Chapter - IV

Cultural Cross Currents - Creative Tensions and Their Resolutions

The book under review in this chapter is *Heat and Dust*. Cross-cultural interaction between two sets of characters spanning a third generation’s divide (Olivia and the Nawab, the narrator and Inder Lal) forms the focus and part of the narratology. Both time-periods, pre-independence and post-independence (the 1970s) and female protagonists therein are internal to the cultural problematics and resultant dysfunctionalities within the earlier and later dynamics. Their interconnectedness is not only cultural but familial as Olivia is the first wife of the narrator’s grandfather (Douglas). Olivia is tainted by a cultural, racial and sexual stigma which lies heavy on her due to the colonial ruler mindset.

The earlier novels chiefly spotlight the persona and shadow of differing British and/or Indian characters. If an individual is caught in either to the point of a mire, creative tension necessarily cannot have a healthy, meaningful release and may, indeed, be absent altogether. Cultural stereotype, a form of stasis, cannot lead to cultural creativity, as there is no freshness of perception. Unlike the other novels examined in this project, *Heat and Dust*, the subject herein, is a novel of serious intent. It is thus relevant to view this novel as a fresh resolution of cultural cross-currents for purposes of the comparative study. So, this
chapter's thrust is to clearly draw aside the illusory veil between culture and religion, as well as between East and West.

*Heat and Dust* (1975) is Jhabvala's eighth novel. For reader's facilitation for later analysis and interpretation, a modest summary would here be in order. The name of the narrator is not mentioned in the story. She appears to be young, and has decided to reveal the mysteries of Olivia (her step grandmother), her life and reasons for her divorce and death. For this she uses the letters and diaries of Olivia. This novel appears more like a journal or a diary entry rather than a story. This quest becomes an adventure to the narrator in a foreign land.

Olivia's experiences of pre-independence India and the narrator's experiences of post-independence India are no different from each other's. Olivia lived in India in the early nineteen thirties and the narrator who came to India in the 1970s, wants to discover Olivia's past life – her experiences, her parties, friends, etc. Olivia's story shows the world of British colonial officers, their families, their social circles and their life styles in the olden days. Different attitudes of British women have been remarkably highlighted through effective and realistic portrayal of the characters like Mrs. Crawford and Mrs. Minnies. But Olivia is not like them as she does not fit the dutiful British wife's mould as revealed later. A notable and important instance of such 'colonially aberrant' behaviour is her refusal to accompany the other colonial wives to Simla (now Shimla) to escape from the scorching heat of the plains of India. On the surface
her husband Douglas is taken in, she possibly consciously staying back to be with him. But there is another attraction, at least buried deep within, her fascination (of a mesmerizing nature) for the Nawab of Khatm. She has a keen interest in Indian customs and wants to know more about the rituals like 'Suttee Pratha', the festival of Husband's Wedding Day, and the practice of Hijra Dancing, among others.

Harry, an Englishman is Nawab’s minion as well as a member of his retinue whose main job is to set up social engagements with the powerful and influential British families. In the course of narrative his chief function turns out to bring Olivia and the Nawab close to each other, ultimately resulting in intimacy.

The Nawab’s state of Khatm which is of a small size is in dire straits, both communally as well as financially. Yet, wealth is still flaunted; communal riots rear up in all their inhumane ugliness, but are glossed over by the Nawab, though it is a great source of agitation to Douglas. However, as Khatm is not within his jurisdiction, he is powerless to really do anything much in this regard. But when it spills over into his territory, he does take decisive action. However, the Nawab cannot, at any point be directly implicated. This assumes all the more alarming proportions in Douglas’s eyes when it is made known that the Nawab shelters the dacoits and is a partaker of their booty. But there is no tangible evidence. The feudal Nawab is deeply entrenched in his own ends, and is so arrogant and quarrelsome that he cannot be touched. He actively
participates in public functions and other local religious ceremonies besides, as already mentioned, hosting opulent parties for British families. The Nawab, presumably fairly young, exudes dynamism and thus has numerous admirers, though the chief Briton among these is Harry, over whom he exercises a powerful grip of will to the latter’s detriment. It is as if he is the victim of a magic spell, the Nawab being over-possessive and selfish in using him as an agent, for which he is given the life of opulence at the cost of psychological and physical confinement in India.

Harry’s long-standing and overwhelming desire to return to England and join his ailing mother has been repeatedly brushed aside, as is the case after he stays at Olivia’s house during the riots. Here Douglas convinces him to follow his own mind and return to London. However, the Nawab, upon arrival, soon effortlessly squashes this plan, Harry returning to the Nawab’s palace. One can, therefore, see that the Nawab can steamroll other’s wills with practiced ease (a mark of a ruler even, if not a just one).

Olivia’s interest in the Nawab develops at parties, progressing greatly when she starts secretly visiting him unaccompanied by Douglas. Finally, she is invited by the Nawab for a picnic at Baba Firdaus’ shrine. Amidst the natural and romantic surroundings of the shrine, the Nawab talks about its greatness. He tells her about his brigand ancestor Amanullah Khan and how Baba Firdaus protected him when he was in great danger. Amanullah Khan built that shrine in Baba’s honour and as a thanksgiving gesture. However, at this point Baba
Firdaus had disappeared but his presence, which possesses the power of miracles, remains to be detailed later.

Olivia immensely enjoys the Nawab’s charming company and entertainment he provides. This is a welcome change from the cloistered and monotonous dull life at her home. The Nawab himself initiates the tryst with Olivia by visiting her during Douglas’s absence. However, it comes to fruition later in his domain. As expected, in course of time Olivia falls in love with Nawab, blind to his faults. Later she becomes pregnant and the Nawab’s possessiveness thereby takes on gargantuan proportions as well as the form of a hoping-to-be-fulfilled desire, to hit Douglas in the face with the fact of pregnancy. Douglas imagines the child is his and makes preparations accordingly. But the Begum, the Nawab’s mother decides to abort the child by engaging midwives to perform the task. Douglas rushes her to the hospital where Dr. Saunders discovers the cause of the miscarriage and the whole British community is shocked and feels disgraced. Olivia returns to the Nawab’s palace, where she comes to know that he has arranged a cottage for her at a hill-station, he himself and Begum had left for London.

The second plot revolves round the unnamed narrator who has come to India in search of Olivia’s mysteries. Her own personal experiences swing from the pleasant to unpleasant, from good to bad, without a black and white dimension. Despite the compatriots’ advice to the contrary (about the perils and
uncleanliness of India), she has an open mind and is thus not predisposed either negatively or positively, but inhabits neutral ground initially.

The narrator's encounter with the young British Chidanand (Chid), a holy man by recourse to ochre robes and a constantly repetitive mantra, is marked by difficult tolerance and pity, she being a sex object as well as the source of his food and money.

The narrator also develops sexual relations with her lower middle-class guide-cum-friend Inder Lal, who is her landlord too. It is important to mention here that one can see a similarity or parallel between Olivia and the Nawab’s past and the present of the narrator and Inder Lal. In both the cases the secret of the shrine is revealed by the Nawab and Inder Lal respectively. The narrator and Inder Lal make love first at the shrine, an oasis from the heat and dust. They both tie holy red threads on the lattices of the shrine. The experience echoes that of Olivia and Nawab's. The miraculous blessings which can ensure pregnancy to the childless is revealed, the festival being 'Pati Ki Shadi'. The difference between Olivia and the narrator is that the latter is marked with positivity. She too does get pregnant but keeps it hidden from Inder Lal, her land-lord who is already married, and decides to deliver the baby in an ashram.

The reader later learns without even scant details that the 1930s British characters are eventually due to go back to their own country. The Nawab settles in Britain but later dies in New York, leaving Olivia isolated and alone.
Now to detail some minor characters who are nevertheless pivotally important plot-wise. These are Inder Lal’s dominating widowed mother and his meek and submissive wife, Ritu, always unquestioningly obedient and under the power of her mother-in-law, who has an authoritative personality. The life of elderly Indian widows is examined in the course of the novel, especially their reservations and liberty. The abolition of sutteepratha may have some concern with it, but to give undue importance to it in narrator’s time would be falling far short of the mark.

The panorama of both the British Raj and the overlapping of three different cultures and religions have been drawn in a highly picturesque manner—a method of bringing into the clear light of day the differing social dynamics, having a moral dimension, which is particularly colonial in the earlier time-period. In this light, Dr. and Mrs. Saunders represent typical British morality whereas Mrs. and Mr. Crawford are more open apparently, yet cannot achieve a worthwhile assimilation in Indianness. However, Major Minnies does have a slight inclination towards and understanding of Indian spirituality and poetry but regards it as belonging to another plane which proves elusive in the given world.

