visualised. He had wanted to retreat from the position that called for a crossing of the bridges. The psychology, Scott later felt, encapsulated the whole feeling of the Anglo-Indians when confronted with the picture of a vast, flat territory, forbidding, incalculable, hoary and at once ugly and beautiful.

The description of Daphne's run also hints at the possible reasons behind it -

And there she was, my prime mystery, a girl, in the dark, running, exhausted, hurt in some way, yet strangely good of heart - tough, resilient but she runs.⁴⁹

Once such a central image existed, it needed to be interrogated by the conscious intelligence of the

novelist. Scott began to 'bombard' his image with his own experience, he extracted details about the girl's physical attributes. Neil Ghosh and Caroline Davies supplied the essentials:

Bombarding the image with experience, the girl I'd met briefly at Calcutta came back to mind..... My imagination fined her down.....and Daphne Manners was born as tall, gangling, rather awkward.....and the running in darkness suggested shortness of sight, and spectacles that she was too vain to wear. Experience also connected her to that Anglicised Indian, the girl in Calcutta had been in love with. So Daphne too had an Anglicised Indian lover.... The girl in the image now had the physical attributes and the outline of an emotional history. But from what was she running? ⁵⁰

He next 'bombed' the image with knowledge and it took on some historical associations and became settled in time and circumstance. As more 'bombardment' followed, the image began to acquire the dimensions of a symbolic confrontation between the East and the West at the time of the Quit India riots. Scott wrote:

The last great confrontation between East and West was in 1942. At least it was

my opinion. By that year, the Indian Congress - still motivated by the distrust of British intentions which was sown in 1919, and torn between the worldly anti-Hitler attitude of Nehru and the unworldly anti-violence attitude of Gandhi - had come out on Gandhi's side, to resist all forms of external control. Here there was an extremely interesting human and political situation. The nation that in 1940 and 1941 had stood virtually alone in its resistance to totalitarianism in Europe - depended in the East upon the stability of a country towards which it had always adopted a somewhat totalitarian attitude of its own.⁵¹

The turn of events in India in 1942 had all the hall-marks of a violent tragedy. Scott saw it as:

.....madness, but there was something magnificent about it too. It was a declaration of war on the British - non-violent war - an ultimatum that unless self-government was granted immediately the Congress would lead the nation in a mass civil disobedience that would make India untenable as a military base. The railways would stop, the docks would close, the war factories would come to a standstill. That was the resolution. On 8 August

the All India Congress Committee adopted the resolution in Bombay. ⁵²

In the early hours of the next day, the top leaders of the party were arrested. This incensed the people and the masses took to the streets. The British over-reacted because they imagined that something in the lines of the Sepoy Mutiny was about to take place. They ruthlessly stamped out all shows of dissension. This was the background Scott had in mind for Daphne's run:

..... against such a background, yes, there might be a girl, a white girl, running in the darkness. I had my time, place and circumstance. I had bombarded my image with these historical facts and they stuck. ⁵³

He went on to compare Daphne with Miss Sherwood - the Mission School Superintendent of Amritsar who had been assaulted by some hooligans in 1919. During the riots that took place after the repressive Rowlatt Act came into force, this lady was dragged off her bicycle and roughed up. Incidentally, Daphne's bicycle plays an important part in Jewel's plot. On the British side, Dyer retaliated by ordering that the six boys he suspected of committing

the crime to be flogged within a triangle that was erected on the exact spot of the assault. Daphne was not a missionary; so Scott came up with a Mission School Superintendent - Miss Crane, and invested her with the qualities that were different from but complementary to those Daphne had, such as stubbornness, endurance and capacity for love. The image of Miss Crane evolved through a process that Scott called 'reverse exploration'. He first visualised her removing Gandhi's portrait from the wall and replacing it with the picture titled "The Jewel in the Crown". Scott called her "a half-baked" liberal because inspite of her good intentions and fairly developed liberal instincts, she lacked the ability to cross the East-West divide. The emergence of this elderly missionary enabled Scott to "begin behind the image of a girl who had crossed the bridge between East and West"⁵⁴. The juxtaposition of their names in the first sentence of Jewel indicates their shared fate.

Walter Allen defined the novel as an extended metaphor. This was Scott's favourite definition. He used Daphne's rape as a metaphor in Jewel:

The use of the assumed rape of Daphne Manners is to explode pent-up fear. But is that too like the business of the caves

in Forster. And yet it happened in Jallian-wallah Bagh Was this also what Forster was doing? I hope not. ⁵⁵

Daphne's rape at Bibighar is used to buttress the theme of the souring British-India love affair. Scott considered Daphne to be "an ideal subject for rape. Friendly, unspoiled.....", she was:

.... a cause celebre. This should be built up into a tremendously well-documented inner story, which can illustrate the whole British-Indian affair..... ⁵⁶

In Jewel, Scott attempts to explore - to the fullest possible extent - the relations between Britain and India during the closing years of the raj. There is a description of it on the first page of the novel -

.....the affair that began on the evening of August 9th, 1942, in Mayapore, ended with the spectacle of the two nations in violent opposition, not for the first time nor yet for the last because they were still locked in the imperial embrace of such long standing and subtlety that it was no longer possible for them to know whether they hated or loved one

another, or what it was that held them together and seemed to have confused the image of their separate destinies.⁵⁷

The situation in which they find themselves has an element of timelessness about it; it is also paradigmatic:

....the English/Indian affair. And what a curious love affair. In one sense India took the part of a woman and can be said to have been abandoned by her lover she had grown tired of. Conversely place England in the situation of the woman and she becomes like an older mistress to a young man who eventually throws her off but remains faithful to her for certain useful lessons he has learnt about the art of loving and the art of life.⁵⁸

What really kept the two races apart was the matter of colour. Even Miss Crane cannot give up her prejudices until it is much too late. Journeying in the midst of the troubles Miss Crane wakes up to a new experience and realizes:

....that she is about to go over the hump
- that thirty-five years of effort and

willingness had never really got her over; the hump however high or low it was, which however hard you tried, still lay at the path of thoughts you sent flowing out to a man or woman whose skin was a different colour from your own. Were it only the size of a pebble, the hump was always there, disrupting the purity of that flow, the purity of thoughts.⁵⁹

There is nothing that she can do now either for Mr. Choudhuri or for her school children; he is dead, killed by the marauders. Miss Crane begs God's forgiveness and while holding the dead man's hand admits her own failure:

".... Its taken me a long time", she said, meaning not only Mr. Choudhuri, "I am sorry it was too late".⁶⁰

The shock of the experience proves too much for her; too tired to go about getting things right or solving moral and dialectical problems, she becomes aware of the fact that there was something compulsive about the British-Indian situation - "the idea of there being somewhere in this curious centuries long association, a kind of love with hate on the obverse side, as on a coin...."⁶¹ She wishes she had taken one of the soldiers aside - (Clancy perhaps - who came to her home for tea once a week in place of the Indian

ladies who stopped coming once she had taken down Gandhi's picture) and told him the other side of the story; she wishes she had mentioned all about prevarication and betrayal on the British side when they allowed "the little matter of the colour of the skin"⁶² to become - what it never was - a major issue.

Lily Chatterjee calls Daphne and Miss Crane "the chance victims of colonial rule."⁶³ She feels that the missionary woman unlike Daphne, lacked the gift for friendship of any kind:

She loved India but no particular Indian.....
She made friendships in her head and seldom
in her heart.....⁶⁴

Her gesture of taking Gandhi's picture down - because he had offended her sensibilities with his call to the British at the time of the war to leave India - was weak and ineffectual. This leads Lily to surmise that Miss Crane, despite her courage "had never dirtied her hands, never got grubby for the sake of a cause she'd always believed she held dear",⁶⁵ until it was much too late for her to change herself. Her subsequent madness is caused by the split in her personality when she finds the courage to "See the truth

if not to live with it, see how all her good works and noble thoughts had been going on in a vacuum".⁶⁶ Daphne was different as she:

.....didn't ever shrink from getting grubby. She flung herself into everything with zest. The more afraid she was of something the more determined she was not to shrink from experiencing it....⁶⁷

But even Daphne was not always like this; when she arrived in India she had found it all quite strange. She felt ill-at-ease and had weird dreams in which she saw faces mainly - faces that she conjured up in alarming detail and they were those of strangers. When the Durzi held her blouse, she snatched it away because she could not bear to have him touch it with his black fingers. Daphne was going through a traumatic phase that Scott termed as "cultural shock."

When Daphne fell in love with Kumar all her inhibitions and prejudices left her. She wanted to break out of her circle and do the unconventional thing. The affair with Hari was the logical but terrifying outcome of breaking out of the separate groups and learning to live together. Sister Ludmila remembers Daphne as the girl

who had directly plunged into the dark currents, the currents of human conflict that flowed between Macgregor House and Bibighar - the former associated with the white men, and the latter with the black. Daphne realized that except for the colour of his skin, Kumar was not Indian at all. So she was careful not to allow the business of colour to inhibit her response to him. In this she differed from other white women. Sister Ludmila noticed how they all eyed Kumar's dark good looks surreptitiously. Only Daphne had the courage to enter the flood as she did not believe in dividing conduct into parts:

And then she rejected the notion of horror entirely realizing that it was not good waiting for a bridge to be built but a question of entering the flood, and meeting there, letting the current take them both. It is as if she said to herself: Well, life is not a business of standing on dry land and occasionally getting your feet wet. It is merely an illusion that some of us stand on one bank and some on the opposite. So long as we stand like that we are not living at all, but dreaming. So jump, jump in, and let the shock wake us up. Even if we drown, at least for a moment or two before we die we shall be awake and alive.⁶⁸

Daphne's unborn child is a symbol of the union of East and West. The question of the baby's colour does not bother her at all. Her trust in Kumar and India is complete and she feels as if she has done her bit. She calls the baby her own "ham-fisted offering to the future."⁶⁹ Her refusal to testify against the attackers and Kumar is taken seriously by the Anglo-Indians only when Daphne says - "For all I knew they could have been British soldiers with their faces blacked."⁷⁰ Her refusal to say anything puts her on the side of the Indians.

Scott is careful to point out that the assumption of superiority is sometimes compulsive. The impulses can arise covertly as in the case of Daphne. She acknowledges her failure to see that Kumar might come to harm as a result of the charade that she forces him to play:

I never gave him a chance to calm down and say - as I would let an Englishman say - "Look, for Pete's sake, if I haven't been here in Bibighar, where in hell have I been? How do I account for this swollen lip, or black eye or scratched cheek", whatever it was. I never gave him a chance because even in my panic there was this assumption of superiority, of privilege,

of believing that I knew what was best for both of us, because the colour of my skin automatically put me on the side of those who never told a lie.⁷¹

Daphne goes on to indict the Anglo-Indian judicial system. She calls it a robot that cannot distinguish between love and rape.

Her love for Hari is what enables her to take the plunge. Her world becomes larger and she is able to experience real freedom. In Kumar's company, she visits those parts of Mayapore that no white woman had ever visited; she goes to his aunt's house at Chillianwallah where she really feels at home. She visits the Tirupati Temple to offer puja - an experience that she finds uplifting. She meets Hari at the sanctuary and sometimes at Bibighar - the two places that seemed to be safe meeting grounds for them.

When she looks at her country women she detects the strain they are under. She finds the women looking worse than the men as they go about pretending that the moral forces are still at work. To Daphne it is obvious that the moral thing had soured long ago and this leads her to wonder:

What happens to a woman if she tells herself that ninety-nine percent of the men she sees are not really men at all, but creatures of an inferior species whose colour is their main distinguishing mark? What happens when you unsex a nation, treat it like a nation of eunuchs? ⁷²

Daphne feels that the whole thing had reached such a stage that it might explode. Things are very wrong in the situation in which actions do not suit the words and the rulers go about pretending that they are fulfilling a responsibility. What lies underneath it all is the primitive and savage instinct to attack and destroy everything that seems alien. She feels that a mighty cataclysm would end this charade; to her the sleeping Vishnu looked as if "he might awake at any minute and take them to oblivion in a crack of happy thunder."⁷³

Just as Daphne acknowledges her aberrations and subterfuges, Robin White - the civilized and reflective Commissioner of Mayapore - recognises his own set of prejudices. Scott's personal experiences come in handy when he explores through the Anglo-Indians like White, Daphne, Reid and Merrick, the elements of an alien culture that seem incomprehensible to them. Robin White becomes Scott's mouthpiece for stating his political and moral ideas. But more than that, Robin

White, like the author, knows and understands India because he is in love with the place and the people. In Jewel he recalls the moment when he had fallen in love with India:

My bowels were in a terrible state and I couldn't face anything let alone a toddy. I was lying on a charpoy without a mosquito net and suddenly saw the middle-aged Indian woman standing in the doorway watching me.....⁷⁴

The lady feeds him curds. By next morning White feels much better and the sight of the empty bowl and a flower next to it makes him feel as if he has been given back his humanity:

.....I felt that the curds and the flower were for affection, not tribute, affection big enough to include a dash of motherly criticism, the suggestion that my indisposition could be overcome easily enough once I learned I had no real enemies.⁷⁵

Mr. White never forgot the lesson. This is why he ignores the critical looks directed at him when he escorts two Indians into the all-white club at Mayapore. Incidentally, he thinks poorly of Kipling. He believes in the moral drift of history:

It was then a question of the greater morality outlasting and outweighing the lesser which was why, of course, in the end the Indians won.⁷⁶

The impetus behind the "moral drift" is the force of individual conscience. The White Man under the peepul tree performs his job honourably so long as he listens to the voice of his conscience. Paternalism becomes a farce when it is divorced from morality. Speaking for himself, White says:

I simply wasn't cut out for paternalism.
My superiors were the last of the breed.⁷⁷

White represents the reforming aspect of the I.C.S. His views as contained in the typescript in The Jewel convey a humane reading of the rape and the subsequent riots at Mayapore. His type is opposed to the type of Brigadier Reid (whose name spelled backwards reads like Dyer); the contrast is between a liberal and an imperialist. Reid's attitude becomes apparent when he begins his address to the Berkshire lads by quoting Kipling's lines:

"- its Tommy this, an' Tommy that an'
'Tommy, fall be'ind
But it's 'please to walk in front, Sir when
there's trouble in the wind --"⁷⁸

Reid typifies the psychology of the authors of the military memoirs that Scott had intensely disliked. "I loathe his type," Scott had confided to Ronald Gant" but I tried to get into his skin." ⁷⁹ Reid feels that the Congress Party is made up of a bunch of hooligans and has no patience with their antics. The Quit India Resolution seemed a suicidal design to him. His distrust of Gandhi colours his view:

My own belief was and remains that non-violent non-cooperation movement was planned down almost to fine detail by underground members of the Congress acting on instructions from those who wished to look like the trio of monkeys "hearing no evil, speaking no evil, seeing no evil." ⁸⁰

Such a reading leads him to adopt a stern attitude towards the Indians and come down heavily on them when the riots break out. He believes that the Indians take advantage when one is sympathetic to them. This idea reinforces his excessive reliance on force to secure compliance. He seems to concur with Miss Poulson's observation:

...how extraordinary and yet how logical that the two Europeans who had so far suffered injury in the present troubles were both women and both women of radical and pro-Indian views. ⁸¹

Reid supports Merrick when the latter arrests the young men on the suspicion that they had raped Daphne;

... I agreed, he seemed to have sufficient grounds to hold the men in custody on suspicion of this crime alone, which I thought was fortunate because once the story got round that an English girl had been outraged there wasn't a white man or woman in the country who wouldn't rejoice that the suspects were already apprehended. The effect on the Indian population of knowing that this kind of thing couldn't be got away with would also be exemplary.⁸²

Such attitudes are based on fear and they recall the Anglo-Indian paranoia during the Mutiny. They are also in direct contrast to White's calm and rational way of looking at things. The Deputy Commissioner finds Reid's attitude "emotional and non-analytical."⁸³ The difference between these two men hinges on the fact that while White is conscious of the duty he has towards the Indians, Reid is only aware of what the Indians owe to the British. Scott highlights Reid's views through the latter's recollection of the evidences of the British rule:

When I looked out on the maidan in the old artillery mess in Mayapore, or drove

round the cantonment, I could not help but feel proud of the years of British rule. Even in these turbulent times the charm of the cantonment helped one to bear in mind the calm, wise and enduring things. One had only to cross the river into the native town to see that in our cantonments and civil lines we had set an example for others to follow and laid down a design for civilized life that the Indians would one day inherit. It seemed odd to think that in the battle that lay ahead to stop all these from falling into the hands of the Japanese the Indians were not on our side.⁸⁴

Ronald Merrick, the Superintendent of Police at Mayapore, holds more rabid views. He represents the dark forces of British authoritarianism. Sister Ludmilla recalls the way he had eyed Kumar washing at the pump and selected him as his victim:

...so there he was, Merrick, the policeman, with his hairy red arms and china blue eyes, watching Kumar at the pump....⁸⁵

Her view is that the Bibighar affair began the night Kumar was found drunk near the river and brought to the sanctuary.