Douglas Rivers represents typical colonial mentality and to this end is well-functional in his job. He wants to make reforms in India, eliminate the evil of sutteepratha and bring about communal harmony. He faces heat and dust both at home in his matrimonial affairs (where his wife ditches him), and outside,
where in scorching heat he performs his duty faithfully. He is always, insofar as humanly as possible, the enforcer of British law. He desires to craft a new India in the image of Britain as evident in hill-station retreats at places like Simla and Mussourie. Presumably, Douglas fully recovers from Olivia's elopement with the Nawab in 1923. However, he returns to London and remarries.

This chapter's intent is not to deal with the entire novel at the level of narrative, plot, characters and symbology. Instead, there is a sustained, rigorous focus on the duos of Olivia and Nawab, Narrator and Inder Lal. Other characters and incidents would be brought into focus during the analysis wherever relevant. The Sufi strains as opposed to the strict concepts of Islam would be examined for exegetical purposes. In addition, the Freudian/Jungian concepts of persona, ego, shadow, anima, animus and self, etc. would also be brought into play. The Sufi strain is a potent symbol especially when seen within the context of the shrine of Firdaus, which is symbolic of union and fertility, as amply clear in both the duos' trysts spanning time.

Herein is the power of love and blessings highlighted, but Olivia is more like a puppet, a being of not well-developed ego, as she submits to an abortion. The narrator, however, is comfortable and secure in her being. She feels no need of an overblown, overdeveloped persona and is at ease with her inner self, so she decides to have Inder Lal's baby without even burdening him with the knowledge. In her the polarities of anima and animus are healthy. She is at peace with herself and her surroundings; she has real inner, inward placidity
and is well adjusted to the world without as well. Unlike Olivia, she is not an unevolved schoolgirl. Importantly, it must be mentioned that in both cases the shrine of Baba Firdaus is of splendid significance as the matings take place here. Its social significance is thus of fertility, in which the Husband’s Wedding Day or *Pati Ki Shadi* is tied in with the related rituals of special mass-gatherings being celebrated. Staunch folklorean belief of blessings is associated with it; even the deserted women and those who have been turned out of their homes due to infertility, come to the shrine for blessings, as the following textual extract shows:

Typical of the way things get mixed up in India is the story of Baba Firdaus’ shrine. As the Nawab had explained to Olivia, this had originally been built by his ancestor Amanullah Khan in thanksgiving to a Muslim faqir who had given him shelter. It is now sacred to Hindu women because it is thought that offerings at this shrine will cure childlessness. But it is sacred to them for only one day a year. The reason why is open to various interpretations. Some believe that a childless woman had been driven away from her husband’s home so that he could marry again. On the day of this second wedding of his she came to hide her shame and grief in Baba Firdaus’ grove. Here she had a vision that within nine months of this date she would bear a child; and so it happened. The day of the festival is called *Pati Ki Shadi*, or the Husband’s Wedding Day. (65-66)

So, obviously the shrine is believed to be connected to fecundity, a state reflected in the verdant environs and water, representative of fertility, tranquility, peace and a soothing spiritual balm (a marked contrast to the heat and dust of the desert). It is also symbolic of human trials and travails. When
Olivia visits the shrine with the Nawab, the natural environs are brought in
sharp relief as they approach nearer:

The car turned from the road and into a narrow track. It was
difficult to drive here: they were shaken to and fro... After a while
the car couldn't go any further and they all had to get out and
walk. The path got more and more narrow and climbed steeply
upwards. The Nawab still didn't say anything though sometimes
he held some branches aside to make it easier for Olivia to walk.
But she still got scratched by thorns and also some insects were
biting her; her straw hat had slipped to one side and she was very
hot and near to tears. (42)

The pain and efforts required to reach the holy place makes it a place of
pilgrimage. There is a big change from her cloistered and formerly sequestered
life with Douglas, the dreariness of indoor living. The following quote brings
the positive surroundings into sharp focus:

There was a little spring which came freshly bubbling out of a cleft
between some stones. It was the sound of this spring that, together
with the bird-song filled that green grove. The Nawab squatted
down and dabbed his fingers in the water and invited Olivia to do
the same: "How cold it is. It is always like that. People think it is a
miracle that there should be this green grove and this cold water
here in this place where there is only desert. Why is it so?..." (46)

It appears truly miraculous that such an oasis is secluded away in the
rocky and desert area of Khatm, which perhaps symbolizes that after passing
through and experiencing difficulties one can enjoy the fruit of blessings and joie
de vivre. Like Emily Dickinson in her poem "Success is Counted Sweetest" who
says that a person who is sorely thirsty can enjoy and appreciate the sweetness
of nectar precisely because he/she is in dire need of it in comparison to one who
is always in possession of the nectar.

Success is counted sweetest
By those who ne'er succeed.
To comprehend a nectar
 Requires sorest need. (1-4)

The thorny and scorching journey prepares Olivia in particular as well as the Nawab for appreciation of the shrine and its verdant, shady grove with spring water. But this strikes a deep chord, one of attunement, touching deeply their very souls.

The description of the shrine and the environs and its history is a pointer to the same. However, this is not all that obvious, but rather suggestive as the following excerpt shows:

It was a small plain whitewashed structure with a striped dome on top. Inside there were latticed windows to which people had tied bits of red thread, praying for fulfillment of their wishes. They had also laid strings of flowers—now wilted—on a little whitewashed mound that stood alone in the centre of the shrine. The Nawab explained that the shrine had been built by an ancestor of his in gratitude to Baba Firdaus who had lived on this spot. Baba Firdaus had been a devout soul devoted to prayer and solitude; the Nawab's ancestor — Amanullah Khan — had been a freebooter riding around the country with his own band of desperadoes to find what pickings they could in the free-for-all between Moghuls Afghans, Mahrattas, and the East India Company.... Once he had sought refuge in this grove — all his men had been killed in an engagement, and he himself had only just escaped with his life, though badly wounded. Baba Firdaus had kept him hidden from his pursuers and also tended his wounds and nursed him back to health. Years later, when fortune smiled on him again, Amanullah Khan had returned; but by then the place was deserted and no one knew what had happened to the Baba, or even whether he was
dead or alive. So all Amanullah Khan could do was to build this little shrine in the holy man’s honour. (44-45)

Baba not only gave him shelter but also attended him, despite the fact that he was a malefactor. This is because the saints are free from worldly desire in a social sense in particular, have no malice, and are free even from the taint of good or bad deeds. Instead purity and simplicity is part of their being, soul and consciousness. Enfolded within is piety and serenity and pleasantness and good will towards humanity. Thus did Baba Firdaus shelter and nurse dacoit Amanullah as he would have anyone in need, king or even pauper, gentleman or criminal. The influence of these saintly people that gives fresh lease of life to mortal beings whose life otherwise is affected by the selfish motivations and considerations besides mischievous and evil thoughts which tempt them to go astray than to follow the path of righteousness. Insofar as the suffering is concerned, it may tempt a said individual to selfish behaviour and errant ways. Sufism, as such, gives no weightage to caste, creed, culture or religion to the point of prejudiced exclusivity but embraces all equally, in the true spirit of spirituality, with all its radiant meaningfulness. It can be argued that Jung’s school of thought contains components of spirituality, varying in individual cases as per differing thoughts of differing individuals. But it does not reach the essence of Vedanta as the former is more empirical. However, it can be interpreted that Jungian psychology, derive as it does from ancient cultures and literatures as well as archaeology, anthropology and sociology, with
consciousness as the vibrant hub, has indeed not only a psychomythic but also a psychospiritual dimension. Sufism is, however, much more accessible to the masses as faith and devotion. While Vedanta, which requires intellectual understanding is meant for specialized persons like divyayogis.

In present scenario admittedly the purification is warranted to put the individual and thereby society at large on the path of peace and prosperity through noble thoughts. The principles as enunciated by the Sufi Saints thus appear to have become handy and in the novel under discussion their impact on the character of Amanullah Khan is obviously noticed as from a suffian dacoit he becomes a follower of Baba Firdaus and devotes his energies as well as money to the construction of a Sufi shrine.

However, it must be reiterated that Heat and Dust is nowhere a study in Sufism but rather carries its strains and minor echoes, most evidently in the narrator's case. In Olivia's life a moral judgement is made by Douglas and British peers. But the narrator flows with the stream of life unimpacted by such societal considerations. Perhaps she has Baba Firdaus' enveloping blessing, something which Olivia lost, may be because she does not believe, all that much, in its power. Amanullah is a study of a brigand whose goodness is awakened by Baba firdaus sheltering and nursing tangible blessings. He also may feel the intangible effect of divine love.

Nowhere is Ruth Prawer Jhabvala using Sufism as a part of her conscious craft and artistry. Nevertheless, it is manifested in the cultural context of the
novel. Though it would not be proper to overemphasize the Sufi strain in the novel, its cross-cultural implications, however, may not to be overlooked. Ruth Jhabvala is bringing in Sufism in an unsufi way keeping the narrator in between the mass of people. Actually solutions to cross-cultural problems come only when people come closer to each other due to which the cultural identity is loosened. The negative aspect of cultural identity, viz. superiority, stereotyping of the other culture, prejudice, and absence of relatedness stem from the lack of proper communication and cultural contents in communication. To slightly digress, India itself is a culturally varied and vast country. So, it is natural that bridges of cultural communication are necessary. In Heat and Dust three cultures are shown in close contact, British, Hindu and Muslim, engendering tensions, at times creative, carried forward and impelled by cultural cross-currents.

In order to find the solutions to the problematics of cultural cross-currents, certain pioneers have to cross the threshold. This is absolutely essential to transcend and arrive at hitherto unknown and uncharted cultural territory, to effect a meaningful encounter and understanding which reaches the depth of being.

The narrator is a calm and open explorer-cum-pioneer. But Olivia stumbles rather temporarily onto the cross-cultural path due to the stardust of lust and glamour of the Nawab conjoined. The narrator makes herself comfortable amidst alien surroundings and calmly and effortlessly evolves with the same. In both the Olivia-Nawab and narrator-Inder Lal relationships, love
does form a meaningful aspect, but it is deep on the narrator's part. In Olivia's case, on the other hand, love is not meaningful in itself but is seen as a function of certain extraneous ostentations.

Nevertheless, even in Olivia's case the Sufi strain is evident as she is blessed with motherhood after visiting the shrine. However, soon after, the sanctity of this strain is desecrated when she submits to the designs of the Begum to abort the child. This incident brings about a catastrophic change in her life. Both consummations at the shrine (Olivia-Nawab and narrator-Inder Lal) do have mystical import and significance and are pivotal to the subplots, sharing relative parallels. So, the spiritual perspective forms a major factor in, if not removing, at least alleviating the dysfunctionalities due to cultural differences. The spiritual perspective, naturally, is all-spanning and is neither monoculture-specific nor monoreligion-specific, (i.e. spirituality should come from a system which is not related to one particular religion or culture e.g. Yoga and Vedanta are peculiar to India, therefore, cannot mediate).

In Heat and Dust the guru-shishya dynamics are totally absent. As already stated, though, the Sufi shrine is a beacon but this should not be either underrated or overrated. However, Baba Firdaus' magnetic blessings do form a crucial factor as he is a divine presence even while physically non-existent.

Now to examine the basic applicable essence of Sufism. According to Sufi Doctrine the mystic union is possible if a person follows spiritual path for the spiritual journey. During the process one passes through various stations and
states. The number of stations and states may vary from person to person but these are the essential aspects of the path. The stations are known as *maqam*, while the mystical states are called *hal*.

The mystic dwells in a number of spiritual stations (*maqam*), which are described in varying sequence, and, after the initial repentance, comprise abstinence, renunciation, and poverty. ("Islamic Mysticism" *Encyclopaedia Britannica* 945)

The main difference between *maqam* and *hal* is, that a *maqam* is required by personal striving while *hal* is sudden flash of knowledge which comes as a gift from God.

In Sufism it is considered that *nafs* is the main seat of evil elements. According to K. Khosla:

In Sufism, there is an evil element in man whose seat is *nafs*, the carnal soul or the flesh (not the body), which drugs us with every evil anodyne. Its mortification is an utter necessity on the path;

(142)

Thus the *nafs* has to be purified and its purification can be done either outwardly or inwardly. For this either one should perform religious rituals and obligations, or it can be purified through *husan*, that is beauty, which is not only physical but encompasses nature's beauty, beauty of humanity and the overall way of life. This can be effected by elevating passion to the level of romance, music and beauty in their widest aspects, appreciating thereby their very depth and core. There are certain psychological impurities like quarrelsomeness, jealousy and over competitiveness.
This can be overcome by *husnal adab* (Khosla 147), i.e. good behaviour, which means good manners and feelings, self-control and discipline, with which a person can reach the spiritual heights. One should abstain from lustful desires, which are forbidden by God. This *taqwa* or abstinence (Khosla 148) is the outcome of piety. Thus one should overcome pride and envy, then only a noble life is achieved. Both the physical and psychological impurities are conjoined and can be separated only theoretically. Once the purification of the lower side of personality comes about love sentiments begin to dominate as the purification has already taken place. Then one can experience that the spark of knowledge is coming directly from God. Here is the complete transition from 'station' to 'state', and it is known as *marifat* or gnosis (Khosla 164). Marifat is characterized by incessant enjoyment, which once achieved transmutes into *mahabba* (love) a consequence of God's love for man. The object of this type of love being the divine (i.e. love of and for the divine). When a person reaches this height, then he starts loving mankind, nature and surroundings as these infatuations cross the limits of all-surpassing intensity or shiddat.

An extremely good example of this type of love is love of Meera Bai for Krishna, who immersed herself in his love so greatly that she left her husband's home and reached the state of ecstasy. She used to dance to the *bhajans*, which she wrote in praise of Lord Krishna.
John Donne's "The Flea", celebrates a perennial union of the physical in the intensity of its love. The flea has sucked the blood of the lovers and thus has consecrated it, the insect personified as a temple of love thus:

Mark but this flea, and mark in this,
How little that which thou deny'st me is;
It suck'd me first, and now sucks thee,
And in this flea, our two bloods mingled be;
Thou Know'st that this cannot be said
A sin, nor shame, nor less of maidenhead,

..................................................................................
Oh stay, three lives in one flea spare,
Where we almost, yea more than married are.
This flea is you and I, and this
Our marriage bed, and marriage temple is;
Thou parents grudge, and you, we're met,
And cloistered in these living walls of jet. (1-6, 10-15)

This is an example of Wusal i.e. union leading to ecstasy.

According to Rumi, the Sufi Path is described as consisting of seven mystical stages known as Seven Valleys. To quote K. Khosla:

The first is the valley of Quest (talab) where the aspirant has to undergo a hundred trials and hardships every instant. He has to renounce all worldly possessions as of no worth, and detach himself from all that exists. ....

The second is the Valley of Love (ishq), which is fire and where the entrant himself must become a flaming fire. Reason is of no avail here. For where reason enters, love flees....

The third is the Valley of Gnosis (marifat). It has no head or foot, no beginning or end. The Sun of Gnosis shines, and the entrant becomes a seer of mysteries according to his merit. There are degrees of gnosis. Each one's proximity to God is in measure with his spiritual state.
The fourth is the Valley of Independence and Detachment (istighna). Here, the entrant desires nothing.

The fifth is the valley of Unity (tawhid)... Whether you see a few or many, in reality, there is but one, and the many complete its unity....

The sixth is the Valley of Bewilderment (liayrat) ... Here the entrant is subject to pain, sighs and burning. Whoever, bewildered and lost, has the Unity of Being imprinted on his soul, forgets all, himself included. ...

The seventh Valley is the Valley of Poverty (faqr) and self-abnegation (fana). Its essence is forgetfulness, dumbness, and unconsciousness. Here the aspirant is lost to self and sunk in the fathomless ocean. He is existent and yet non-existent. (Khosla 164-165)

The concept of seven valleys can be applied to the narrator of the novel Heat and Dust. She is on a quest, which is actually to find out the mysteries of the life of her step-grandmother. During this quest, she has several experiences: her stay in a lower middle class family; her encounter with land lord Inder Lal, his mother and his wife Ritu; visit to Sufi shrine, suttee shrines and Maji's cottage.

These experiences act as stations and states to her so that she undergoes gnosis (marifat) and falls in love (ishq) with Inder Lal who appears like Lord Krishna to her. But soon she detaches (istighna) herself from him and decides to deliver the baby in an Ashram without letting him know about her pregnancy. Thus by passing through pains, and burning and by self abnegation she rises to the height and feels like Simurgh (Khosla 165), that is like sea-bird who is in the
state of ecstasy after the painful and hazardous journey. She taking the lesson from Olivia’s life — who was madly in love with Nawab but perished as she could not overcome her nafs — decides to detach herself from the level of mortal love and reaches metaphysical state. She ends her materialistic desires and feels happy like a Fakir.