It was as if Fate had intervened to arrange that chance meeting between the two men. Hari's speech was better accented than Merrick's:

....in Merrick's book this counted against him. For in Merrick's voice there was a different tone, a tone regulated by care and ambition rather than by upbringing.⁸⁶

It was the beginning of a catastrophic association the meaning of which was apparent only to Sister Ludmilla:

Only I had seen the darkness in him (Kumar), and the darkness in the white man, in Merrick. Two such darknesses in opposition can create a blinding light. Against such a light ordinary mortals must hide their eyes.⁸⁷

The dangerous attraction between the white man and the black is "thicketed" around by Merrick's "secrecy and also with the prejudice he had learned because he was one of the white men in control of a black man's country."⁸⁸ After the first meeting, Merrick keeps an eye on the Indian and notices Daphne only when he sights her in Kumar's company in the maidan. He is appalled by her choice and he takes the first

opportunity to warn her against such an association. Daphne's reply is that she "personally didn't care what colour people were, and it was obviously only Hari's colour, the fact that he was an Indian that got people's goat."⁸⁹ To Ronald colour mattered, it was basic to every relationship. Daphne feels strongly about the prejudices men like Merrick exhibit in their behaviour. In her diary that she writes to explain her relationship with Kumar to Lady Manners, she equates her rape with what the Anglo-Indians, like Merrick, were doing to India:

Well there has been more than one rape.
 I can't say, Auntie that I lay back and enjoyed mine. But Lili was trying to lie back and enjoy what we've done to her country. I don't mean done in malice. Perhaps there was love. Oh, somewhere in the past, and now, and in the future, love as there was between me and Hari. But the spoilers are always there, aren't they? the Ronald Merricks....⁹⁰

Merrick takes a sadistic pleasure in torturing and humiliating Kumar after he is taken into police custody. Merrick's actions show how particular attitudes have the function of supporting vested interests and structures of authority. In the context of the Bibighar affair, he assumes the role

of Dyer. Merrick's method of operating also suggests that like Brigadier Reid he is firm in his commitment to maintain the British rule in India. Merrick presents the racist critique of the imperialist dream.

Scott recreates his period through an imaginative understanding of the situation, the place and the people. The central core of the novel exhibits the curious antipathy between Merrick and Kumar. The Bibighar incident rings like an echo throughout the novel and even suggests the possibility of the story continuing in some other place and with some other people. At the end of the novel the Stranger - the person who reconstructs the tragic events of the time - sees Parvati (Daphne's daughter) running down the steps of the Macgregor House and surmises:

...this is to leave the Macgregor House with the idea of Parvati admirably suited to her surroundings where there is always the promise of the story continuing instead of finishing....⁹¹

The British-Indian affair was by no means over and Scott planned to write more novels based on the theme.

He uses a complex narrative method in Jewel. Much of the novel comes through to us in the form of the interviews, notes and details collected by the shadowy unnamed Traveller/Stranger who visits India in 1964. This man reconstructs the events of 1942 after a gap of more than two decades. This distancing allows Scott to have the kind of flexibility that is necessary for the depiction of a human drama in the context of an actual historical background; it also helps him to place the Bibighar rape and the Quit India riots in neat perspective with the developments in the subsequent years. Everything is referred back to the failure of the British to unify India. Almost all the liberal Anglo-Indian characters in the novel harp on this fact - Mr. White, Daphne, Miss Crane and Lady Manners. The last one is determined to leave Rawalpindi in 1947 as she cannot bear the thought of living in the midst of people who would become India's enemies at the stroke of a pen.

The Stranger collects the testimony of the people who are connected with the Bibighar event. There are two third person narratives - the stories of Miss Crane and of Hari Kumar. Lili Chatterjee, Sister Ludmilla and Robin White speak or convey in writing their recollections to the Stranger. Vidyasagar - the Indian with radical views -

makes a statement in the form of a deposition. Brigadier Reid reveals his interpretation and reaction to the events in his memoir. Then, there is a description of the changes in the club where the Stranger meets the Indians after the equations between the British and Indians had changed in the post-Independence scenario. Daphne's journal presents her side of the story and finally there are a few letters written by Lady Manners to Lily Chatterjee which contain her views on the changes that came about in the wake of India's independence. The form of the novel, therefore, is one of approach, through different eyes, through different histories, from different vantage points to a central Point of reference, which is exemplified in the original image" ⁹² - of Daphne running.

The Gathering Clouds : The Day of the Scorpion :

Scott considered the break-up of India in 1947 as Britain's biggest failure. The frequent outbreak of hostilities between India and Pakistan seemed to underline the tragedy of partition. Lady Manner's letters at the end of Jewel reveals the unease of a reflective mind conscious of its complicity in the affair:

The creation of Pakistan is our crowning failure. I can't bear it. They should

never have got rid of Wavell. Our only justification for two hundred years of power was unification. But we've divided one composite nation into two and everyone at home goes round saying what a swell the new Viceroy is for getting it all sorted out so quickly.⁹³

When war broke out between the two countries in 1965, Scott recapitulated Lady Manners' view - "it is all our fault (as Lady Manners said in one of those letters to Lady Chatterjee)".⁹⁴

In Jewel, Scott examines the circumstances leading to Daphne's rape and the events that followed it in the context of the Quit India riots. In The Day of the Scorpion he studies the situation in the Anglo-Indian society. He analyses their fears and reservations to highlight the tragedy of their exile. The focus is on a military family - the Laytons. Sarah Layton voices her protest against the debiliating signs of pettiness, snobbery and hypocrisy that mar the behaviour of her countrymen. The novel reveals the onset of the season of malaise; set against the background of the Japanese threat, Scorpion creates the impression that time is actually running out for the British in India.

Scott began jotting down his ideas for this novel on September 8, 1965. He wrote:

Every aspect of this novel should be a variation on the general theme of our failure to unify. It should take into account the gradual fraction of the liberal left on the idea that India was a unity, as well as the idea, happily seized upon by the reactionary right that it never was and never could be.⁹⁵

He was saddened by the outbreak of hostilities between the two sub-continental neighbours. In a letter to Dorothy Ganapathy, he mentioned the feeling of guilt that haunted his mind:

....no one has yet traced that responsibility back to the failure of the British to consolidate and unify. No one has yet had the courage to say Divide and Rule has come full circle. At best, on the man-in-the-side-street side there is a faded idea of paternalism gone wrong.⁹⁶

In the same letter he criticised the double standards - what he called "labour paternalism" - of the Wilson Government which happily overlooked the British encouragement of

fractional politics, and imposed an arms embargo on India:

They obviously imagine they are in a paternalistic position, vis-a-vis India. When they see "the children squabbling" they get out the big stick. They get it out by saying "No pocket money and no sweets this week...."⁹⁷

Scott felt that in the end India must be reunited because Pakistan has always been an impossible proposition. He regarded the war as an "extension" of getting rid of the British.

Scott believed that Jewel needed a sequel because it had not tackled all the issues such as - the situation that necessitated the British exit from India and forced the division of the country. But historical and political considerations apart, Scott also needed to round off the story of Jewel. "We are left, after the Daphne Manners Novel" he wrote, "with certain signposts for further action." He referred to "certain residual aspects of evidence that arouse our curiosity."⁹⁸ Hari Kumar had disappeared from the pages of Jewel and Lady Manners does not want to track him down. She writes to Lady Chatterjee expressing her sympathy for Kumar:

... No my dear. Leave poor Hari Kumar to work out his own salvation, if he is still alive to work it out and if there is any salvation of any kind for a boy like him. He is the left-over, the loose end of our reign, the kind of person we created - I suppose with the best intentions.⁹⁹

The sequel to Jewel needed to solve the mystery of what became of Hari Kumar. Merrick, who had evolved as one of the representatives of the raj, had to be brought back into the action of the Quartet series : Scorpion gives us a view of his later life. The Indian side of the story was too sketchily drawn in the first novel. Hari and Lili Chatterjee (articulate and westernised) do not represent the core of feeling that might be taken to be typically Indian. For Scorpion, Scott invented a Muslim Congressman who articulates the nationalistic feelings of the times.

Scott had read enough about the British - Indian connection to realize that some major historical events - such as the Black Hole Tragedy, the Retreat from Kabul, the Indian Mutiny, the Jallianwallah Tragedy and the Quit India riots - were responsible for the hardening of British and Indian attitudes. He was more critical of the Anglo-Indian posture, as the group showed its overdeveloped

sense of devotion to the cause that Scott called "the stern righteousness of paternalism and a sense of divine mission."¹⁰⁰ Such an attitude led them to ignore all uncomfortable questions and oppose every liberal reform. There seemed to be one set of principles at work in Britain and another reserved for use in the colony. Echoes of the historical events that aggravated the racial feelings are sounded throughout the Scorpion as Scott goes about the task of recreating the situation that made India's partition inevitable.

The turning point came in 1942. Cripps' proposals "killed at one blow the myth of unification."¹⁰¹ The Congress rejected the plan and resorted to Quit India as a consequence of which its leaders were arrested. This created a vacuum and "left the field wide open for the megalomaniac Jinnah."¹⁰² Another fallout to the failure of the Cripps' mission was that some members of the Congress - the most outstanding being Subhas Chandra Bose - were so incensed with Britain's prevaricating tactics, that they came to feel that the only way to get rid of the British was to side with her enemies - Germany and Japan. Thus began the I.N.A. experiment. These developments are examined in Scorpion.

The novel opens out in time and place to question the British failure to unify India; Scorpion

also conducts an inquiry into the Muslim position vis-a-vis the aspirations espoused by the predominantly Hindu Congress Party; the novel portrays the dilemma of a prominent Muslim Congressman; it records the unease of the Princes and every other factor that threatened the structure of the provincial government. M.A. Kasim emerges as a powerful character and his principled political stand enables him to question the political drift caused by the makeshift alliances of the day. Scott turns the spotlight on the military side of the raj and indicates thereby that much of Britain's authority depended on the use of force. Another theme that emerges in the novel is British paternalism typified in the phrase "man-bap." It introduces the subject of Indian intransigence; with the Japanese threat looming large over the country, the novel investigates the strange case of the Indian P.O.Ws actively siding with Britain's enemies. Scott views the I.N.A. phenomenon from all sides. He shows its bearings on the military side, the impact it had on the Congress and Gandhi and, finally, tackles the contentious issue of divided loyalty.

It had taken Scott about a year to write Jewel but Scorpion took much longer to finish. It was "a very difficult book to write (there were) so many

strands to sort out." ¹⁰³ Scott believed that during the last few years of the British rule in India, it had become quite apparent that the policy of Divide and Rule had come full circle. He wrote to John Willey - "I suppose the key idea in Scorpion, or one of the key ideas, is that reference to India as the place where the British came to the end of themselves as they were. I am trying to illustrate the moral drift of history. Trying to give it steel in the backbone was the reason it took so long in the factory." ¹⁰⁴

Scott invoked so many images of the Anglo-Indians - in work and retreat - that he ran out of space even before he reached the situation in the country in 1945. The prologue shows a stranger reconstructing the history of the Anglo-Indians on the basis of the evidences of British rule that still remain in Ranpur. He sees the odd buildings, the telegraph lines, road and rail links, the signs of legal and administrative machinery, the clubs, messes and barracks - and he reminisces:

... These were bequeathed, undoubtedly; these and the language and the humpy graves in the English cemetery of St. Luke's in the oldest part of the cantonment, many of whose headstones record an early

death, a cutting-off before the prime or in the prime, with all that this suggests in the way of unfinished business.

But it is not these things which impress the stranger What impresses him is something for which there is no memorial but which all these things collectively bear witness to : the fact that here in Ranpur, and in places like Ranpur, the British came to the end of themselves as they were.¹⁰⁵

Scott read Nehru's Discovery of India (1946) where he found Nehru arguing the case for the Congress and criticising the failure of the British to call for fresh elections in the provincial and central governments between 1939 and 1942. Scott also felt that instead of allowing the Governors to carry on exercising full executive powers the Viceroy should have moved towards a national government as proposed by C.R. Rajagopalachari and supported by the Congress.