Now to list some relevant critical comment on *Heat and Dust* by some eminent critics. Yasmine Gooneratne in *Silence Cunning and Exile: The Fiction of Ruth Prawer Jhabvala* comments:

The entire substance of *Heat and Dust* is filtered through the consciousness of the narrator, who becomes (through Ruth Jhabvala’s subtle adaptation of the cinematic technique of flashback) both the instrument and the subject of her creator’s ironic view of life. Her effectiveness as a tool of social analysis depends to a great degree on the firmness with which her character is established in the opening sections of the novel as honest and reliable, and her approach to recording the events of Olivia’s life and her own established as serious. This is effectively managed through an unobtrusive accumulation of detail that gradually builds an impression in the reader’s mind of a personality at once self-aware and generous. (222)

Gooneratne is right in pointing out that the narrator is the main character of the novel, who is a gentle and kindly soul. The writer is basically praising the novel which is realistic. This novel has been used as a film script also. There is an ironic view of life which sheds a holistic perspective on the Indian characters in particular. However, the perspective of this chapter is not technique as such but the cultural cross-currents revealed and the solutions to the problematics, the characters taking on the role and becoming the mouthpieces for the analysis
of two cultures. Vasant A. Shahane too comments on the technique of the novel thus:

*Heat and Dust* is a skillfully manipulated picture of princely Indian silhouetted against an equally deftly drawn picture of modern India, and both these parallels are presented from the European point of view. There is hardly a scene in the novel which is genuinely moving or overwhelmingly real. But the designing of the novel is very skillful and even intricate, though Jhabvala doesn’t display the mastery of technique which characterized her art in *A New Dominion.* (140-141)

Though it has been rightly commented that there is a parallel view of old India (1923) and the India of the seventees. One does not encounter much change in the thinking, ideologies and surroundings of the two eras. Though there are great differences, yet the experiences of Olivia and the narrator do intersect. Anyway, the novel has been highly rated by each and every critic such as Yasmine Gooneratne, Vasant A. Shahane etc.

Now to focus on two vital relationships, viz., the narrator-Inder Lal relationship and that between Olivia and Nawab. While exploring these relationships, the fact that comes to light is that these are worthy of discussion for finding the solutions to the problematics arising due to cultural cross-currents. The first relationship is that of the narrator and Inder Lal, the narrator differing from Olivia as being a genuine and conscious seeker. The narrator has come to India to explore the hidden facts about Olivia and her elopement with the Nawab. During the process of her research she enters into the life of Indian masses. The process begins when she hires a room and her landlord, Inder Lal is
surprised by her austere, highly simple lifestyle, bare of luxuries and even basic amenities. To quote the text:

I think my landlord, Inder Lal, is disappointed with the way I live in my room. He keeps looking round for furniture but there isn’t any. I sit on the floor and at night I spread my sleeping-bag out on it. The only piece of furniture I have so far acquired is a very tiny desk the height of a foot-stool on which I have laid out my papers. ... Inder Lal looks at my bare walls. Probably he was hoping for pictures and photographs — but I feel no need for anything like that when all I have to do is look out of the window at the bazaar below. I certainly wouldn’t want to be distracted from that scene. Hence no curtains either. (6-7)

Although she is the grand daughter of an ICS officer, Douglas, and comes ancestrally from a well-off family in England, here in India she prefers to live in extreme simplicity. Her lifestyle is almost Gandhian. She could have stayed in a mission as she initially did when she arrived in India or in some hotel with at least some basic facilities but she prefers to live in a congested street-house of a low-middle class Indian clerk, Inder Lal. And in order to get mixed up with them she adopted a simple lifestyle. But from a preconceived Indian viewpoint, Inder Lal’s astonishment over a Briton living in this manner is understandable. He is even more puzzled by her simple Indian apparel. Here the astonishment of Inder Lal reminds one of the astounding behaviour of Gopi in A New Dominion, when he feels woebegone on finding that Raymond’s belongings were all Indian-made handicrafts. He wonders why Raymond does not possess a good piece of furniture and other imported articles. Gopi’s nature is thus actually of nafs, which makes for an inferiority complex in front of those people
who had once been the ruler of this country and still are considered to be superior, being the citizens of a developed nation. This feeling of inferiority complex causes hurdles in the natural way of development. Both Gopi and Inder Lal, who represent the lower-class strata of our society, are themselves responsible for creating parallactic conditions, while foreigners like Raymond (*A New Dominion*) are jovial by nature. They want to mix up with the commoners and understand them during the process. Raymond and the narrator are about to go back to England after gaining and receiving some unfortunate experiences while Judy assimilates herself in the alien culture and stays with her husband for the well being of her family. These three are the most positive British characters in Jhabvala's novels, not forgetting Olivia, of course, about whom the discussion will come later in the chapter.

The narrator in the novel *Heat and Dust* wants to experience day to day living of India and has no sense of superiority complex. She likes observing people, and so, even her windows are curtailless. She has a remarkable lack of typical exaggerated sense of privacy like many of formerly colonial origins. So, she takes in the life style, culture, customs and family relationships of a typical middle class Indian family. She enjoys all types of human and natural and manmade vistas: the beggars, the vendors, children playing in the street and men folk gossiping idly. Ever since her arrival in India she has attempted progressively to assimilate herself in the vastly different environment. She is
truly individual and is not bothered about being appraised by all and sundry, as the following quote from the text bears out:

I have already got used to being appraised in this way in India. Everyone does it everywhere — in the streets, on buses and trains: they are quite open about it, women as well as men, nor do they make any attempt to conceal their amusement if that is what one happens to arouse in them. I suppose we must look strange to them, and what must also be strange is the way we are living among them — no longer apart, but eating their food and often wearing Indian clothes because they are cooler and cheaper. (8-9)

So, she is participating directly or indirectly in Indian panorama, resultantly becoming a pioneer in searching for India and Indian culture. Ostensibly she had come to solve the enigma surrounding the past of her step grandmother. No doubt, this search continues but it becomes a springboard for a fulsome entry into the whole of the Indian scenario: its different people, classes, religious faiths, etc. make her bon vivant. This quality of hers is the main reason for creativity; in fact the narrator retains her own identity, though it progresses during the process of the quest about the life history of Olivia and as a result of her own experiences which do have some parallels with Olivia. She relates well with Inder Lal, his mother, his wife Ritu and his mother’s widow friends. But she cannot communicate with Ritu in essence as the latter suffers from schizophrenia, something not understood by the family and, therefore, unattended to. Ritu’s silence is due to the lack of sharing because the shackle of Indian culture does not permit a married woman to be verbose and share the problems and secrets of her life with strangers. But the narrator’s alliance with
Ritu's mother-in-law is quite amicable. Despite the age difference both of them become good friends, even the language barrier is no problem. She has the quality of sharing everyone's feeling which is the positiveness of her character. Resultantly she gathers a great deal of information about the relations and bondings of a middle class family and other cultural and ethical knowledge in the company of the loquacious mother-in-law of Ritu. To illustrate how the narrator and Ritu's mother-in-law get along, the following is relevant:

After that night the mother and I have drawn close together. We have become friends. Now she often accompanies me to the bazaar and bullies the shopkeeper if he is not giving me the best vegetables. She has seen to it that everyone charges me the right price. I understand her Hindi much better now, and she some of mine though it still makes her laugh. But she does most of the talking and I like listening to her, especially when she tells me about herself. (53)

So, the narrator represents a vast self reality enabling her to assimilate and imbibe a byproduct of either the Anima or self or both in tandem. The present researcher will be reusing Anima to expound creative tension. (Earlier the formulation of Anima has taken place in the previous chapter). In the aforesaid paragraph the narrator is in Hetaira locale, giving a good companionship to others, thus making them feel comfortable, listening to them and showing interest in their lives. Though there is some language problem, it does not cause any interruption in the narrator's and mother-in-law's dialogue. She conveys her feelings in poor Hindustani and is able to understand the latter also.
When the narrator, who was already keen to know everything about Olivia and the Nawab, comes to know that Inder Lal’s mother and her aging friends are going to visit Baba Firdaus’ shrine on the Husband’s Weeding Day, she gets ready to join them as she does not want to miss the opportunity. She had already learnt about the shrine and the specific Husband’s Wedding Day from Olivia’s letters.

Yesterday was the Husband’s Wedding Day and I accompanied Inder Lal’s mother and her friends to the place of pilgrimage. We went on a bus crammed with women bound for the same destination. Most of them were elderly, and obviously the object of their pilgrimage was, like ours, to have a pleasant outing. Everyone had brought a lot of food which was shared out with many jokes. Some of them had brought barren daughters-in-law, but these remained silent and in the background.

Our little party found a place under a tree where we all sat in a circle and ate and drank as we had been doing steadily since leaving home.... There were more stories, and I liked listening to them, just as I liked sitting here with my friends in the middle of this festive scene. I felt part of it all—absorbed as I had been absorbed by the worshipping crowd packed into the shrine. (66-67)

Thus, her outlook is positive. Her journey in an ordinary local bus with the local crowd shows no prejudice, no precedence, her sole motive is to gain delight from everywhere. She gloats over the happiness of the widow ladies, who in their youth lived a meek existence under the authority of their mothers-in-law. But now they are like free birds. They appear to have positive current and are full of jouissance, though rough with their daughters-in-law (as it’s the part of their culture and society). The narrator, by amalgamation, comes close to
India and takes in each and every moment spent going into the state of Hayrat. As stated earlier this is the state when a person has the vibration that the world is the creation of god and the entire mankind is perceived as His bounty to humanity. There is wonder over the beatific.

The most noticeable thing is that Firdaus’s shrine provides fellowship to the masses. Earlier it was under the control of Nawab who considered it to be his paternal property but in the seventies it was open to all. In Nawab’s time too it was the place where Olivia, Harry, Nawab and his retinue used to arrange and enjoy the picnics. To quote from the text:

Now he was in an excellent mood and the party began to go with a swing. The servants had unpacked the picnic hampers, filling the sacred grove with roasted chickens, quails, and potted shrimps. The young men were very lively and entertained sometimes with practical jokes which they played on each other, and sometimes with songs and Urdu verses. One of them had brought a lute-like instrument out of which he plucked some bittersweet notes. The lute also provided the music for the game of musical chairs they played, with cushions laid in a row. (47)

Despite being a shrine and a holy place, the non-vegetarian food was cooked there which shows that ‘Sufi’ saints and shrines are accessible to all Muslims, Hindus Christians, saints and even dacoits. The emphasis lies on love of humanity and the necessity of doing one’s duty, engaging oneself in work and being true to oneself and towards God. People come and enjoy the rare bliss of nature in desert area. The shrine provides solace to both the wretched and the aspirants. Not only this, the Nawab had made this place a hideout for the
dacoits, who were patronized by him. The era in which the narrator arrived at this place, it has come to be known for a fair called the Husband’s Wedding Day and thus offers the opportunity to the masses to come close to each other, enjoy the nature’s beauty and be blessed. Though it is located in the same area where communal riots occurred on the Husband’s Wedding Day, but now this day has become important by virtue of communal meeting.

The Suttee Shrine, which may be taken as a parallel of the Firdaus’s shrine, has also been described by Jhabvala. This shrine again can symbolize spirituality. Viewed intellectually or emotionally, the idea of suttee gives a negative signal of an unprogressive society. But culturally and historically it is seen as love and loyalty to the extreme as the narrator’s visit to the shrine with Ritu’s mother-in-law shows:

After that Inder Lai’s mother took me to see the suttee shrines. We walked to the end of the bazaar and through the gateway leading out of town, then down a dusty road till we came to a tank or reservoir by the wayside. Here Inder Lai’s mother showed me a cluster of little shrines under some trees: they were not much bigger than mile-stones, though some of them had little domes on top. There were crude figures scratched hair-thin into the stone: presumably the husband with the faithful wife who had burned herself with him. They gave me an eerie feeling, but Inder Lai’s mother devoutly joined her hands before the shrines. She decorated one of them with a little string of roses and marigolds she had brought. She told me that, on certain days of the year, she and her friends come with sweets, milk, and flowers to worship these widows who have made the highest sacrifice. She sounded really respectful and seemed to have the greatest reverence for that ancient custom. (54-55)
Of course, the narrator cannot deep down view it as other than barbarous. The cultural commonality between Firdaus' shrine and the suttee shrine is that both are constructed after the death of some person, and both are considered hallowed, with spiritual power. A shrine is that place where some relic of the person is buried with a dome-like structure built over it and worshipped with great reverence. The presence of water (natural source of water) near the shrines is also common. Water is considered as life and is generally associated with holy people and is believed to have some healing power. Symbolically, the presence of water near the places like Firdaus' shrine and suttee shrines represents an eternal life after death. Another spiritual place in the novel is Maji's hut, located in the middle of the water pond, again representing vital force. Maji, a pious lady, lives there and is believed to have some supernatural power and allurement:

Maji is said to have certain powers, and though I don’t know what they are, she does give me the impression of having something more than other people, even if it is only more vim and vigour. She seems to be positively bursting with those. She lives very simply in a little hut under a tree. It is a lovely spot, in between the lake where the boys go swimming and a lot of old royal tombs. When I was taken to see her, we all crawled inside her hut and sat on the mud floor there. I enjoyed being with all those widows, they were so gay and friendly, and though I couldn’t take much part in their conversation, I did a lot of smiling and nodding; and when they all began to sing hymns—led by Maji who sang very lustily, throwing herself around in her enthusiasm—I tried to join in which seemed to please them. (54)
In this novel, Ruth Jhabvala has stressed spirituality as a positive path imparting energy to the weary souls. The Firdaus’ shrine, spiritual lady named Maji’s hut and even the suttee shrines are depicted in a sublime manner. Maji is a close friend of Inder Lal’s mother, a widow, possessing a certain positive flow of energy, which influences the elderly ladies, who feel delighted in her company. Their behaviour is highly girlish, it appears that they want to enliven life with vigour. The Suttee Pratha abolished long ago, according to which the widow used to embrace sutteehood for the sake of relationship, which supersedes the emotional death by cutting off from the society and to abandon the joys of life after becoming widow which certainly would draw them towards Thanatos (Death Principle). But these widows are enjoying life by singing hymns in praise of God and during the process they reach the state of Masti and forget everthing in bliss, which provides them new energy. The narrator does join them initially to please Maji and her friends. She finds the music interesting. According to certain belief, the music has the power of purifying heart, body and soul and this is precisely why Sufis reach ecstasy. ‘Maji’ can be compared to ‘Meera Bai’, who, in the Ishq of God, has attained the paraphysical state. She lives in the shrine, respected by all, singing and enjoying and spreading happiness among her women friends.

Therefore, these shrines and Maji’s hut have become mini psycho-cosmic realities as they make for fellowships fostering new relationships, and are the source of natural and spiritual energies. These are the sources of vigour and
vitality and music adds to their flavour. Through music they are connected to God. As discussed earlier, *Ishq* is reflected through music in which body, heart and soul are involved and a person achieves divinity by this. It is known as *Ishq Hakiki* (a trance state), i.e. spiritual love, the love through which one reaches such a state in which there is no consciousness of surroundings and this state of obliviousness increases with the rhythm of music. Hence these places provide solace to everyone, irrespective of their caste, creed or race. And the narrator, who is a foreigner, makes space everywhere and enjoys life.

**Narrator's main quality is to adjust herself everywhere with everyone.** She is entering into an alien culture through Anima. The narrator has great love and affection within (which is expressed), and in her fascination for Eros, she crosses the boundary of culture. Her Anima is strong, which is actually a Mandala of Eros and emotions and at spiritual level it shows *caritas* and *agape*. She is a good female companion (Hetaira) to Inder Lal’s mother, Inder Lal and even to Chid (Chidananda), her compatriot who has 'become an Indian ascetic'. Actually, sometimes she appears to be a mother while she takes care of Chid, sometimes Hetaira when she listens to the problems of Inder Lal and provides good company to his mother, like a friend as well as grown-up daughter. Thus, it is difficult to typify her. To understand her, she requires to be examined from different angles.

While exploring her relationship with Inder Lal, one can come across two stages. **At first stage, she is in Hetaira locale with Inder Lal, who accompanies**
her to Nawab’s palace and is not at all interested in the history of it. He is afflicted with the shadow, with petty problems which have absorbed his energy which is the reason for his lack of interest in the history of the place. To illustrate his obsession with the petty:

Inder Lai walked close behind me and told me about the goings-on in his office. There is a lot of intrigue and jealousy. Inder Lai would like not to get involved — all he asks is to be allowed to carry out his duties — but this is impossible, people will not let him alone, one is forced to take sides. As a matter of fact, there is a lot of jealousy and intrigue against him too as the head of his department is favourably disposed towards him. (12)

The entire information given in this paragraph is of no interest to the narrator. Yet she listens. She does not know who his boss was and who were poisoning his seniors against him, yet she cares to listen to him as she does not want to embarrass him by ignoring. Inder Lai has no one to give an ear to his problems and understand him, as he has an uneducated mother and a meek wife at home. Inder Lai lacks the companionship of his wife, reducing their relationship to a mechanical level. She is dominated by her mother-in-law, engaged in taking care of the children and domestic chores. The mother-in-law is closer to her son than wife, she preventing her from taking care of his basic needs:

But she seems to be very close to her son — it is she, not Ritu, who does everything for him like serving his food and laying his clothes out. She is very proud of him... (53)
The mother's concern for her son is positive. But this creates a gulf between the couple. That is why Inder Lal seeks a companion with whom he can share his joys and sorrows. Moreover, the girl (Ritu) was chosen by Inder Lal's mother as her daughter-in-law. She was chosen on account of her prettiness, fair complexion and good family background. However, in the West wives enjoy the right of equality with their husbands. The narrator, who is a Westerner, provides good company to Inder Lal, who feels proud to have an English friend as it adds to his status.