Scott invented the character Muhammed Ali Kasim, who articulates most of his ideas on politics. Kasim is shown as having served as Chief Minister of Ranpur from 1937 until his resignation in 1939. Scott read A.K. Azad's India Wins Freedom (1959) the ghosted autobiography

of the Muslim Congressman who was the party's president from 1940 to the middle of 1946. He found Azad a man with an "overwhelming sense of his own importance."¹⁰⁶ Such a man cannot have been a model for his Kasim. Scott shows the latter standing like a bridge over the Hindu-Muslim divide. Kasim's position is wholly opposed to Jinnah's and he rejects the overtures of the British and the League because : "His desire for unity had become central to his policy".¹⁰⁷

Scott was fairly knowledgeable about the state of affairs in Princely India. He makes his Mirat a "paradigm of political virtue"¹⁰⁸ as he did not subscribe to the general belief that all small principalities were necessarily hot-beds of corruption. His view was that:

Quite a number of them were as virtuous as Mirat, if they were well-advised and had progressive minded rulers and had a good Dewan or Wazir (of whatever nationality). The thing is that you seldom heard about them because scandal and bad news are always more memorable than virtue and good news. If I had made my Mirat a hot-bed of autocratic corruption I would have thought myself guilty of following an easy, popular line. Apart from which,

of course, the state of Mirat obviously had to reflect the characters of the Nawab and Bronowsky...¹⁰⁹

The Count, Dmitri Bronowsky is a white Russian emigre whose strategy is "to turn all differences in Indian life and culture to advantage....." ¹¹⁰ His attitude is in direct contrast to the British policy in India.

Scorpion discusses the I.N.A. movement which is shown as coinciding with the political developments in the country in the wake of the Quit India situation. Scott had read Hugh Toye's The Springing Tiger and other relevant books and material related to the I.N.A. and its charismatic leader - Netaji. They helped him to reconstruct the events that led to the scene of the final confrontation between Kasim and his eldest son Sayed (who had defected to Bose's side), even if much of his knowledge on the subject was to come of use in the last two novels of the Quartet.

The Layton and Muir families are representative of Anglo-India. Scott shows Teddie Bingham as harbouring the impossible paternalistic dream and even dying for it. Three sections of the Scorpion feature them almost exclusively. The titles

of three sections - "A History", "A Wedding", and "A Christening" hint at the forces at work to perpetuate the raj. The title of the novel encapsulates the feeling of insecurity in the Anglo-Indians which they sought to cushion by an exaggerated sense of pride in the family and national histories. Scott had initially intended to take the novel down to 1947 and it is in that context that his choice of the title metaphor is fully explained:

Scorpions are very sensitive to heat, which is why they live under stones. The rains drive them out into the open. There was an old belief that if you surrounded them with a ring of fire they committed suicide. But actually they are shrivelled by the heat, and when they dart out their tails, they're not committing suicide but trying to attack. Well that's what so much of the British in India was all about. They were scorched by fires they had really set light to themselves.

....Its the Day of the Scorpion because this book is supposed to be taking us to the eve of Independence - when we are all flushed out from under the stones.¹¹¹

Sarah remembers how as a child he had watched Dost Muhammed killing a Scorpion by encircling it with a ring of fire. Mabel later tells her that contrary to the general notion, scorpions do not sting themselves to death, they are killed by the heat. This helps Sarah to link two truths together and come up in support of the British policy -

...the last thing (Sarah) would want her father to do if he lost a battle was fall on his sword.... It would be impractical of the Scorpion to kill itself.... It was more practical of the Scorpion to attempt to survive by darting its venomous tail in the direction of what surrounded it and was rapidly killing it. Just as brave too. Perhaps braver. After all, there was a saying : Never say die.¹¹²

The structure of the novel became complex because characters such as the Laytons exist not merely as individuals but also as representatives of certain attitudes - even as the plot widens to capture the tragic drift as India moves at once towards liberation and dismemberment.

Scott examines the central situation from different angles but retains the use of the Stranger/Traveller

as the hidden narrator. This person is travelling around in England and India collecting information from people.

The Prologue mentions the Muslim woman in burkha whom the Stranger encounters in Ranpur; it is then that he pauses to think of what might have happened to the rest - the thousands of the faithful who had thronged the mosque on the Id festivals:

Some of those that still remain mourn friends and relatives who chose Islam but never reached the land of promise having died on the way....¹¹³

The reference is to partition and the bloodshed that accompanied it. The next section of the novel focuses on Kasim as if to underline the tragedy of his political marginalisation. Kasim is shown conversing with the Governor - Sir Malcolm. The latter tells him that he wants him in his Executive Council. Kasim refuses the offer saying:

"....you only offer me a job. I am looking for a country and I am looking for it alone."¹¹⁴

The Bibighar affairs are revisited when Kasim draws the Governor's

attention to some distressing questions that had remained unanswered. The reference by Sir Malcolm, to Sayed's capture serves to introduce the subject of the I.N.A. Kasim also reads the notices in Times of India - one announcing the birth of Daphne's daughter and another mentioning her death in childbirth. He wonders what motive might have guided Lady Manners in her decision to insert the notices:

... I suppose she is telling us that she will never forgive us for what a handful of our men did on that particular night. Or do these announcements mean that she has forgiven us now and taken the child so tragically and violently conceived to her heart, for India's sake? One cannot tell.¹¹⁵

The next section of Scorpion shows Lady Manners in her houseboat at Srinagar bringing up the child - Parvati with assistance from her Indian menials. No visitors call on her because her own people do not understand why she wants to have the child - the "vocal repository"¹¹⁶ for the memories that her countrymen are pretending to forget. To them it amounts to a "scandal". So, when Sarah visits her, she shows the courage to defy tradition and herd sentiment. Sarah's "broodiness" strikes Lady Manners as

as being quite "odd and intricate, not at all the result of simple self-absorption."¹¹⁷

For large stretches of Scorpion it is Sarah who supplies a broad perspective on things and issues. She has inherited her aunt's (Mabel) fierce independence. The latter had refused to contribute to Dyer's Fund because her sympathies were not really with him but with his victims. Sarah's younger sister Susan exists as a foil to her; while Sarah is fond of questioning because she does not believe that anything can be self-evident, Susan usually avoids making any sort of scrutiny. She is the typical memsahib who enjoys the attention she receives from the unattached Anglo-Indian males. Sarah begins to realize that people like Teddie and Susan close their eyes to the fact that Colonel Layton's generation could well be the last of the Anglo-Indians to choose India as their home. Sarah is conscious of the fact that in Anglo-India everything is coming to an end; she cannot close her eyes to the truth. With her questioning habit, her seriousness and "broodiness", Sarah stands outside the circle of the Pankot memsahibs. Mrs. Smalley points out that the problem with Sarah is that she does not take the raj seriously:

.... Any of it.... us. India. What we're here for. I mean in spite of everything. In spite of her - well, what she was brought up to. I mean although men never talk about it, they feel it, don't they? ... I believe that after a while they get a horrible feeling she's laughing at them. At all of us.¹¹⁸

Mrs. Smalley goes on to echo Lady Manners' observation:

...I couldn't help feeling she was thinking a lot.... she made me feel that everything we were saying was somehow a joke to her, the joke she couldn't share.¹¹⁹

Her observation, especially the last one, is a shrewd one because Sarah really has no illusion about the Anglo-Indian position: "A dead hand lay over the whole enterprise". But the ritual went on with men like Teddie marrying girls like Susan. Sarah finds their attitude mirthless and irresponsible -

It was mirthless because it was irresponsible and irresponsible because the notion of responsibility was the notion of a vanished age.¹²⁰

Sarah comes to view, with consternation, the fact that for a good lot of her countrymen in India there was no private life - only a public one:

Their faces seemed to be "aware of the need to express something remote, beyond their capacity to imagine - martyrdom in the cause of a power and responsibility they ... had collectively inherited, and the stiffness of a refusal to be intimidated; group expressions arising from group psychology." ¹²¹

While Sarah is not pretty, her face would wear well because it was Layton face. She has also inherited from her forefathers the streak of toughness which enables her to weather the storms. She offers quiet support to Mildred - her mother - who is under tremendous strain because Col. Layton, her husband, has been taken a prisoner of war in Germany. Sarah is pragmatic and sincere in her commitments. Unlike Susan, who "creates an illusion of herself as the centre of a world without sadness,"¹²² the girl with "the gift for making let's pretend real, "Sarah has the ability to live with the errors and unpleasantness of real-life situations.. She knows that the years of belief were over and those of disbelief had begun. She is haunted by the

knowledge of the gathering threat to the British rule in India. On one occasion when Susan asks her: "Why are we finished, Sarah? Why don't we matter?" her silent reply to it is:

Because we don't really believe in it anymore. Not really believe. Not in the way I expect grandfather Layton believed - grandfather and those Muirs and Laytons at rest, at peace, fulfilled, sleeping under the hummocky graves, bone of India's bone; and our not believing seems like a betrayal of them....¹²³

After Teddie's death Sarah goes to visit the injured Merrick at a Calcutta hospital and learns from him the circumstances of her brother-in-law's death. Merrick tells her:

He went down for the regiment. I told you there was a touch of the old fashioned gallantry in it. All that paternalist business really meant something to him. Man-bap....¹²⁴

At Calcutta, Sarah allows herself to be seduced by Major Clark because even her virginity had a role in the matter of fixing her identity and at that time her only desire

was to cast off the enchantment with her inherited identity. She realizes that the old Flagstaff House values needed to be readjusted to ensure the survival of those who held them:

It was a survival of exiles. Their enemy was light not dark, the light of their own kind, of their people at home from whom they have been cut off for too long.¹²⁵

She thinks it is about time they all went home.

Merrick enters the pages of Scorpion as Teddie's best man. We are told that he has left the police and is presently in the army - perhaps as a consequence of the events at Mayapore. The odd stone thrown at him, the rusty bicycle placed at his doorstep, cabalistic signs painted outside his mess room and the figure of a white clad woman in supplication - all point towards the fact that this actor in the Bibighar affair has been tracked down. But Merrick's attitude shows no signs of change. He swears by his previous racist views even though there is a suggestion that the Bigighar event is something he has not forgotten. Early in their association, he tells Sarah that when she consorted with Ahmed she reminded him

of Daphne. He had thought, for a brief while at least, that Ahmed was not quite different from Kumar:

And yet not Kumar's type. Physically yes, but finally Kasim bears no more resemblance to Kumar than you do to Miss Manners. But in the taxi, I think there was a sort of a fantasy in my mind of Hari and Daphne about to come together again..... 126

Later he came to realize that Sarah and Ahmed were different inasmuch as they had their barriers up against each other. Daphne's mistake, as Merrick tells Sarah, was to cross the line that divides the Anglo-Indians and the Indians:

She didn't see why a line had to be drawn. But its essential, isn't it? You have to draw a line. Well it is arbitrary. nine times out of ten perhaps you draw it at the wrong place. But you need it there, you need to be able to say : There's the line. This side of it is right. That side is wrong. Then you have your moral term of reference. Then you can act. You can feel committed. You can be involved. Your life takes on something like a shape. It has form. Purpose as well, may be.... 127

Merrick believes that a white woman should be more careful than her male counterpart in avoiding any contact with a coloured man because a white man has the dominant position vis-a-vis a woman of whatever colour. Merrick says:

There is this connotation paleness has of something more finely, more delicately adjusted. Well - superior. Capable of leading. Equipped mentally and physically to dominate. A dark-skinned man touching a white-skinned woman will always be conscious of the fact that he is diminishing her. She would be conscious of it too.¹²⁸

Sarah begins to understand his motivations and sees him as "a man chilled by an implacable desire to be approached, accepted."¹²⁹ Bronowsky's surmise is that Merrick's habit of tidiness is the characteristic of a man who wants to be organising centre of his own life. As a self-made man, Merrick is contemptuous of those who enjoy the privileges their birth entitles them to. This is one of the reasons for his dislike for Kumar.

Scorpion contains a long drawn out scene in which Kumar is examined by Rowan and Gopal while Lady Manners watches it all from a hidden position. The long

interrogation reveals Merrick's perverse handling of the case. The events recapitulated by Kumar show that the police officer had forced him to enact the reality of the situation in British India. Kumar calls it "a situation of enactment"¹³⁰ and Merrick's words at the time were that:

....ideas without enactment lose their significance. He said that if people would enact a situation they would understand its significance. He said that history was a sum of situations whose significance was never seen until long afterwards because people had been afraid to act them out.....¹³¹

So, the Daphne-Kumar affair, the Bibighar event, and Merrick's concern for Daphne are all peripheral issues. The real issue was between Merrick and Kumar. Even then, it was not enough to say that one was the ruler and the other the ruled; what was more basic to their relation - according¹³² to Merrick - was the "contempt" on his side and the "fear" on Kumar's. This explains the situation in which Merrick subjects Kumar to violent beating and sexual abuse. The Bibighar affair, according to the former, symbolised the liberal corruption of both British and Indians. He also feels that the British admiration for the martial and faithful

servants was nothing but "a mixture of perverted sexuality and feudal arrogance";¹³³ when they feigned admiration for the Indian intellectuals "all that they were admiring or sympathising with was the black reflection of their own white ideals."¹³⁴ Lady Manners's comment on the whole sordid episode is:

We must remember the worst because the worst is the lives we lead. The best is only our history, and between our history and our lives there is this vast dark plain where rapt and patient shepherds drive their invisible flocks in expectation of God's forgiveness.¹³⁵

In Jewel, White had remarked on the "beat" and "pause"¹³⁶ - which he called - the unrecorded moments of history; Kumar's deposition fills in these unrecorded moments and uncovers the "Areas of dangerous fallibility between a policy and its pursuit."¹³⁷

It is appropriate that Merrick should tell Sarah about the two persons who had clung to the impossible paternalist dream; one of them being Miss Crane - hopelessly attached to her allegorical print, and the other being Teddie with his faith in man-bap; Miss Crane had done

in Muzzafirabad what Teddie had tried to do for a Muzzy Guide who had become a J.I.F.F., the other thing that linked Miss Crane and Teddie, was the fact that both died by fire.

Sarah begins to see Merrick for what he is when he reveals himself in course of his conversation:

Merrick, of course, is (a) trying to create an impression on Sarah, inviting her in as it were, and (b) trying to talk himself out of his bad conscience while at the same time preening himself. He's also hamming a bit, enjoying the wounded soldier gambit. Given half a chance Merrick will always gab.¹³⁸

He gives her the impression that he is still haunted by his past actions - that Kumar and his aunt as his victims lay "like a dead weight on that conscience of his which he said he could examine but give a clean bill to".¹³⁹ Perhaps the way into him was "to become his victim and haunt his conscience." Merrick is unapproachable because "there was no way into him at all, and all the people he chose as victims lay scattered on his threshold." He is "the dark side, the arcane side" of the raj.

You reveal something that is sad about us, as if out here we had built a mansion without doors and windows, with no way in and no way out. All India lies on our doorstep and cannot enter to warm us or be warmed. We live in holes and crevices of crumbling stone, no longer sheltered by the carapace of our history which is leaving us behind. And one day we shall lie exposed, in our tender skins. You as well as us.¹⁴⁰

With this, Scott rounds off his original metaphor of the scorpions, and hints at the fate that awaits the British in India.

The Tragedy of Rootlessness : The Towers of Silence:

In the summer of 1968 Scott was busy making notes on his next novel which is called The Towers of Silence. He set down to serious work on it in September and by October he began planning to return to India. He flew to Bombay on 4th January 1969. Throughout the cold months of that year Scott was busily working on the novel.