But I think by now he has got used to me and perhaps is even rather proud to be seen walking with his English friend. I also think he quite likes my company now. At first he welcomed it mainly to practise his English — he said it was a very good chance for him — but now he also seems to enjoy our conversations. I certainly do. He is very frank with me and tells me all sorts of personal things: not only about his life but also about his feelings. He has told me that the only other person he can talk to freely is his mother but even with her — well, he said, with the mother there are certain things one cannot speak as with a friend.

Once I asked, 'what about your wife?'

He said she was not intelligent. Also she had not had much education. (49)

The narrator provides a good companionship to Inder Lal, which he could not get from his mother and wife. During the process of listening to his problems, the narrator enters into the labyrinth of his life, filling the vacuum. Their relationship is initially that of a landlord-cum-guide, but develops into friendship and later companionship. Her sympathetic nature takes the form of
love, a sense of bonding is there, and during the course of time, she becomes pregnant, but does not burden the lover, keeping it a secret. The love here is one sided only, which has been described as Ishq.

The narrator has a pure soul. By mixing with different types of people as well as her down-to-earth nature makes her austerely simple. Her love for Inder Lal is full of simplicity. She has passed the stage of marifat with a little of lower personality (nafs) left in her. Her Mahabba has taken the form of Ishq and this Ishq is actually Ishq Hakiki as it is more spiritual than sensuous. Her love for Inder Lal reaches the apex when she ties the holy red thread in the lattices of the shrine:

On Sunday Inder Lal and I went to Baba Firdaus' grove for a picnic. It was my idea though when we were sitting soaked with perspiration, in the bus and rattling through the broiling landscape, I wondered whether it had been such a good one. We got off and toiled up the rocky, completely barren and exposed path that led to the grove: but once there, it was like being received in Paradise.... Inder Lal lay down at once under a tree, but I was so delighted with the place that I wandered around it.

He produced two pieces of red string; he said we had to tie them to the lattice in the shrine and then our wishes would be fulfilled.... He first tied his piece of string, to show me how to do it.... (124-125-126)

So, her love is not mundane but rather of a very high degree. She wonders at the miracle of God as to how such a blissful place is there in the desert area. Though she had come earlier to the place with Inder Lal's mother but that was fair time and she could not enjoy Nature's beauty. Her... in her
love for Inder Lal, along with the tranquility of the place, she reaches the stage of Hayrat. While enjoying the surrounding and Inder Lal’s company simultaneously she ties the holy thread in the lattices of the shrine with a wish to become mother to fill the gap of her Anima side.

Thus by purification of soul and obliterating the baser desires, instincts and feelings, one can achieve everlasting happiness leading to permanent ecstasy. The base personality components are mental impurities, apart from ill-will and malice, the feelings of inferiority, etc. All these things come in the way of progress. These impurities thwart natural way of living, thus demand cleaning. Thus the soul purification is required, which is possible by passing through the seven stages or seven Valleys as discussed earlier. He/she who has passed through these necessary stages successfully, is bestowed with blessings of the divine. This is what has happened to the narrator who by leading a simple life, controlling her worldly desires and after passing through the seven stages has achieved the blessings of Baba Firdaus. In Inder Lal’s eyes she is just an open-minded Western woman who has liberal views about sex. But she genuinely cares for him, and, it can be argued that she has attained Maqam.

Ritu (Inder Lal’s wife) and her mother-in-law are away to pilgrimage with Chid. Inder Lal daily visits here at night. But he feels uncomfortable when Chid returns, as his is not true caring.

After Chid moved back in again, Inder Lal at first felt shy about his nightly visits. But I have assured him that it is all right because Chid is mostly sleeping .... Inder Lal and I lie on my bedding on
the opposite side, and it is more and more delightful to be with him. He trusts me now completely and has become very affectionate. I think he prefers to be with me when it is dark. Then everything hidden and private between us two alone. Also I feel it makes a difference that he cannot see me, for I'm aware that my appearance has always been a stumbling block to him. In the dark he can forget this and he also needn't feel ashamed of me before others.... At such times I'm reminded of all those stories that are told of the child Krishna and the many pranks and high-spirited tricks he got up to. I also think of my pregnancy and I think of it as part of him. But I have not told him about it.(140-141)

Inder Lal is a socially straitjacketed man who dares not come to his beloved during the day. For him, it is more of satisfying the biological need. He is a symbol of ordinary confused mankind, who requires someone with whom he can share his mental as well as physical requirements. He is a self-suppressed personality. The narrator is a believer with a grain of salt as she does recall the pranks of Lord Krishna in his company (Lord Krishna is considered as the god of love). The narrator has intensified her life as well as her feelings (as suggested in Sufism). Inder Lal is like a bowl of nectar for her because her love has reached ecstasy.

Inder Lal is just a lower middle-class being who likes to complain, and thus cannot grasp spiritual love. Therefore, the narrator is wise in keeping her pregnancy a secret from him. It is because of his negligence and uncaring attitude that his wife suffers from schizophrenia. The narrator asks him to get his wife (Ritu) examined by a psychiatrist. However, he blames Ritu for her illness:

He told me that during the first years of her marriage she had been so homesick that she had never stopped crying. "It was very
injurious to her health", he said, "especially when she got in family way. Mother and I tried to explain matters to her, how it was necessary for her to eat and be happy, but she did not understand. Naturally her health suffered and the child also was born weak. It was her fault. An intelligent person would have understood and taken care". (50)

Inder Lal seems to be partly an escapist. He could have consoled Ritu. His social vanity causes him to boast of his education and government job. He also criticizes Ritu for being uneducated, instead of having made an effort at the relationship. He dismisses her thus:

Inder Lal said, "How is it possible for me to talk with her the way I am now talking with you [the narrator]? It is not possible. She would understand nothing". He added: "Her health also has remained very weak". (50)

As intimacy develops between Inder Lal and the narrator, their conversations become comfortable. One can either be solitary or social or both. Since the narrator is more into the social mode, she associates herself with everyone and tries to solve their problems. She gives shelter to Chid, one of her compatriots, who has come to India in search of peace and self-actualization like the three Western girls (Evie, Margaret and Lee) in A New Dominion who were caught in the trap of a charlatan. In the same fashion, Chid must have fallen into the clutches of some fraudulent Guru (this has not been mentioned in the text but one may conjecture as much) as is evident from his orange robes and the mantras he recites endlessly. He states that by chanting these mantras he was trying to have control over himself and his worldly desires. He has changed his
name too and became Chidanand, popularly known as Chid. When the narrator first found him, he was in a piteous condition:

He had all his possessions with him — a bundle, an umbrella, prayer-beads, and a begging bowl— and they were scattered around him where he lay propped against a latticed arch. There were also some bits of dried bun on a newspaper. He said he didn’t know how long he had been lying here — sometimes it was dark and sometimes it was darker, he said. He had been thrown out of the travellers’ rest-house when his two companions had moved on. He had then tried to continue his pilgrimage, but feeling very ill on the road, had dragged himself back to Satipur. He said he was still very ill. He had been lying her alone, and no one had bothered him because no one had found him except once a pariah dog had sniffed at him and gone away again. (61-62)

The piteous condition of Chidanand compels the narrator to give him shelter due to her strong natural maternal instinct. Thus, she is a person whose heart is full of love, sympathy and fellow-feeling, who loves God, loves mankind, can feel the suffering of others as her own like a Sufi saint. There is a combination of Vatsalya Bhav, Madhur Bhav with Karuna Ras in the narrator which is the highest level of self. Thus the narrator is a veritable Sophia towards Chid. Though Chid takes advantage of this and despite the vacuously repetitive practice of chanting Mantras, he is, naturally, unable to control his hunger for food and sex for which he uses the narrator:

He is always hungry, and not only for food. He also needs sex very badly and seems to take it for granted that I will give it to him the same way I give him my food. I have never had such a feeling of being used. In fact, he admits that this is what he is doing — using me to reach a higher plane of consciousness through the powers of sex that we are engendering between us. I don’t really know why I let him go ahead. (65)
It is a poor view of Indian spirituality that an ascetic who is unable to control his hunger, desires and lust pleads that he is overdoing the things in order to reach the highest plane and that too by exploiting the innocent narrator. The narrator herself, however, has transcended mundane worldly desires which is why she tolerates Chid even though he exploits her unabashedly. It appears that she is helping him in establishing his existence in spiritual as well as mortal world. His spirituality as such is fake. Chid’s problem is that he is delusional.

Later Chid goes on a pilgrimage to the Himalayas in search of peace. But the delusion can neither last nor hold. He returns almost a broken boy badly in need to reconstitute himself. He has reverted to Western clothing. Only dejection marks his being. He literally and psychologically retreats to the corner. Neither Yoga nor the pilgrimage has effected enlightenment.

It is relevant to mention that Yoga Sadhna requires purification of the Shahawat stage. Should this be neglected, the yoga is incorrectly performed. Proper Yoga induces transcendental energy within the body. However, if the base is faulty, it will effect lust and anger horrendously. This can happen without guidance, the fate of Chid, possibly. The right practice of yoga with its inseparable concomitant of Samadhi is helpful to maintain celibacy. In Samadhi one overcomes sex; it is believed that sex pleasure pales before the ecstasy experienced by a realized one, established in Samadhi state. Chid’s practice was like a mere robotic puppet without intelligence. Delusion was the puppeteer
pulling the strings. His subsequent withdrawal from everything is a case of psychosis.

Sufism insists on companionship and work culture, so that one can achieve the heights of spirituality by passing through all stages. Work is essential, a source of accumulating and expending energy, a prerequisite for healthy spiritual living. Even in Sanatan Dharma the life has been divided into four Ashrams, viz. Brahmacarya, when one has to learn, study and prepare himself for future by maintaining celibacy. This is followed by Grahastha Ashram, the stage of marriage and children and attached duties towards family, society, and work together ('Krishna' stresses Karma in The Gita). The third stage is of Vanaprastha Ashram, which is characterized by worship and pilgrimages, while still in the family. The Sanyasa Ashram is the last stage, where one renounces worldly pleasures, the only aim being to find 'self' and 'God' to attain peace.

Chidanand jumps directly into the last stage, thus imbalancing the system and inviting illness. But the narrator's love and care nurses him back to sufficient health. She is like a Shekinah, a Sufi name for one who wants the best for everyone and administers to ailing, sick souls through love. The Gnostic term is Sophia. Sophia is the inspiration of the wise old man who has knowledge. But this skill emanates from love, it is the source-spring. The Sophia personality is concerned about others' potential, not their lacks. Due to the same attribute the narrator does surrender herself to and indulge childish, immature Chid's demands, the gift is precious as it involves sacrifice, in which
love and care are innate and inherent. She is at the more advanced and fulfilling stage of *Ishq* with Inder Lal. In both cases she expects no acknowledgement or reward. In ‘Chid’s’ case it is love due to sympathy; in Inder Lal’s case it is spiritual love.

To her Inder Lal’s child in her womb is somewhat of a spiritual conception. The child would be the blending of two cultures but this need not be unduly stressed.

Rumi, the greatest Persian Sufi poet holds body (the physical self) in high esteem. He believed that had the ‘earthly body’ not been necessary for the manifestation of the Divine, God would not have created it. In this sense, the external world can not be denigrated as purposeless. According to Khosla:

> Form is necessary to manifest the invisible, and so the body is purposeful part of the creation. It is an outward manifestation of the spirit in this world, and without it the body cannot live. (140)

This bears out that *Ishq* has to be realized through the body. However, if one gets stuck in the body without progression, no ‘Wusal’ can be achieved. But the body is required for real insight. The narrator had Wusal with Inder Lal, though both Chid and Inder Lal used her just for mental and physical satisfaction considering her only an instrument in this process. But from narrator’s point of view real spiritual union is with Inder Lal. Similar is the Olivia-Nawab relationship, but the Nawab is not a sniveler like Inder Lal; he is a vital man with a well developed Anima too, who needs a lovely woman to
radiate from. He is a radiating personality who has great charm with a strong Anima aspect in his personality. To an extraordinary degree he possesses the masculine principle. The development and flowering of the Nawab and Olivia's relationship may, possibly, be traced to the former's failed marriage with Zahira (Sandy, the Nawab had given her this name) of the Cabobpur Kingdom due to her greater wealth and Cambridge education as well as more aristocratic lineage. He loved her passionately but her affluent family was the faulty spoke in the wheel. As is evident from the facts about the gulf that led to the failure, as unfolded by Harry to Olivia:

"The Cabobpur family didn't want her to marry him", he said. "They're much bigger royals of course — he doesn't really count in those circles: not much of a title, and by their standards he isn't even rich". (34)

Initially the love blossomed despite all hurdles. But for reasons unknown she fell mentally ill, after which they were separated. There was a lot of fuss over the return of the dowry. It appears that the Nawab was emotionally attached to her even after separation. While showing Sandy's piano to Olivia the Nawab becomes sentimental thus:

Sandy had been learning the sitar but she got tired of it so I sent for the pianos....

"I wish Sandy could have learned to play like you. I miss her very much. She was supposed to be in purdah upstairs but she often hid from everyone to come and be with me. You see, she was a modern girl, she went to school in Switzerland and all the rest. She was not like our other Indian ladies but — yes, like you, Olivia. She was like you. Also beautiful like you." (88)
The above paragraph shows that Sandy was a modern girl for whom it was difficult to live in an orthodox family with its injunction of purdah. Her mental illness shares a slight parallel with that of Inder Lal’s wife Ritu, though the backgrounds are of course radically different. Both suffer from loneliness and lack of companionship from their husbands, due to different reasons. The probable cause for the Nawab’s obsession with Olivia is her great beauty and modernity like that of Sandy; he is thus on the rebound. But when it boils down to this, he chooses orthodox tradition, in spite of his Oxford education and exposure.

The Nawab’s love for Olivia is a continuation of the same elusive love, the love he lost and has rebound in Olivia, heady ambrosia. But, on the positive side, he is true to his loves as he does not maintain a harem, despite such practice being a cultural given at the time. So, he does not view the opposite sex as chattel, despite his title and power. Even harem members socially did receive status and protection and had companionship in their own sorority of sorts. But the question is, at what cost? Perhaps, they were too brainwashed to ever consider, much less weigh it. An important corollary and outfall of Indian society must be considered in and within this context: is not genuine bonding and companionship rare among couples in families? Sociologically examined, the answer would be a depressing yes. Insofar as the Nawab in concerned, he can be divided into both Hindu and Muslim components. Both realities are part
of his experience and being. His mother's (the Begum) domineering personality was probably the reason why Sandy and his relationship died a premature death. This can be ascertained from the way she takes charge of Olivia's abortion even though the Nawab and even Olivia want to have their illicit child. So, he crumbles before his mother, the mother complex being cultural. Yet, in the face of this cultural reality, both Sandy and Olivia become the sacrificial victims.

The description of Olivia's abortion is very much like a butcher slaughtering a kid. She initially is deluded that the Begum has arranged midwives for check-up and care, but the macabre reality soon hits hard under the Begum's authority:

It was the Begum herself who had come, with only one attendant. Both of them were shrouded in black burqas but Olivia knew which was the Begum from the deferential way in which the midwives treated her. She appeared keenly interested in the operation (such personal attention, Olivia thought; I ought to be flattered). The Begum watched from behind her burqa as the two midwives continued their massage. Then one of them got up and went to prepare something in a corner of the room. Olivia tried to see what it was... She saw the midwife showing the Begum a twig on to which she was rubbing some paste. ...

The midwife with the twig came towards her, holding it... Although the midwife worked swiftly and skillfully, the twig hurt Olivia as it entered into her. She was unable to stifle a cry. (167-168)

The effect is debilitating and takes away much of Olivia's vibrancy once the abortion is completed. To the British mind, the black burqa symbolizes
death, the colour of funerals. Critically, the Begum can be viewed as vampire and devoid of motherliness. When Olivia peers into her eyes she appears no different from the Nawab which is also symbolic of the fact that the Nawab too is not interested in the birth of the baby who will be an amalgamation of the two cultures. The Nawab’s love for Olivia with all its possessiveness cannot withstand the Begum’s honour’s dictates, the reason for his passive consent. So, the child is sacrificed at the bidding of the Nawab’s persona and his mother’s dominance. Perhaps Nawab had thought that Britishers would finally go back to England making India an independent country and everything would be settled and thus he would again be the ruler of his own state. Therefore, the son born to Olivia’s womb, (who would not be a muslim) should not become a Nawab by legacy. He was proud of his ancestors who had given him the entire legacy and wants that it should go in right hands, that is, to a person who belongs to his own community. Both mother and son are not free from the trivial and impure thoughts and thus cannot overcome the state of Shahawat. To refer to an earlier part of the text, the Nawab’s ascent to the throne at a tender age is a key to his character and its development.

Harry tells Olivia that Nawab became the ruler of his princely state at the age of fifteen and obtained whatever he wanted: “So he’s always ruled, you see; always been the ruler”. (34)

Rule and its concomitant outcome of obsessional possession has made the Nawab whimsical and overpowering in nature. Harry, too, is a victim of his
royal whim. His repeated desire to return to England and see his mother invariably falls on the Nawab's cleverly twisted ears. The royal always suppresses this request, and Harry is completely in the grip of his power, deluded that the Nawab loves him as much as he loves the Nawab. This delusion is of epic proportions, painting in Harry's mind the Nawab in a godly light in which Harry sacrifices to the utmost:

"I do want to do everything I can to make him—happier. Goodness knows I try. Not only because I like him very much but because he's been fantastically kind to me. You can have no idea of his generosity, Olivia. He wants his friends to have everything. Everything he can give them. It's his nature. If you don't want to take he is terribly hurt... But all he knows is giving. Giving things"....