Towers dramatises the differences of thought and perception between the British at home and those

still in India. It narrows down to the consciousness of a single person - a retired missionary Barbara Batchelor - who had made a brief appearance as Mabel's paying guest in Scorpion. She is "the central channel for things going on."¹⁴¹ In the novel Scott is trying to amalgamate the multiplicity of themes that emerged in course of Scorpion:

In a way many old strings are gathered together again but what we are trying to get at here, through Miss Batchelor, is a sort of synthesis of the currents of emotion in course..... The time scheme is 1939 - 45 beginning with the start of the War and the retirement of Barbara Batchelor.¹⁴²

This novel is a quiet book as compared to Jewel, Scorpion and Division. Its tone is elegiac. At the time of writing it Scott had already realized that there was going to be four raj novels instead of three; he wanted Towers to be "the sort of contemplative pause that pushes everything a bit deeper and from which all themes etc., will emerge clearly enough to leave Division as for more a book of action."¹⁴³ When he began it, he had only a vague idea of getting "down underneath all previous material" and "coming out with something coherent from the point of view of theme -

clearing the ground for the action of the final part":

Originally Towers was supposed to end the sequence with Miss Batchelor's story forming Book One, but it separated itself and once I had admitted it I was able to ponder it all out and adjust the rhythm.¹⁴⁴

Miss Batchelor retires to Pankot - the quiet hill station. The novel's view of reality is predominantly what Barbie's side-long glances reveal to her. The views seem authoritative and unbiased because the elderly spinster's homeless and rootless position enables her to view the whole situation with objectivity. Barbie introduces the readers to Mabel, the Rankins and the Smalleys, and most importantly, to the Laytons. She reveals the doubts and misgivings of the tired Anglo-Indians who are beginning to realise that they all have to leave the country.

Once again, the focus is on the Layton family; here the circumstances presented in Scorpion are explored in greater detail in the context of the fast-paced political developments that impinge on the lives of the family members. The domestic situation is also subtly

orchestrated with the happenings in the European and the Far Eastern war theatres. Gradually the small but highly articulate Pankot Anglo-Indians begin to sense what lies ahead for them:

This sense of danger, of the sea-level rising, swamping the plains, threatening the hills, this sense of immediate inundation was one to which people were now not unaccustomed and although the outbreak of war in Europe had momentarily suggested the sudden erection of a rocky headland upon which to stand fast, the headland was far away, in England and India was very close and all about... ¹⁴⁵

Scott highlights the anomaly of the Anglo-Indians clinging to old purposes and values in the face of the dramatic changes of public opinion at home in the inter and post-war situation. He goes on to show his characters suffering "a loss of belief in their inherited values and awareness of their irrelevance in the eyes both of Indians and their own people in Britain. They are melancholy exiles... captive to the past burdened by the crushing weight of their own history, caught in what Emerson had called 'the moral drift of history.'" ¹⁴⁶ Barbie's tin-trunk of missionary

relics becomes a compelling symbol for that history - both personal and universal. The missionary woman feels its weight along with the weight of her present and expectations of the future. It becomes a symbol of her displacement and humiliation - as she and her trunk get shunted from one place to another. It seems to epitomise the entire situation of the raj:

A comic but horrifying thought took hold: of old Miss Batchelor, homeless, seated on a trunk in the middle of the bazaar surrounded by her detritus, unpacking and rebuilding the monument there, to the amusement of Hindu and Muslim shopkeepers who would interpret such a sight as proof that the entire raj would presently and similarly be on its uppers.¹⁴⁷

Through Barbie, Scott highlights the anachronistic, imperialist, and paternalist ideologies. The sense of mission is now lost and Barbie acknowledges her failure:

...my life here has indeed been wasted because I have lived it as a transferred appendage, as a parlour maid, the first in line for the morning prayers while the mistress of the house... kneels like

myself in piety for a purpose. But we have no purpose that God would recognise as such.¹⁴⁸

The novel derives its title from the name the Parsees give to their high platforms where they expose their dead to the vultures. It explicates the point made by Clark in Scorpion when he explained to Sarah his reading of the Anglo-Indian situation:

.....its all as dead as yesterday, isn't it? You ought to bury its body, or expose it to the vultures like the Parsees do. It didn't survive the Great War. It makes an awful smell.....¹⁴⁹

The title, then, indicates the demise of the raj in appropriate symbolic terms.

In 1967 Scott read the published diaries and correspondence of the Secretary of an Edwardian Viceroy (Servant of India : A Study of the Imperial Rule 1905-10 by Sir James Dunlop ed Martin Gilbert) which deepened his understanding of "the burden of experiences and attitudes that had long been discarded by the British at home." In his review article "Anglo-Indian Attitudes" written in 1967,

Scott observed that there were three concerns that shaped Anglo-India's "highly developed sense of community"; he called the first of these "companionship in exile" - which generated a mentality resistant to change; the second of these was their sense of pride in belonging to an exclusive club; the third factor that bound them together was their desire to defend their supposed obligations in the face of all odds.

In Towers Scott set out to examine the link between British paternalism and Indian loyalty which spawned the concept of man-bap. Sarah tells Barbie that Merrick believed that Teddie had died for man-bap. This information leads Barbie to reflect:

Man-bap.... It meant Mother-Father, the relationship of the Raj to India, of a man like Colonel Layton to the men of his regiment, of a district officer to the people of his district, of Barbie herself to the children. She had taught Man-bap. I am your father and your mother. Yes, the picture had been an illustration of this aspect of imperial attachment; the combination of hardness and sentimentality from which Mabel had turned her

face. If Teddie had died in an attempt to gather strayed sheep into a fold she saw why Captain Merrick might remember the picture.¹⁵⁰

Barbie does not concur with Merrick's view that even Miss Crane's gesture of holding the Indian's hand stood for man-bap. To her it reads more like despair - something that her suicide note also points at : "There is no God. Not even on the road to Dibrapur."¹⁵¹ Mildred is one of the few of the Anglo-Indians who still believe in man-bap. Teddie's death, in her opinion, is a "blameless death", his praiseworthy sacrifice is "worth the whole bloody war put together."¹⁵² Mildred's attitude helps her to "withstand the countless irritations to which English women in India were naturally subjected."¹⁵³ But the pressure of keeping her lonely flag flying - the ritual of visiting the homes of her husband's subordinates and offering words of encouragement and comfort to them, exhausts her:

At first her expression remained stable... but presently.... it began to lose definition, as though the face which it controlled was gradually slackening...¹⁵⁴

Mildred represents a lost age:

Her languor was not that of someone superiorly regretting the passing of the golden age. The illumination of Mildred Layton made by the hummocky grass was one of contrast; contrast in deductions and expectations from identical promises and identical investment. Mildred's enemy was history.... and the evidence of cessation which a clear look into the future might reveal did not countermand her duty to the existing order of things if she continued to believe in it.¹⁵⁵

Her outdated views drag her down and lead her to seek comfort in drinks and covert sex. Barbie's view of the adulterous coupling of Mildred and Kevin which she call a "human parody of divine creation"¹⁵⁶ underscores the Mildred's frustration :

It was as though the world outside the subterranean room was dying or extinct and the joyless coupling was a bitter hopeless expression of the will of the woman for the species to survive.¹⁵⁷

Barbie also feels that Mildred's ride to the valley "offering matriarchal wisdom to women much older and wiser than she "betrayed" an arrogance, the kind which Mabel always set her face against."¹⁵⁸

For Mabel and Barbie, man-bap was a hard, romantic doctrine that emphasised devotion, duty and loyalty but not love. Miss Crane's allegorical picture was incomplete because it had omitted vital fact. When Barbie comes across the line - "Man is explicable by nothing less than all his history" - (in a volume of Emerson's essays) she reflects :

(that) in her own experience lay an explanation not only of history but of the lives of other people, therefore an explanation of the things that had happened to Edwina and to Miss Manners of whom she had only the vaguest picture, the one that had commonly been shared in Pankot of a reclining figure, in white, in a darkened room. But now it had changed. The girl's hand was no longer pressed inverted against her forehead but held by another which was brown like the dead teacher's. The picture shimmered, became fluid. Colours and patterns ran. When Barbie sat at her desk and gazed at the actual picture she was no longer sure of what she saw : Edwina guarding the body, Mabel kneeling to grub out weeds or inclining to gather roses; or herself, Barbie surrounded by the black children she had presumed to bring to God; or

Miss Manners in some kind of unacceptable relationship with a man of another race whom she was intent on saving.¹⁵⁹

At this point, Barbie knows exactly what the allegorical print had left out - it was the unknown Indian whose presence might have revealed the value (if any) placed by the raj on love. Barbie finds her unknown Indian through Mabel - the person whose name Sarah had ringed with red to indicate her Indian connection:

Mabel's background is impressive. Her two husbands and her son by the second marriage have held important civil and military posts under the raj. Yet, Mabel has consistently refused to subscribe to the narrow Anglo-Indian codes. Despite standing like a guardian over the memory of an earlier golden age, Mabel lives her life in the way she chooses. At one point in Scorpion Colonel Layton says "There had always been a hard streak in her."¹⁶⁰ Earlier, she had surprised the Anglo-Indian community by refusing to contribute for General Dyer's fund. Her remark at the time was heavily laced with sarcasm:

Twenty-six thousand ? Well now, how many unarmed Indians died in the Jallianwallah Bagh ? Two hundred ? Three hundred ?

There seems to be some uncertainty, but lets say two hundred and sixty. That's one hundred pounds apiece. So we know the current price for a brown.¹⁶¹

Mabel went further in her defiance - she sent a cheque of £ 100 to one Sir Akbar Ali Khan (Muhammed Ali Kasim's father) who was collecting money for the Jallianwallah victims. Mabel's gesture seemed to suggest that she like others of her generation read only the "Capital letters of an ancient contract."¹⁶² She represents the raj with its mission intact. The Jallianwallah tragedy is the cross that she is forever conscious of carrying; it disturbs her even when she sleeps. Barbie reports that Mabel talks in her sleep; she mutters "Gillian Waller" - which to Barbie sounds like the name of a person. In her old age Mabel becomes hard of hearing and appears to be content to potter around in her rose garden:

Her days are spent in the celebration of the natural cycle of seed, growth, flower, decay, seed....."¹⁶³

On one occasion she tells Barbie:

No flower is quite like another of the species.... But from the house all one

sees is a garden, which is all there is to it in the long run.¹⁶⁴

The description also fits the Anglo-Indians. They are also like the palpitating butterflies of the lace used for Sarah's christening gown, a portion of which Barbie uses to cover her hand when she rides on the tonga.

Mabel has retreated from the present as though she had a prior knowledge of the doom that awaits the raj:

The truth could no longer be avoided. It had been a criticism of the foundations of the edifice, of the sense of duty which kept alive the senses of pride and loyalty and honour. It drew attention to a situation it was painful to acknowledge; that the God had left the temple, no one knew when, or how, or why. What one was left with were the rites which had once propitiated, once been obligatory but were now meaningless because God was no longer there to receive them. Poor Teddie. His was an end of an expository kind, like a last sacrificial attempt to recall godly favour.¹⁶⁵

Sarah regards Mabel and Daphne as freaks among the "temperate plants in the hot-house; they were the ones in whom the sap still ran."¹⁶⁶

The news of Edwina's death - she had set fire to herself - on 28 Oct. 1942, horrifies Barbie who wonders what would happen to Edwina's soul:

.... It would be settled in limbo which to Barbie was a bleak and incomprehensible but real place chilled by god's breath and darkened by the devil's brow.¹⁶⁷

The revelation of Edwina's despair uncovers Barbie's own and despite fighting spiritedly against her feeling of despondency, she begins to sense the growing distance between herself and God. She wonders what "gifts" her mission had brought to the children of India and "if - among them - there has ever been the gift of love." Barbie reflects on the apartness of the two worlds - British India and the India of the Indians:

The division is one of which I am ashamed. I have done nothing, nothing, to remove it, ever. My poor Edwina sat huddled by the roadside in the rain, holding that dead man's hand. That, I continually see, was significant. For me that image is like an old picture of the kind that were popular in the last century which told stories and pointed moral lessons. I see the caption, "Too late."¹⁶⁸

After Teddie's death, a name appears in the visitor's book at Flagstaff House - that of Lady Manners. Her quiet arrival serves to emphasise the sharp division between Anglo-India and the other India ("she had made herself one of them"). It uncovered an unpalatable truth - as if the old lady was saying "I am in your midst, think about it."¹⁶⁹

In Scorpion Clark had also referred to the cracks in the raj edifice. He told Sarah about the family he had met in 'Pindi and the feeling between him and them seemed somewhat like Lili's "that odd racial prejudice thing" - as if, inspite of belonging to the same race and having the same colour "one was black," him and "the others white, them." Clark felt as if he had met a family "who'd been preserved by some sort of Edwardian sunlight that got trapped between the Indian Ocean and the Arabian Sea round the turn of the century."¹⁷⁰ He had been tempted to say "Where have you all been ? Come back. All is forgiven." He expounds this philosophy of forgiveness:

I suppose one of the things you need to be forgiven for is deluding the Indians as well as yourselves into thinking that the values of 1911 are still current at home.¹⁷¹

1911 was the year of the Delhi Durbar.

There is a tragic air about Sarah. Her entire bearing seems to suggest "the melancholy arising from too long an exile, from too far a removal from the source of dynamic native experience."¹⁷² Barbie comes to understand Sarah's tragedy:

Looking at Sarah Barbie felt she understood a little of the sense the girl might have of having no clearly defined world to inhabit, but one poised between the old for which she had been prepared but which seemed to be dying and the new for which she had not been prepared at all. Young, fresh and intelligent, all the patterns to which she had been trained to conform were fading, and she was already conscious just from chance of casual encounter of the gulf between herself and the person she would have been if she had never come back to India : the kind of person she "really was."¹⁷³

Scott also delves deep into the mind of Isobel Rankin to uncover the patterns of thought of a believer in the imperial myth. She and Mabel stand at the opposite ends of the spectrum and poor Sarah is the Proserpine figure. Isobel knows all

about the errors and aberrations of the past, but if she were questioned on the benefits that India derived from the imperial connection she would have known what to say:

.... She would have been perfectly clear that it was the example so often given of personal trustworthiness; a virtue that flowed from courage, honesty, loyalty and common sense in what was to her a single definition of good. She did not see how a person or country could survive without it.¹⁷⁴

Isobel senses the indifference and apathy of her countrymen in Britain to India and her affairs. The absence of any kind of support from home had crippled the raj. In a situation where authority of any kind had become suspect in some eyes:

She feared ... there would be a demission of authority in India by her own people that would be possible only to describe as dishonourable if by demission one implied as one should a full discharge of every obligation.¹⁷⁵

While Isobel is aware of the moral drift against imperialism, she is unwilling to abandon her beliefs - the one thing

that might reconcile her to the inevitability of a transfer of power.

Barbie's view of reality is not cushioned by myths. She sees the sham behind it:

... The significance of her surroundings, the reality of this ordinariness, this shabbiness, this evidence of detritus behind the screens of imperial power and magnificence. The feeling she had was not of glory departing or departed but of the original and continual irrelevance to the business of being in India.....¹⁷⁶

Barbie remembers how Mabel had turned her back upon the imperial business; her sudden departure from Susan's party "had certainly made it feel through the empty chair" that it was a criticism of the foundations of the edifice, of the sense of duty which kept alive the senses of pride, loyalty and honour...."¹⁷⁷ Amidst such a condition, it is not Merrick's personality which stands out, but that of Mildred. But the glow that emanates from her does not warm or spread. Her desire to have Susan and Teddie's son named after the father - Edward Arthur David Bingham - speaks for her nostalgic attachment to the past; such an attachment leads her to come out in favour of maintaining continuity

and status quo. Mildred's problem is that she is unable to come to terms with the new condition. Her situation is summed up in one of Barbie's comments - "... The garden is a native garden. We are only visitors. That has been our mistake. That is why God has not followed us here."¹⁷⁸ In this topsy-turvy world Susan retreats into a shell and one day she takes her baby son out in the open, lays him down on the ground and creates a ring of fire around him - exactly in the way Dost Muhammed had done to kill a scorpion. This bizarre mimicry of that event and perhaps of Teddie's tragic death too, shocks everyone - except Barbie. The latter surmises that Susan may not have been out of mind, she had possibly entered it - "Perhaps that is why she is happy and smiles."¹⁷⁹

Barbie feels that she herself has failed to attain growth in India - "when I sailed for India I thought : Now I can be large again. But this has not been possible. One may carry the Word, yes, but the Word without the act is an abstraction so God does not follow....." ¹⁸⁰ In one of her tragic moods Barbie calls out to India - half in regret and half in hope : "India, she thought. India. India..."¹⁸¹ And her children seem to laugh and beg her to repeat the magic words. Then her voice becomes hoarse and finally it deserts her. It makes her feel that "The damage to

her voice.... was a punishment." ¹⁸² This threat eventually becomes real.

Barbie meets Merrick accidentally at Rose Cottage; their meeting takes place just prior to Barbie's melodramatic tonga ride. This is the occasion when Barbie presents him with a small copy of "The Jewel in the Crown," with the words:

One should always share one's hopes....
that represents one of the unfulfilled
ones... We've had everything in the picture
except what got left out... I call it
the unknown Indian. He isn't there.
So the picture isn't finished....¹⁸³

But Barbie has already found her 'unknown Indian.' He is Ashok - the child she meets on her daily visitations to Mabel's grave. She was the person who had impressed on Barbie the fact that the raj was in its death throes and Mabel's coffin, befittingly, signifies to Barbie the passing away of the raj - "There(she thought) went the raj..."¹⁸⁴ Gaffur's poem captures the mood - the illusoriness of dreams and the passage of time:

It is not for you to say, Gaffur
That the rose is one of God's creations.

Although its scent is doubtless that of heaven
In time the rose and the poet will both die
Who then shall come to this decision ?
(Trans. Edwin Tippitt)

x x x x x

You oughtn't to say, Gaffur,
That God created the roses,
No matter how heavenly they smell.
You have to think of the time when
You're both dead and smell nasty
And people are only interested in your
successors.¹⁸⁵

(Trans. Dimitri Bronowsky)

Towers ends with an appendix - an extract from a letter that M.A. Kasim wrote to Gandhi in August 1945:

I find myself uncertain which of the two recent events - the election of a socialist government in London and the destruction of Hiroshima by a single atom bomb - will have the profounder effect on India's future.¹⁸⁶

It serves to "underline the motif that runs through the book, of the distinction between the British and the British in India."¹⁸⁷

Barbie's insistence on loading her trunk on the tonga and riding down the hill in a November drizzle, proves to be her undoing. The trap goes out of control endangering her life and those of the driver and the horse. But just before it overturns, Barbie has a vision in which God seems to cast his light on her by first "casting the shadow of the prince of darkness across her feet."¹⁸⁸ Barbie has the sensation of "falling endlessly like Lucifer but without Lucifer's pride, and not she trusted, to his eventual destination."¹⁸⁹ Clarissa Peplow tells Sarah later how the crazed Barbie suddenly marched into the rectory saying that she had seen the devil and asking for a spade; Merrick is the devil and the spade is to resurrect Mabel.

The voiceless Barbie is obsessed with birds which are later identified as the vultures feeding on the carcasses exposed on the towers of silence of the Parsees. She sits "at the window watching through narrowed hungry eyes the birds that fed on the dead bodies of the Parsees." At night she blows dandelion clocks as "to blow them to the bone was the one way she now had of sleeping, sure in the Lord and the resurrection and the spade."¹⁹⁰ The Towers ends with her death on August 6, 1945.

After completing the novel Scott looked back to trace a sense of identification with Barbie:

I see now that her trunk of missionary relics....is really a symbol of the luggage I am conscious of carrying with me everyday in my life - the luggage of my past, of my personal history and of the world's history - luggage crammed with relics of achievement, of failure, of continuing aspirations and optimistic expectations.¹⁹¹

An Imaginative Reconstruction : A Division of the Spoils:

A Division of the Spoils is the last novel of the Raj Quartet. It focuses on the last few years of the British rule in India and shows up the rifts and fissures within the Indian polity. It had seemed at that time that independence would come but it would come at a price. For Scott, many issues remained to be tackled - the first of these was the question of partition and the division of assets and liabilities between India and Pakistan; there remained the task of sorting out the I.N.A. imbroglio; and the settlement of the question involving Princely states. Scott explains the novel's title in moral terms:

The spoils we are dividing are the moral spoils - the remnants of an old nineteenth century morality and notion of what we are in the world to do, either as a good

Fabian, a good Indian, a sensible Englishman, a bitter reactionary or a weeping colonel. Upon this division—the workaday world casts a casual eye.....¹⁹²

From one point of view, the division represented a "triumph of principles";¹⁹³ the Muslims got what they wanted in the form of Pakistan, the Congress aspiration for freedom was fulfilled; and in the end Britain was able to honour her commitments. That hundreds of people died during the transition, was quite another matter.

Scott uses a slightly ironic tone as an "illustration of English ignorance of India."¹⁹⁴ The tone is there in the first paragraph of the novel:

Hitler was dead, the peace in Europe was almost a month old; only the Japanese remained to be dealt with. In June the Viceroy left London, flew back to Delhi, said nothing in public for nearly two weeks and then announced a conference of Indian leaders at Simla to discuss the proposals which he hoped would ease the political situation.....¹⁹⁵

The characters in the last novel also allude to the swift historical developments of the day. There is, for instance,

Mrs. Peabody's observation on Anglo-Indians - "So you see we all end up like carpet sellers in Cairo" ¹⁹⁶; when Dmitri and Perron watch the flames engulfing a part of Mirat, the Russian says, "There are other illuminations at the front, not of my devising" ¹⁹⁷. He adds, "Meanwhile one feels a bit like Nero, in need of a fiddle. Perhaps I should send for the court musicians. But let us go and finish the champagne." Perron is struck by the irony of the situation - "Here luxury, elegance. A mile away, everything a man possessed going up in smoke." ¹⁹⁸

Scott began writing his notes on the novel in 1971. It took him three years to complete it. The opening shows the range of his knowledge of British and Indian history. He makes an adequate assessment of the situation in India during the fag-end of the raj. He delves deep into the Hindu/Muslim conflict. He dilates upon the problem faced by the Princes. But much of the novel is devoted to the subject of the Indian National Army. The theme had surfaced in the Scorpion - where Teddie is shown as sacrificing his life in Imphal in 1944 while appealing to two Jiffs (a corruption of JIFC, Japanese Inspired Fifth Column) Merrick sustains serious burns and mutilation when he tries to save Teddie. Scorpion also mentions Kasim's release in 1944

after news comes in that Sayed - his elder son has joined the I.N.A. In Towers Merrick lectures the officers in Mirat (1943) on I.N.A. movement. He goes on to question the loyalty of its men.

Scott evinced an interest in the I.N.A., way back in 1946 when he was responsible for guarding one of its officers in Bihar. He later came to feel that not many Englishman cared to know about the I.N.A. and as such they remained ignorant of the role these men played in India's freedom movement. He searched out the books that dealt with it. He read Shah Nawaz Khan's My Memories of INA and its Netaji (1946) and K.R. Palta's My Adventures With the INA and Two Historic Trials. In a letter to Dr. P.C. Gupta of Jadavpur University who had loaned him Shah Nawaz's book, Scott wrote:

My interest in the I.N.A. is, in a sense, relatively marginal to the book I am writing but I hate guessing or relying on an increasingly uncertain memory, when putting anything into a book, even through the book is only fiction.¹⁹⁹

Scott went on to read some other books such as A.B. Saqui Facts about INA (1946), Bhulabhai Desai's INA Defence (1945)

and INA Speaks (1946) and V.S. Kulkarni and K.S.N. Murthy's First Indian National Army Trial (1946). In 1969 he visited India and on his return he felt confident about tackling the subject:

.... I have valuable stuff from my trip in the form of notes I took at an interrogation of three ex-I.N.A. men . I am also in touch with one of the (then) young barristers who worked for the Defence Committee.²⁰⁰

In Division, Scott introduces a historian - Perron whose clairvoyance seems like a "breath of fresh air";²⁰¹ his training as a historian helps him to maintain the necessary detachment and objectivity. The primary narrative method used in Scorpion and Towers is reconstruction. Jewel uses a mix of commentaries and reconstructions; the same is done in the case of Division. It is made up of two books of uneven sizes - each covering a separate phase of Indian history. The first book covers the period between 4 August and 26 August 1945; it begins with the dropping of the atom bomb on Hiroshima and closes with the sealing of Kasim's political future. The second book is set in the period June to August 1947 - that is from Mountbatten's proposal for the transfer

of power to partition, independence and accession of the princely states. The novel leaves out a span of twenty-one months - the time lag between the periods covered by the two books. A lot happened at that time - the I.N.A. trials, the elections to the provincial and the central councils, the mutiny of the navy ratings, the visit of the Cabinet Mission, the Congress-League confrontation and the setting up of an interim government; then came the replacement for Wavell - Lord Mountbatten and it was the latter's decision to advance the date of the transfer of power that led to large-scale violence. Scott refers to all of them in an oblique way and structures the novel in a manner that everything keeps referring back to the I.N.A. problem - which, Scott believed, actually undermined the raj.

In Book I Perron and Purvis examine the situation in British India and come up with their own critiques. Three leading characters of the Quartet - Sarah, Merrick and Bronowsky come together accidentally when they meet at a party in Bombay. Sarah has come there to meet her father, Colonel Layton, who is returning home after his stay in Germany as a P.O.W. Merrick follows the Laytons to Pankot for the purpose of examining the Havildar from Colonel's regiment who had joined the Frei Hind in Germany.

Perron, who is now on Merrick's staff, also travels to Pankot and en route he meets his school friend Nigel Rowan. The latter is laying the ground for a meeting between the Governor and Kasim at Mirat. Scott uses a mixed method for this section; the first two chapters are reconstructions - one provided by Perron and the other by Sarah. The disturbing fact that emerges here is that Merrick wants to marry into the Layton family. His choice is Susan; Sarah is against such a match because she is aware of Merrick's diabolical nature. But, Colonel Layton "actually aware of returning to a new world in which the I.N.A. has shaken his belief in man-bap, accepts Merrick as an agent of the Raj's continuity."²⁰² This section of the novel has another reconstruction - the unusual but long-awaited confrontation between M.A. Kasim and Sayed. When the examination of Sayed is over, Kasim decides to retire from active politics because he is overwhelmingly aware of being "out of rhythm with the country's emotional feelings."²⁰³ Kasim's unease stems from the fact that while the Congress, the League and the majority of Indians are in favour of defending the I.N.A. undertrials, he himself cannot really condone his son's actions:

To my Sayed is a man whose actions remain indefensible because he broke his word,

he broke his contract. It follows that I cannot break mine. Never in my life shall I go over to Jinnah.....²⁰⁴

Book two of Division contains extracts from Perron's diaries and reconstructions. The scene is Mirat just on the eve of India's independence and Scott's remark on this section is :

... We are now at the climax of the book
 I have chosen (to get it) in Mirat because it is a Princely State and it was in such that the absolute indifference to the obligations of history is most clearly stated or exemplified.²⁰⁵

The period between September 1945 and June 1947 is depicted with the help of lengthy expositions on Halki's cartoons. As Hilary Spurling puts it, this is Scott's last salute to his own ambitions as a cartoonist. At the level of the story, too, it is Perron who reconstructs the events that led to Merrick's death with the help of the accounts provided by Bronowsky. Perron comes to know about Merrick's marriage to Susan, his appointment to the Mirat State Police, and his eventual death. The novel ends with the slaughter of Muslims as Mirat accedes to India. Kasim's younger son

is dragged out of a train compartment and brutally hacked to death.

Guy Perron is a Chillingborough product, and, as such, he is acquainted with two of his contemporaries in the Quartet, - Rowan and Kumar. He recalls Rowan's academic brilliance and tells Sarah that he had only known Nigel "as one of the minor figures in Olympus would know Zeus."²⁰⁶ Perron learns from Sarah that Rowan is now the A.D.C. to the Governor of Ranpur after his transfer from the army to the Political Department. Perron also remembers Kumar - his junior in school:

The way Coomer came into focus was in white flannels making one of those broad sweeps to leg which even Perron who had been bored by cricket and played it badly recognised as elegant.²⁰⁷

Perron also recalls asking Kumar about the difference between karma and dharma. The latter admitted that he did not know the answer as he had spent almost his entire life in England. It is from Merrick that Perron comes to know about the charge against Kumar - "He and five of his friends raped an English girl called Daphne Manners" ²⁰⁸ - and the historian feels that it is "melodramatic" and difficult to imagine.

Perron has a degree in history from Cambridge; he joined the army in 1941 and came to India in 1943. Scott's explanation, for bringing Perron into the Quartet, was that he needed someone who would wrap up the whole business with openness and a smile. He looked for a positive man who would be able to provide a commentary on the actual and fictional events from within the pages of the novel. As a professional historian, Guy Perron has cultivated an impartial stance; he has a methodical approach to evidence, an inquiring mind and a broad perspective on the entire situation. In a letter to Sir Herbert Thomson, 26 June 1975, Scott denied that he was Perron. He invented this fictional character because he needed such a man:

After all those tortured and tortuous three books one had to find a way to come in from outside, roughly in one's own persona ; laughing at the whole thing but knowledgeable and involved. One had to wrap it up as it were with a smile, and a sense of openness. I needed and looked for a positive man. I suppose every book has a right to criticise itself, and Guy is the critic. But a kind of happy one. The sort of man it would be nice to have a drink and a laugh and a lunch with. You'd come away from that (at least that's what I aimed at) feeling

you'd had a good time but hadn't destroyed anything.²⁰⁹

Through Perron, Scott articulates his own sense of frustration with the indifferent and callous attitude of the British at home to the affairs in India:

The overall argument ... is that the greatest contribution to the tragi-comedy was the total indifference to and the ignorance of Indian affairs of the people at home who finally decided to hand India back in as many pieces as was necessary so long as it was got rid of. Which is what happened.²¹⁰

What the literature on the raj had left out was "the hour by hour bandobast." Scott makes Perron wander around jotting down his observations in a calm and logical way. This fictional character reveals his practical, inquisitive and ruthlessly anti-nostalgic sense of history. Unlike Major Tippitt in Scorpion who says - "I'm a historian really. The present does not interest me. The future even less."²¹¹ Perron's position is that the past cannot be detached from the present and the future. He will not allow himself to get bogged down by sentiment. When he looks at the Anglo-Indians like Sarah, Perron seems to feel that:

Their lives were not his affair. He had his own to live. Their dissatisfaction, their boredom, the strain they always seemed to be under, were largely their own fault. The real world was outside..... if you allowed yourself to sympathise too much they would destroy you. You would lose what you valued most. Your objectivity.²¹²

Though Perron only enters the last novel of the Quartet, he quite resembles the Stranger or Traveller. Scott said; "Basically this writer/traveller/stranger is a mechanism for achieving both detachment and involvement."²¹³ The point that emerges here is that Scott uses such a character as a covert fictional narrative device in the first three novels - and more explicitly in the last to convey his sense of history. Ultimately, it is Scott who controls his narrator/historian.

But Perron, unlike the Stranger, is an interesting character. His charisma even draws Sarah towards him ("Its nice to see you, Guy. You always made me laugh".)²¹⁴ Perron is interested in things that are less obvious to a layman. He is capable of entering into the heart of things and make sensible deductions. He provides the most comprehensive critique of the British-Indian connection:

For at least a hundred years India has formed a part of England's idea about herself and for the same period India has been forced into a position of being a reflection of that idea. Upto 1900 the part India played in our idea about ourselves was the part played by anything which we believed was a right to possess (like the special relationship with God). Since 1900, certainly 1918, the reverse has obtained. India as not a part of ourselves has played no part whatsoever in the lives of the Englishmen in general.... and those who came out ... became detached both from English life and from the English idea of life. Getting rid of India will cause us no qualm of conscience because it will be like getting rid of what is no longer reflected in our mirror of ourselves. The sad thing is that whereas in the English mirror there is now no Indian reflection... in the Indian mirror the English reflection may be very hard to get rid of, because in the Indian mind English possession has not been an idea but a reality, often a harsh one. The other sad thing is that people like the Laytons may now see nothing at all when looking in their mirror, not even themselves.²¹⁵

"India ... as part of England's idea of herself" spawned a large number of political postures - ranging from the

imperial pride of Wavell to the liberal qualms of conscience. But what Scott is primarily concerned with is an examination of the fall-outs of imperial rule. He indicates the time when the colonial attitudes underwent wholesale changes. It was the British electorate that initiated an important set of changes when it voted the Atlee government to power in 1945 with a mandate to begin the process of de-colonisation in India. Purvis and Aunt Charlotte (Perron's aunt in London) represent a common feeling among the British people that "a British presence in India was an economic and administrative burden whose quick off-loading was an essential feature of post-war policy in a welfare state."²¹⁶ Men like Perron are uneasy with such callous attitudes. He feels that the British were truly responsible for the one-quarter of a million deaths in India in the riots in the wake of partition. His aunt's opinion is that the responsibility lay with the people who attacked and killed each other. Perron is now able to gauge the level of his countrymen's ignorance - how little they "knew or cared about a country whose history had been our own for more than three hundred years and which had contributed more than any other to our wealth."²¹⁷

Perron is a witness to call the historical changes that are sweeping India in the closing years of

the British rule. He dissects the cartoons of Halki to understand the mood here and the drift of political and historical events. He notes the political leanings and covert tactics of the Indian politicians, the prevarications of the British administrators who dilute their promises with formulas of compromise. Perron watches the outbreak of violence in the streets of Mirat; he analyses the brutal realities underlying the Japanese - Indian collaboration and its consequences on Indian politics. The alliance is shown as undermining Kasim's political future and also casting its shadow on the lives of Sayed and other characters, among them - Havildar Karim Khan and Colonel Layton.

Sarah appears to know that there is no future for people like them in India. She feels that her pucca-memsahib identity has become a distinct disadvantage. She wants to override this "enchantment of inherited identity"²¹⁸ and search for an existence outside British India - possibly in England. The last pages of Division show her providing relief to the victims of a train carnage. Her thoughts are of Ahmed who has met with a violent end. She reflects on her relations with him and states the sort of bond they shared:

Ahmed and I weren't in love. We loved one another. We recognised in each other the compulsion to break away from what I can only call a received life.²¹⁹

After their visit to the Summer Residency, Perron and Sarah are in a heightened state of excitement. That night, Perron has a vision in which the identities of himself, Sarah, Hari and Daphne fused and he comes to realize why Daphne had refused to let Kumar enter the MacGregor house with her and why she made him promise to say nothing.

After finishing the Quartet, Scott admitted having invoked or cultivated a destructive streak in himself in the interest of his creation. This fact was confirmed by his daughter, Sally. She said that Scott gave them the impression that he had to reserve some area of suffering for himself - as if opening himself to it, he needed its presence. Some of this 'darkness' he bequeathes to Kumar but most of it goes to shape the character of Merrick. Hari Kumar adopts the pseudonym - "Philoctetes" - to sign off his articles in the Ranpur Gazette. The myth about an archer cast out by his companions because of his stinking, suppurating wound is recapitulated by Rowan when he explains to Perron the tragic fate of the great archer:

Friend of Hercules. One of the heroes of Trojan war Sophocles wrote a play about him..... They had to set him ashore, abandoned him on the voyage.

He was hurt in someway. Wounded by one of his poisoned arrows ... he stank and others couldn't stand the smell. So they set him ashore and went on.²²⁰

It seemed to explain Kumar's tragedy. Later, Perron is haunted by a sweet - foul smell in his room - a smell that was not "just Merrick's smell, but also the smell of the archer's wound."²²¹ What Scott is suggesting here is Hari's anomalous position in British India. Unable to identify himself with Indians - whom he refers to as "they" - Kumar attempts to perpetuate the myth of his apartness by keeping alive his contact with Colin through letters. They represent his nostalgic link with a country he had once considered his home. But, his colour thwarts him at every step. He becomes invisible to Colin and the Anglo-Indians to whom his Englishness seems preposterous and ridiculous. Later, when he is released from prison Kumar deliberately courts this anonymity when he begins to "cram" the candidates for entrance to government college - seldom visiting their homes, seldom leaving the apartment. Gopal - the sympathetic Indian present during Hari's examination

tells Perron that "What he was living now was hardly a life.... Kumar seemed to have no ambition." ²²² His "window to the world was still closed and darkened." Perron feels that he now has the answer to the question that he had asked Hari many years ago:

What is the difference between karma and dharma ? He didn't know. I had learned the answer long ago. So had Hari. He was living it. ²²³

Perron visits Hari's home at the end of Division but fails to meet him. He later wonders whether his visit has served any purpose. It seemed cruel to remind him of a past that he was trying hard to forget. Anglo-India had rejected Hari and caused him to suffer greatly. The suffering is reflected in his essay:

I walk home and think of another place, of seemingly long endless summers and the shade of different kinds of trees, and then of winters when the branches of the trees were so bare, that recalling them now, it seems inconceivable to me that I looked at them and did not think of the summer just gone, and the spring soon to come, as illusions; as dreams, never fulfilled, never to be fulfilled. ²²⁴

While Kumar's suffering engages Perron's sympathy, Merrick remains impervious to it, Perron sees the clash between them as something that was inevitable:

And yet how logical that meeting was, between Kumar - one of Macaulay's "brown-skinned Englishman" - and Merrick, English-born and bred, but a man whose country's social and economic structure had denied him the advantages and privileges which Kumar had initially enjoyed.²²⁵

Perron is on Kumar's side. To him Merrick is "a man who lacked entirely that liberal instinct which is so dear to historians that they lay it out like a guideline through the unmapped forests of prejudice and self-interest."²²⁶ In England Kumar would have been the cynosure of all eyes - especially the historian's - because he stood for everything of value to him. In such a context, Merrick would have been the 'invisible' man. But, in the segregated society in India the equation fails to hold good:

Place them there, in India and the historian cannot see either of them. They have wandered off the guideline into the jungle... Yes their meeting was logical. And they had met before, countless times. You

can say they are still meeting, that their meeting reveals the real animus, the one that historians won't recognise, or which they relegate to their margins.²²⁷

Merrick is the sort of man a historian naturally mistrusts and Perron despises him. Merrick lives by the rules that he has devised:

As an arriviste on the imperial stage, he invents his own role and lacking established connection, defines himself by choosing his supportive cast. Lacking class distinction he supports his role by exaggerating racial differences, enacting his white contemptuousness to draw envy and fear from his victims.²²⁸

He is, as Dmitri says, a self-invented man. The first view of him is as the stern police officer in Mayapore - a crusader for truth. In Scorpion he projects himself (to Sarah) - as a paragon. In Towers he is the conscientious army officer for whom Barbie has a sneaking sympathy. In Division Merrick escorts Sayed to the Circuit House and attempts to get Havilder Khan to confess his crime; he also restores order in the strife-torn Mirat. Bronowsky appreciates the

fine job he had done in Mirat, but knows that it - as indeed anything that Merrick did - had an element of the unreal about it:

He is one of your hollow men. The outer casing is almost perfect and he has carried it off almost to perfection. But, of course, it is a casing he has designed. The loss he has sustained - the left arm - even this fits. I am tempted to say that had he not suffered the loss he might one day have been forced to invent it.²²⁹

Thinking almost along the same lines as Bronowsky, Perron begins to see why Merrick had chosen to target the Havilder. The Indian became special to Merrick because he had chosen to define him in adversarial terms. This is the technique of a self-invented man. Perron realizes that Merrick had chosen Kumar, the Laytons, Rowan and Perron himself - for precisely the same reasons. If society is a wave (Emerson says so) then men like Perron and Rowan stand a chance of surviving because they believe in riding with the times; the Merricks and the Purvises of the world are the ones who go against the tide and are drowned. Perron's exasperation is evident when he cries out:

Can't the fool see that nobody of the class he aspires to has ever cared a damn about the empire and all that God-the-Father-God-the-raj was a lot of insular middle-and lower-class shit ?²³⁰

Merrick is a firm believer in the myth of white superiority:

He has been sucked in by all that Kiplingesque double talk.... Merrick spent too long inventing himself in the image to have the energy to realize that as an image it is and always was hollow.²³¹

This explains his dislike for Kumar, and the liberal Anglo-Indians such as Rowan, Perron and Col. Layton ("who'd clasp the Bose-tainted havildar to his bosom")²³². This racist, illiberal, sexually deviant, sadistic man represents the dark side of the raj. He acts on impulses that are never officially acknowledged. At one point he himself tells Sarah about the unwritten rule - "One isn't supposed to talk about this kind of thing" and Sarah replies - "I know.... Its
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how we hide our prejudices and continue to live with them...."

Merrick believes in dominating and destroying his victims; Pinker is humiliated and terrorised; all the

sufferings of Kumar, including the beatings and the sexual abuse he is subjected to in jail, are caused by Merrick; then, there is the case of the Havildar who is so shamed and humiliated that he decides to commit suicide; finally the boy Aziz is brutally assaulted by the sadistic and malevolent Merrick. Merrick deliberately invites retaliation through everything that he does. He has the compulsive desire to determine the course of events. Bronowsky reveals to Perron the fact that Merrick had certain tendencies which eventually enable his enemies to strike back at him. The smell of hair oil on Merrick's pillow conveys its own dark story. Aziz was probably the first male Merrick had made love to. The consummation of their relationship brought him peace but it was a peace that he could not bear to acknowledge. So, he searched for the occasion of his own death. As Bronowsky sees it - Merrick wanted a man in the nullah almost in the same way he wanted a stone to be thrown at him.

Perhaps he hoped that his murder would be avenged in some splendidly Wagnerian climax, the raj emerging from the twilight and sweeping down the hills with flaming swords.²³⁴

The "Aziz business" revealed a truth about himself that utterly appalled him - the "revelation of the connection between homosexuality, the sado-masochism, the sense of social inferiority and the grinding defensive belief in his racial superiority." ²³⁵ Bronowsky believes, that Merrick courted his own death because his fulfilment through Indian boys threatened the structure of his racist beliefs on which his authoritarian stance depended.

Merrick draws out like a telescope into successive lengths of personation, into a series of masks and transformations. Susan says he was in the habit of going out at night dressed like a Pathan. At the time of his death he was dressed the same way. He was strangled with his own sash and his body hacked into pieces with the ornamental axe that he was also fond of carrying. There were cabalistic signs drawn on the floor of the room and across the face of Susan's mirror was scrawled the word "Bibighar". The past had caught up with Merrick.

As a representative of the brutal forces of imperialism, Merrick unleashes a power that is at once violent and masculine. There is something dark, sinister and inexplicable about him. He is aloof and withdrawn.

In the strange world he inhabits, there are no rules that others would recognise. The common bonds that he forms are the homosexual ones. By focusing on Merrick's distorted image Scott attempts to domesticate "otherness".

Merrick is the only major character to appear in each of the Quartet novels. As Perron explains to Susan's son - Edward, "Ronald" meant "someone with power who rules."²³⁶ He stands for the continuity of the raj. At various points in the novels, Merrick states his views on some of the issues that are linked with imperial rule - man-bap, loyalty, the problem of colour and the legality of the British position. Merrick evolves as the Quartet moves on. It is true that at some point in the story he becomes a monster, but his loneliness also comes into sharp focus. His physical disability somehow adds a dimension to his stature. The readers' sympathy is engaged by this solitary figure who is hounded by some mysterious, faceless people. Jerry Tallmer of New York Times had questioned Scott on the motive behind the creation of a character such as Merrick. Tallmer wondered whether his quasi-homosexuality was supposed to lie at the root of the British rule in India. Scott replied:

I wouldn't quarrel with that. I think there is something perverted about imperialism. But it is a sort of an echo.....²³⁷

Scott looked long and deeply within his own self to locate the patch of darkness there. In the end his honesty and imaginative ingenuity enables him to come out with the portrait of the man who epitomises all the unacknowledged fears, repressions and prejudices spawned by the raj.

Scott was a master in the art of subtle analysis of motives and impulses and so all his characters seem authentic. With a Merrick around, it is conceivable that there would be a Kumar and a Daphne - in whom a reflective Sarah would find something to admire; a liberal challenge would be thrown up by the likes of White, Lady Manners, an urbane Indian lady of royal lineage, a tolerant elderly spinster or a suave, enlightened historian. There is a tremendous range in Scott's characterisation. His Anglo-Indian world is full of people who are individuals and also belong to types.

The last novel of the series ends with the famous train scene which dramatically draws the curtain on the disturbing Indian scene. The description of its

"greasy and evasive" ²³⁸ motion is suggestive of the British culpability in the matter of the death of a quarter-million Indians. Even when Scott was planning his first novel, he had visualised its climatic end - the post-partition train scene.

Scott defined the task of a modern novelist as "the end of the party and the beginning of the washing up."²³⁹ What he meant here was that the modern novelist could not but reflect in his fiction the restless, post-industrial, post-imperial ennui-ridden society. The establishment of a welfare state and the break-up of the empire had brought out bitter truths. The fictional period of the Quartet - as Scott outlined to a class of American students - begins before World War I - when Britain ruled over a quarter of the globe and ends in 1945 when the Attlee government was elected with the hope that it would end all exploitation at home and abroad. He explores this period of history from many perspectives.

His method of using multiple plotting pattern where the meanings are encoded in a multi-layered structure is a part of his strategy to engage his readers in a moral dialogue. Each insight enlarges the situation. It helps to further the dynamic movement of the plot and militates

against the certainties of a set position. He keeps the readers alert and questioning as he goes on 'panning' the cameras of his imagination to capture the drift of history.

History is by no means a matter of straight linear progression. The significance of a happening lies in its impact upon the consciousness of man. History becomes meaningful when the effect of events is studied with reference to the manner in which it impinges on individual consciousness. It is never meaningful without such a reference because history contrives to forge a link between the past, present and the future; the whole past enters the present and the present is vitally linked to the future. The individual exists in a dynamic relationship with the historical forces. In this sense, an individual exists not in isolation but in a living relationship with everyman. The relativity of things was never lost on Scott. He always insisted that his fiction is an amalgam of approaches to things. His "intense curiosity" about the happenings in his society was a "comparative" one. It arose from "A sense that the present should always be seen in relation to the past."²⁴⁰ Scott is in agreement with Emerson's view that "Man is explicable by nothing less than all his history." His characters feel the weight of their personal histories.

Scott began writing about India when India's independence was already twenty years old. He uses "India..... the scene of a remarkable and far-reaching event.....where the British came to the end of themselves as they were"²⁴¹ - to show how the abandonment of myth and fantasy in favour of the realities of history and contemporary or near-contemporary politics mediated through a process of social comedy can be made to yield moral lessons. Ultimately, the most important issues are the moral issues. In his own way, Scott has enlarged the moral lens so as to take into account the disturbing realities (such as the emergence of Powellism) of contemporary societies.

Scott and Forster : A Postscript:

Scott's opinion was that A Passage to India was not the last word on the British-India relationship. He recognised Forster's novel as a supreme achievement and felt a sneaking sympathy for his characters. Forster had been amazed to come across the view of some Anglo-Indians in Madras when they were debating whether or not the Indians could be trusted with the administration of their own country. Furbank touched on the situation in E.M. Forster : A Life:

The Darlings themselves were all he could have wished in sympathy with Indians at

their table, but the tone of Darling's colleagues was depressing.... and he heard the view that the educated 'native' didn't count, he was only a drop in the ocean. 'But every educated man is a drop' we protested to a friend of his.²⁴²

Scott was astonished to find some Englishmen holding similar ideas even as late as in 1964. He jotted down his feelings in his notebook:

The more I think and read and talk about Indian political (and social) problems the more astonished I am at the old British attitudes.²⁴³

When he visited India in 1964, he was asked a question by an Indian - "What do you think you have to offer the world today that might be of value?"²⁴⁴ Scott was unable to answer it directly, but when he met the same man three days later he said that the uncertainty that he had anything of value to offer might itself be of some value. He believed in the necessity and importance of uncertainty. He wanted his novels to engage the readers in a moral dialogue, in addition to educating them on an important phase of the British-Indian connection.

Scott read A Passage the first time after his return home from India in 1946. He read it again after his second Indian visit. He saw that many of the prejudices still existed in the Anglo-Indian circles. In "Enoch Sahib : A Slight Case of Cultural Shock", he recalls the reply of a Brahmin engineer when Scott had asked him how he got on with his colleagues. The engineer had said -

They are all right when they first come out... but in six months time they are spoiled because the others have got at them.

I stared because what he said came straight out of E.M. Forster.....²⁴⁵

Scott came to recognise that the idea of free interaction between the Indians and the British was a myth. He saw that the supreme wish of the Anglo-Indians was to preserve their identity; they also protected themselves in all possible ways from being taken advantage of. On one occasion when Scott had shown up at a Club in the company of Indians, the faces of his countrymen seemed to warn him of the consequences - "You've gone over. You'll be sorry."²⁴⁶ It made him wonder about Aziz's prediction in A Passage in which he held out the promise that the British and the Indians

would become friends may be in "fifty-five hundred years" - after all the British people living in India are finally driven out of the country.

Scott was to suffer often as a result of some unfair comparisons with A Passage. He denied that his Quartet characters are Fosterian - "though they were doomed to exist in a sort of Fosterian twilight."²⁴⁷ Such comparisons with Forster seemed rather unfair because at the time of the publication of the reviews, Forster was the greatest living novelist and his A Passage set up a literary standard and sooner or later also became a source for factual comparisons.

In "Aspects of Writings" (1965), Scott seriously examines the condition of uncertainty in England between 1945 and 1946. Such a climate influenced his work. He considered writing a social art and in one of his lectures he invited the participants to be a part of the redefinition of a world in which "nothing is sure, nothing is planned, nothing has yet been achieved of any lasting value."²⁴⁸ In spite of the odds against him, a writer's job is to keep on trying to capture the reality because sometimes it is all there is to it; the Chinese proverb "It is better to travel than

to arrive"²⁴⁹ was also one of the deeply-felt realizations of Scott.

A Passage appeared to him as neither primarily a realistic novel, nor even a social comedy, but a prophetic one:

I see it now as a novel with a powerful prophetic element, as a philosophical novel, not a social one..²⁵⁰

His own attempt in the Quartet was to study the British-Indian affair with all its ramifications on the social side. The affair was by no means over in 1947 - its reverberations were still palpable in Britain as late as in the sixties when racial tension began to rear its ugly head.

Scott denied that Daphne resembled Adela or that her rape at Bibighar was an extension of Adela's horrific experience in the Marabar Caves. His actual intention was to use the rape as a means of exploding the pent up fear in British minds. In a letter to Dorothy Ganapathy Scott wrote:

The one thing I've had to fight here is the awful English academic fixation on

Kipling and Forster. For heavens sake did nothing happen between 1924 and 1945 ?²⁵¹

The way the English academics consistently ignored his work troubled him:

Here there isn't a bleep from the universities. They are convinced that Forster = India = Forster.²⁵²

He gave vent to a similar feeling of frustration in a letter to Dipali Nag:

The English academics remain indifferent, but then the English have never been the slightest bit interested in India. So long as they had Kipling and Forster to themselves they seem or seemed to think that was enough in regard to that part of the world. How insular we are as people.²⁵³

Scott's lecture "After Marabar: Britain and India, a Post Forsterian View" (1972) begins with a reference to the historical changes since Forster's time. He detects a shift from the imperial confidence of the former years to the

post-war situation of uncertainty. He analysed the transition - from the position of assumed superiority - "...believing that (the mother country) knows best about everything..." to "the desert of uncertainty."²⁵⁴ He wanted his novels to visit the area of uncertainty.

Scott also wanted his novels to focus on the men at work - constructively engaged in the "pursuit of truths and rewards men know they can honourably employ themselves"²⁵⁵ at. In his description of such men, Scott marginalises the element of nostalgia. His real intention to inform, to educate the people about the actual situation during the climatic years of the British rule:

I should like to think that here and there in the books I write there are things which, at home, reduce the weight of ignorance and consequently of prejudice.²⁵⁶

Scott's characters are not preserved in Edwardian sunlight; they are shown as having journeyed or journeying from a position of prejudice to uncertainty. This is why Sarah asks - "Come back where ? Forgiven by whom and for what." Instead of the Edwardian sunlight highlighting their features,

the Quartet characters exist in the melancholy light of their exile:

... the melancholy arising from too long an exile, too far removed from the source of dynamic native experience, which... people feel they need if they are to share that other sense of having something of approved and proven value to offer to other people. The melancholy, too, of knowing that a principal source of comfort, the continuing support of the people who have sent you out to do a job, has begun to erode. And perhaps, above all, the melancholy of knowing that even after twenty, thirty years of living in the country, it has been, still is, an exile because a certain loftiness and detachment have been required or dabbled in or chosen, home has remained home, and India, however, long lived in, never been truly identified with.²⁵⁷

Some characters such as Sarah try to overcome their sense of melancholy. They have "a dash of natural spirit"²⁵⁸ and somehow do not feel personally responsible for what has gone wrong. This is why Sarah wants to know - "Forgiven by whom ?... And for what ?"²⁵⁸

The moral dilemma emerged in the post-Forsterian situation. After a brief recapitulation of the themes of his pre-Quartet novels, Scott noted that the common thread that runs through all of them was the "obsession with the relationship between a man and the work he does."²⁵⁹ His raj men work in accordance with a philosophy in the pursuit of whose truths and rewards men know that they can honourably employ themselves. What Scott saw as missing from A Passage was the delineation of men engaged in the ordinary labours of life. The Turtons and Burtons are never shown doing solid work. Scott's reservations with regard to Forster's characters grew stronger once he began reading the history of the raj and "attempted to pass that history through the selecting mechanism" of his own experience and recollection. According to him in A Passage the raj seemed "notably unoccupied by anything so much except the need to take up a stance or attitude" Scott felt that Forster had denied his characters "one dimension - their work - a dimension that dignifies people."²⁶⁰ He described his own raj novels as "post-Forsterian."

Scott did not deny feeling alienated from the Anglo-Indians. They seemed to him, he wrote later:

... more foreign than the Indian whom I met in the ante-rooms and messes, on

parade, in a daftar, in shops, railway stations.... Because they seemed unself-conscious, a bond of common humanity was much more easily formed between myself and the Indians I met in these ways than between myself and the sahibs and memsahibs who were always, I thought, conscious of having to represent something....²⁶¹

Had he read A Passage then, he may have endorsed the representation of the Indians there with the words - "By God, Forster's right."²⁶² But, his later experiences enabled him to appreciate all that these men were doing or trying to do in India:

Later on - when I learned about the kind of work they did - and what it meant to them - although they seldom spoke about that - I felt - that some of them were my kind of people after all - ordinary English people in exile...²⁶³

Scott was disappointed with the standard representation of the raj characters. He felt that he had never met a Turton or a Burton or for that matter, even a Dr. Aziz. He noted how even Mrs. Moore and Adela Quested - he called them "difficult kettle of fish"²⁶⁴ - went their different ways because they were unable to sustain their mood of defiance:

Mrs. Moore found the whole situation too difficult. She was too old, too ill to cope with it. She turned her back on it and went home and died on the P.&O. Miss Quested found it difficult too, but her response to that was to retreat into the wrathful, protective arms of Turtons and Burtons. She became to an extent one of them. Even Fielding that liberal humanist school master seems to go sour...²⁶⁵

Scott makes it quite apparent that his reservations apart, he was aware of the nature of Forster's achievement and alive to the "endless subtleties"²⁶⁶ of the novel. In a similar way, his criticism of the Turtons and the Burtons notwithstanding, Scott was alive to the point that Forster was making when he rejected the possibility of a friendship between an Englishman and an Indian. His modern reading of A Passage enabled him to detect the "extraordinarily close connection between Mrs. Moore's disagreeable experience of the caves created between 1913 and 1924 and the haunting fear of our modern western civilization that everything exists and nothing has value." Thus to him A Passage was essentially a novel about the post-war liberal dilemma in which the die-hard paternalist attitude of the Turtons and Burtons is challenged by the liberal humanists like Fielding, Mrs. Moore and (initially at least) Adela Quested. Forster's novel

shows the clash of ideologies and goes on to foresee the inability of liberalism to solve the problem of governing India. Incidentally, Scott's view was that it was the ascendancy of liberal Fieldingism in the face of the stiff challenge posed in the British Parliament by conservative Turtonism - that led to India's independence in 1947.

Scott's theme in the Quartet is the loss of belief in the traditional values coupled with an awareness of their irrelevance in the context of the large-scale changes that took place in the inter-war years. Consequently his characters are melancholy exiles chained to their past and embarrassed by the moral drift of history. He captures this consciousness most effectively through Barbie - the lonely, inarticulate and dispossessed missionary who is keenly aware of the fact that she has failed in her mission. Even Churchill had expressed similar sentiments in a letter to his wife where he referred to:

.... the sorry plight to which we have reduced ourselves by losing confidence in our mission.... I have had for some time a feeling of despair about the British connection with India, and still more about what will happen if it is suddenly broken.²⁶⁷

As Scott saw it, Forster's characters are:

..... unoccupied by anything except the need to take up a stance or attitude.²⁶⁸

He considered himself a social novelist rather than a philosophical one. What he missed in A Passage were:

..... references to a concern and belief in occupation which coupled with the conviction and certainty that the occupation was both created by an in rigid line with the national British ethos, led to a rigidity of attitude. Perhaps in 1913 one should not really look for that or therefore miss it. But I have, in terms of a social novel a doubt.²⁶⁹

In the Quartet, Scott wrote about men who are distinguished by the work they do. He realized that the hard-working sahib could both be the subject for caricature and sensitive treatment, depending on the perspective one adopted. He himself was capable of doing both. A perfect example, of his capacity for lampooning a sahib's job, is contained in his lecture to the Royal Society of Literature:

In Anglo-India, surely, the Sahib was shaved while he still slept, then led stupefied to the gusl-khana, folded into his tin tub, doused, dried, powdered, dressed, creakily mounted on no less creaky, stupefied pony and pointed to the direction of the daftar (which is Anglo-Indian for office). Arrived there, with sleep receding and temper rising, he would dock his clerk a week's pay for losing a file, order four peasants out of his sight, three fined, two rigorously imprisoned, and one to District and Sessions for deportation; and then address himself to the more disagreeable business of writing a sharp minute to the Divisional Commissioner about the Civil Engineer's plan to drain the marsh out a Burrapore for a scheme that would improve agricultural conditions but drive out the duck and ruin the shooting. Thus kindled for the day he would return to his bungalow, riding his pony to a lather of terminal fever, kick the syce in at the seat of his pants for not catching him as the royal beast fell dead at the foot of his bungalow steps, then stump up to the veranda in the full view of the whole vast view of the retinue of his servants but shouting koi hai in response to some deep reflexive notion of the protocol to be observed, then clatter into the dark polished dining table where for

a moment he would be puzzled by the presence of a sour-looking woman reading letters at the other end of it. Then, remembering that it was memsahib he would mutter "Hullo, old thing," and busy himself behind the pages of the Civil and Military Gazette.²⁷⁰

Scott's sympathies for the sahib evolved with time and we have his own words charting the stages of his growth:

I was never a Kiplingite. In my youth I was a Bloomsburyist - a liberal Humanist. I didn't believe in the British Empire. I went to India with cadet group ... who mostly felt as I did. Here I began a movement from Bloomsburyism to uncertainty. I found I couldn't denigrate the Kiplingites. They were doing good solid work.²⁷¹

Scott abandoned myth and fantasy for the realities of history. He takes a traumatic moment in the British-Indian history and assimilates it to a pattern that he has knowingly drawn from the real world of history. He denied having employed historical methodology, even if his attempt was always to get the historical context and details right. He makes the fact about the novels fictionality their defining feature

by convincing the readers about the author's role as an interpreter of the past and by making his own strategies of reemplotment central to his writing. His reflections on the procedures of depicting the past are contained in the narrative itself, stated directly in brief discursive passages, and implicitly in his handling of various representational devices - pictures, letters, poems, heirloom, cartoons, etc. History is made available to the reader through a series of distances, accessible only at multiple remove through the mediating forms of relationships and family histories. The reader's approach to history is always mediated by one of Scott's editor figures - the Narrator/Stranger.

Scott uses a series of narrating figures in several modes of discourse. Rather than distance the readers from the past through layers of memory, Scott places distancing devices within the narrative itself. Each character seems to have an individual perspective to an event. The voice of the third person narrator is the voice of the fabulist or the mythmaker whose vision raises the novel above the level of subjective speculation.

The third-person narrative is another way of seeing things. It is a direct narrative as opposed to internal narrative of a character. The Narrator/Stranger not only provides an objective version of things as they were but also explains the possible reasons for them. An example of this can be found in Kumar's examination in Scorpion in which the figures of the lawyer and the storyteller are explicitly linked. Scott exposes the bankruptcy of the British legal system and its inability to recognise virtue and goodness. The court scene throws up a clear and intelligible statement from Kumar placing the other artful interpretations against each other and against fact.

Some characters perform a synthesising function - they unify the novels and their stories. Scott's historiography reduces the friction between fiction and historical reality - and underscores the power of the imagination to map the course of history by means of a story.

Scott denied that he had analysed movements of social change philosophically or equated them with other historical movements. He believed in the power of the imagination to revise the patterns of history. He uses

the Quartet as a field in which the contradictions of history are recreated and resolved. It is a zone of freedom, the limits of which are prescribed according to the demands of imagination and history. History and romance exist collaterally. They have a way of informing each other. If history subverts romance, then, romance alters history - softening, blurring its jagged outlines, changing its colours and even unintentionally changing the tenor of events. Both the novelist and the historian use strategies and techniques to sift their material. When historians work, they employ methods that are necessary to the purpose of presenting their readers with a credible account of events. The form of their account - as indeed that of a novelist - depends on their emphasis on certain elements and repression of others. Thus, the novelist and the historian exist collaterally - not in contention. Patrick Swinden makes a succinct appraisal of Scott's achievement : "Scott.... achieved a revivification of the novel of history used as a means of inferring contemporary problems."²⁷²

Notes

(Except where otherwise indicated the citations to Scott's original letters, notes, reviews, etc., are from Robin Moore's Paul Scott's Raj. Such indentations have the letters "R.M." in parenthesis.)

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CONCLUSION

Kipling's literary career reflects the confrontation between literature and imperialism. Close on its heels came the Great War which triggered off a series of changes that were to alter the face and character of British imperialism and later lead not only to the break-up of the empire but also to the intellectual proscription of imperialism. Kipling reached his artistic maturity and the heights of literary fame by the beginning of the twentieth century - when England was still a great imperial power. Forster, Orwell and Paul Scott wrote their novels on India when imperialism had lost much or all of its magic. Their fictions reflect the decay of the values that sustained the British rule in India and they, consciously or otherwise, throw up a critique of Kipling's imperial beliefs. However, the influence of the Bard of the Empire is palpable in their fictions. When the empire faced the threat of dissolution and was eventually wound up, the novelists were forced willy-nilly to relate their readings of the situation to Kipling's construct of the empire. His shadow falls across the fictions of the later British novelists writing about imperial India. Kipling was attacked, mocked at but never ignored. The world of letters that expelled him could not really exorcise the impact of his ideals on the sensitive minds of the later novelists.

In his writings, Kipling combines the British imperial designs with his love for India. He truly believed in the humanitarian work done by the raj. British imperialism, he felt, was a reaching out to other lands as the energetic, altruistic and supremely gifted British people assumed control and devised a more effective system of administration. It was a two-way traffic because the Anglo-Indians, who distributed their material largesse, sought to learn the ultimate meaning of life from a more spiritual East. In Kim, the Lama knows the secret of life which the players of the Great Game, despite all their worldly knowledge and élan, know nothing of. Kipling's writings show that in his time it was still possible to believe in the empire and continue to be stirred by an affection for India and her people.

Forster's A Passage to India moves away from the certainty of Kipling's position. There is actually a pattern in the progression of the British disillusionment with the imperial dreams. If Kipling's writings represent the energising myth of the empire builders, the later writers like Forster, Orwell and Paul Scott subject the myth to critical scrutiny. On the basis of a close reading of the novels relevant to the study one is led to surmise that Scott, Orwell and even Forster, to an extent, recall the

Kiplingesque ideals in their fictions in a variety of ways. Their fictions bring into focus the interactive relations between literature and society. However, it would be wrong to suppose that literature upholds a vigorously coherent vision of a society at a given point of time or is fully identified with the thought patterns of the times. The Indian fictions of Kipling, Forster, Orwell and Paul Scott are not just a reflection of the "extrinsic" reality but also of the "intrinsic" one. This study takes into account not merely the depictions of the cross-cultural conflicts or people caught in problematical situations, but also the dialectical patterns within the novels that inform and validate these representations of imperial India. The depiction of the social reality depends on the author's understanding of it. Such representations have their own validity because they become the literature of self-revelation where India functions as a unifying theme or metaphor. The private and public worlds converge - as the writers pour out their intense emotions, convictions and obsessions. The special problem of the émigré authorship can be an advantage because it stimulates an unconventional response to reality. The real world is viewed from an off-centre vantage point. As the authors' sensibilities militate against the impressions of an "alien" culture, their stance becomes varied, ironical, and at times even satirical. A study

of their fictions, consequently, becomes a richly rewarding experience. In "The Conversion of Aurellian MacGoggin" Kipling wrote : "In India where you see humanity - raw, brown, naked humanity with nothing between it and the blazing sky, and only used-up, overhauled earth underfoot, the notion somehow dies away and men come back to simpler theories." The quotation explains his position. Even Forster who was more sympathetic to Indian views did not discern any coherent or intelligible core to the Indian reality. India, to him, was a "vague jumble of Rajahs, Babus and elephants." She was a muddle, a grand chaos. Kipling, Forster, Orwell and Paul Scott perceive the vast land mass as monotonous, sinister and enigmatic and they seek to contain it within the limits of their particular metaphors for India. Their constructions reconcile the real with what is perceived which explains the ambience of their fictional worlds (where fascination exists with horror) and the ambiguity of their positions.

Modern novels mirror the crisis in modern life. The early European novels were novels of adventure. Don Quixote faced a world that appeared to him in all its fearsome ambiguity, the single divine truth decomposed into myriad relative truths parcelled out by man. The "thinking self" became the basis of everything as man heroically faced

the universe alone. Kim's experience is somewhat similar, and even at the time of writing the novel, Kipling acknowledged his debt to Cervantes. Actually the seeds of his Indian dream were sown in his mind when as a child in the home of his foster-parents at Southsea he played Crusoe. To him, and to many other writers before and after him, the empire represented an extended field of action.

It is interesting to recall Forster's comment in "The Job Done" (Listener XVII, 19th March, 1937) where he said that an "immature" man like Kipling can become a great writer "when he turns from his superficial worldly experience which he can formulate rationally to the 'daemon' at the centre of his being. "Forster seems to be quite justified in thinking thus. The success of Kim is wholly due to the fact that it is Kipling's inwardly realised dream in which he combines his experience of life and his awareness of the spiritual values with his objective view of the Indian reality. There is no evidence of the jerky movement and the superficial handling of the subject that we find in his early poem titled "Sudder Bazar" (1883). This poem bears an uncanny affinity with some of the scenes and stock figures of Kim. The poem begins by first identifying the occasion for it -

The motive that calls for my ditty
 Is to tell you how many things are
 To be found on the road to the city
 Which we call Sudder Bazar.

Then come the images - following one another in close succession : the voice of the "muezzin" calling the faithful to prayer, the kites circling overhead, the sweet-seller, the Kabuli horse dealers, the letter writers of the bazar, the staid Brahminy bulls, the Jat from the cane fields, the Sikh gentleman and the bridegroom in a marriage procession. Kipling is unable to relate to any of them. The odd figure of a white soldier - a Tommy - seems to review his faith in the British suzerainty -

In the midst of this turmoil pell-mell met,
 You may catch from the spot where you stand
 Some glimpse of T. Atkin's helmet -
 The power that governs the land.

India appears in the poem as a frieze - the way a journalist or a travel writer would see her. Kipling does not enter into the spirit of the place. The sympathy that is so much in evidence in Kim is oddly lacking here. Like Tarvin, Kipling is more concerned with fleeing from "the gamut of face-tints/ That ranges through yellow to tar"

But what do I care for their faces,
For the Jat, the fakir, or the Sikh,
When here, in these populous places,
I meet ninety thousand a week ?

He goes on to recall the reality of the English landscapes, clutching at it like a proverbial straw to prevent himself from being overwhelmed by the Indian reality.

Oh, give me the wet walks of London,
And a tramp with my sweetheart as well,
And our "Power in the East" may be undone,
And the Sudder Bazar go to ... well.

The poem ends on a note of self-justification as Kipling writes:

So this is the reason, my dearest,
When I walk where those infields are,
That I bang the small boy who stands nearest
And flee from Sudder Bazar.

The subjectivity and the conceptual hollowness of the poem reveal a dimension of imperial experience - to which even the later writers relate positively or otherwise. In Kim, the lines are not so sharply drawn. Kim's journey, like Don Quixote's, is symbolic of man's journey into a world

where he encounters the relativity of his own experiences. The language of relativity and ambiguity is basic to both novels, as indeed to Forster's, Orwell's and Paul Scott's Indian fictions. In all of them the principal characters are shown in the process of encountering a complex reality where good and evil are so mixed up that religions, ideologies and even the Self stand threatened. A Passage to India is informed by Forster's awareness of the impossibility of reconciling different perceptions and interpretations of reality. The dissonance is the outcome of a clash of cultures. The central dilemma of modern life is this awareness of the contestability and contingency of particular beliefs and values. The epistemological complexity of Forster's novel underscores the view that political truths and social functions have so obscured the "world of life" that the spirit of the modern novel is the spirit of inquiry into the complexity of the human experience. It reveals the fact that life and reality are too complex to be encompassed and the elusiveness of truth makes simple categorising impossible. While A Passage to India repudiates the western urge to know and control reality, it also maintains a continuity of sorts with the earlier empire fictions - from the Post-Mutiny fictions to Kipling's. Like Burmese Days and the Raj Quartet - which address themselves to the earlier fictional representations of the Indian reality, A Passage

offers a veiled response to the literary revolution brought about by Kipling in his genre of empire fiction. Since the political equations and social realities are constantly altering, the British novels about the empire outline the difficulties of pursuing the ideals of imperial governance when the existentialist dilemma and the solipsist threats are only too tangible. Kipling created a vagrant hero in Kim - one who reveals his image through his action. The Lama provides a counterpoint to this image, suggesting that the Self is not to be grasped through action. He invites Kim to turn away from the world of action and examine instead the invisible inner life. The novel ends before the choice made can really counter the Lama's claim. Kipling must have also been aware of the fact that even Kim's activist creed is likely to be challenged and even thwarted. Kim ends - like A Passage to India - with a recognition of the limits of its own form.

The Great War that so transformed the world, prompted novelists to search for existential meanings in their fictions. The modern novels interrogate not only the preceding ones but also Life, society, politics, epistemological claims and their own discourse patterns. Mrs. Moore's problem reads like an existentialist dilemma. The cave incident and its aftermath - like Mrs. Moore's pathetic self-examination- show that knowledge is perspectival and

inevitably brings particular perspectives into conflict with other standpoints. A Passage is supposed to have raised the hackles of some Anglo-Indians and it also irked some Indians. Its ambiguity suggests that imaginative interpretation of a given condition can work in many directions.

Adela's experience in the caves interrogates the entire raj discourse which fitted the categories of racial and sexual stereotypes into the Anglo-Indian mechanisms of cultural self-definition. In a feminist reading of A Passage - "The Unspeakable Limits of Rape : Colonial Violence and Counter-Insurgency" (published in Genders No.10, Spring 1991) Jenny Sharpe locates the novel within the frame of 1857 with Forster rendering the rape indeterminate and thereby focusing the racialisation of the imperial discourse. She relates the significance of the rape to the historical production of the colonial discourse on the native assault of the white women in India. Recent revisions of the raj in Attenborough's Gandhi and The Jewel in the Crown, according to her, show signs of nostalgia for the empire which masquerades as self-criticism. This is precisely the point that I make in my analysis of the imperial stance of the giants among the writers of empire fiction.

Another of my contentions is that the novelized historiography is perhaps the only way to mitigate the public

dissatisfaction with historical accounts of the cultural encounters. The empire novels not only accommodate the real with the imagined but also interpret the historical facts to explain the predicament of people in problematical situations. A novel is not a dogmatic discourse. A knowledge of ambiguity and relativity of experience prompts the novelists to create existential situations out of historical circumstances. Existence, however, is not dependent merely on what has occurred, on facts. It visualises possibilities. Ultimately, the world of the novel is not just a picture of a known reality, it is also a configuration of an ethos that extends beyond the real world. One has to only examine the final scenes in Kim, A Passage to India, Burmese Days and the Raj Quartet to understand the implications of their designs. So the insistence on fidelity to historical reality is irrelevant to any serious valuation of a novel. The novelist, unlike the historian cannot be coerced to function within the limits imposed by verifiable facts. A novelist is an explorer of experience. If the seeds of the present were there in the past and each beginning prefigures an ending and another beginning and so on, the reality of a fictional work acquires its own legitimacy and truth. Perhaps a novelist's method of imagining relative truths and mirroring them through experimental selves is the only satisfactory way of confronting the enigma of Self, and of Life.

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