"But that means he likes you".

"Who knows? With him you can't tell...sometimes I feel that the only person he really cares for on this earth is the Begum. He hates to be away from her." (35-36)

So, Harry's desperation is truly unfathomable and suggests homosexual love, however latent. The Nawab's forced separation between Harry and his mother is highly cruel. But deluded Harry can never grasp this, despite his pain. But he does express his boundless anguish:

"...I haven't seen my mother for three years. I'm worried about her because she hasn't been keeping too well. She's on her own, you see, in a little flat in South Ken. Of course she wants me to come home. But whenever I mention it, all he does is send her some marvellous present. Once she wrote to him — she thanked him but said 'The best present you could send me would be my Harry home again'. He was really touched." (36)
So, the Nawab as an exploiter is an unfeeling, selfish royal. Perhaps, the same is the reason for caving in to the Begum for Olivia's abortion. Olivia's abortion can be viewed as symbolic of separating a child from the mother. It is something most inhumane, which is similar psychologically to immature, start-struck Harry's plight. So, the Nawab's love is not pure as the partners are not free to make meaningful choices. Despite all his faults, the people are fascinated by the Nawab because he exudes social charm. He has been portrayed as a well-built handsome man:

... The Nawab in his prime is said to have been a well set-up man with a strong, rather hawk-like face. (96)

The hawk is a predatory bird and as such the theriomorph of power, related to death and violence. It gives a valuable insight into the Nawab's personality. He has power, vigour and maintains relations with dacoits. He gives them shelter in the shrine of Baba Firdaus for a share of the booty. Though not an outright criminal socially like his ancestor Amanallah Khan, he has the same grasping nature.

Everyone knows that he is behind the communal riots and patronises dacoits, but Olivia's love and faith do not allow her to believe this. This blind love or Ishq ensures her betrayal. She sacrifices her husband Douglas, community and country, only to find that the Nawab has left for England and made arrangements for her stay at Mussorie. She thus becomes the 'living Suttee' of the Nawab, truly a soul-stifling existence.
The problematics with cultural cross currents are stereotyping, prejudice and hegemony. Prejudice has its roots in stereotyping when a person starts viewing the other culture with a veil over his eyes. This produces distortions. Unless this veil is removed, one cannot see things clearly in their actuality. The windows of perception should be spotless and clean. If perception is pure, one is very positive in experiencing the other culture. At the persona level, the Indian persona is different from the British persona and American persona. Removing deep rooted preconceived views of a non-native from an alien culture proves rather difficult. For this, amicability, reaching out, is required as a trait of the foreigners. The narrator is not unduly in the grip of her own culture from a negative viewpoint. She has the remarkable quality to reach out and arrive at the true meaning of things and appreciate them. The narrator who thereby explores two time periods, is the pivot of the novel. She draws many parallels between the two eras, the chief one being the Olivia-Nawab affair and her own liaison with Inder Lal, especially relevant with respect to the respective confession of love of each couple at Baba Firadus’ shrine. Prejudice, passion and self-interest do not distort her view; nor do they prevent her from interaction. She does not see India through a distorted mirror. The cultural interaction she engages in, is a pillar of her empathetic personality. Cultural hegemony, an outcome of the superiority complex, forms no part of her heart and soul. She is extremely loving to the core and incredibly adaptable. Unlike most Westerners, she even does not require material comforts, preferring a highly austere lifestyle.
Though the Sufi aspect insofar as philosophy is concerned has been invoked to put *Heat and Dust* in cultural perspective, it should not be given overriding importance as only, in actuality, there are merely Sufi strains therein. However, the basic concepts as delineated do have a little significance, naturally confined to the subculture within the culture amidst the convergences and divergences of the Eastern and Western mind, the products of two vastly disparate cultures. Instead, to put into proper perspective, Sufism is simply a mere strain in the work under review. Though parallels do bind the pre-independence and post-independence eras of Olivia-Nawab and the narrator-Inder Lal within the Sufi strains, they should not be given more than culturally contextual importance as the novel is replete with existentialism and psychology, all within a traditional narrative form. As such, the schools of psychology and philosophy that this researcher has applied must take, to state modestly, precedence. Therefore, the Sufi strains, even though the concepts have been discussed at length for a proper grounding-cum-comprehension, should be viewed as mere strains, nothing more, nothing less. Proper exegetical perspective must not be lost sight of. To do so would be at both the researcher’s and the reader’s peril.

The cores of this researcher’s foundation are the cultural cross-currents and creative tension generated in the light thereof. For example, Chid is a self-misbegotten missionary of Indian spirituality without comprehending its basis and essence. In his case the tension generated within is falsely existential, the
meaning and purpose being delusional as he leaps into the final stage ostensibly without having gone through the purifying crucible. So, his fate at the end, that of severe psychosis, has to be the inevitable result. This is a telling commentary on misperception of an alien culture, that too, based merely on hearsay, without thought to one's individual personality and related potential and stage of development. Conversely, the narrator is a true seeker who does not Indianise herself superficially or for the sake of it, but by graduated stages at her own comfortable pace. However, nowhere does she become a blind convert, never abandoning intellectuality, even though she is an individual with a strong, deep feeling nucleus which radiates outwards. In Chid's case, both the initial stage and the later collapse, are marked by dysfunctionalities. He has a weak ego and, therefore, a weak reality principle and polarity principle, which propel him towards Thanatos. He is still at the Id stage, governed in actuality by a mirage-like and immature pleasure principle.

Olivia is transformed from a love-lorn to a love-struck being, the latter in her love and union with the Nawab for whom she sacrifices husband, community and country at the vibrant altar of Eros in all its awaking and reawakening power. She begins to bud, a truly existential flower, but cultures and prejudices prove stronger, she becoming the victim of both cultures, ostracized by her own, abandoned like a stray dog, undergoing a forced abortion, and being rejected at last by the Nawab, the last somewhat imaginably, a living Thanatos. But, presumably, despite withering, her Eros
refuses to die as she is firmly in the Heteira mould of personality. Both she and the narrator exhibit Western ego autonomy though she is destroyed but not defeated completely like a character of Hemingway. Both she and the narrator make life-changing choices and accept what comes. However, in Olivia's case the end is anguished. The narrator is not shaken by weather-storms as she is a bedrock of solid stability amid inner and outer change. She crafts her own ideas in response to the environment and acts accordingly. Freud’s pleasure principle, reality principle, polarity principle and Eros are well balanced within her and she truly progresses as a thinking and acting individual who has the strength of an impervious rock lashed by the turbulent sea. But she feels no turbulence as she is earthy and calm like the earth itself—a veritable symbol and embodiment of the great mother or Sophia. The narrator in Jungian terms is well in touch with her own personality. Therefore, it can be well surmised that there is no tension between the conscious and the unconscious. Thanatos does not enter the picture and cannot touch her — her body, psychologically, rests firmly on earth yet she can fly to the heights of experience as she is firmly and deeply into love, life and living in all their radiance and vibrancy.

Olivia's love for the Nawab has an ethereal aspect as she surrenders herself to his cruelty. But her Eros refuses to desert him when catastrophe comes and she becomes a prisoner of the wisps of memory. Olivia lets her, at this point, fragmented subconscious and unconscious rule her being and does not exert the conscious will to see things as they really are and act accordingly.
The cultural cross-currents she welcomed in the love of and for the Nawab, dysfunctionalise her greatly, not totally, at the end.

In both the narrator and Olivia's cases, evolution does occur. However, there are, of course, differences. The narrator evolves and never loses sight of the quest while doing so, even though, actually a plus point, it begins with investigating Olivia's history. Olivia, however, when forlorn of the Nawab's presence, begins to retreat to the withering whirlpools with only a toehold on life.

The historical aspect (colonial/postcolonial) is an important part of the novel, especially insofar as both the Queen's English and Indian English are part of it. English is, therefore, a strong influencing and moulding force which evolves as per the Indian idiom, though this is not so evident in *Heat and Dust* as in the other works discussed in the other chapters. Inder Lal avails of the opportunity to improve his English by practicing it with the narrator. This shows the condescending colonial complex and subject mentality wherein foreigners, especially the former rulers, are regarded with awe and fascination. However, in the narrative this has not been highlighted greatly due to the journal mode. The novel as such is not peppered with Indianisms as in *Esmond in India, A New Dominion* and *A Backward Place*. But its power is still pervasive, even though the novel under review falls into the Indo-Anglian category, despite being written by an author who is originally a foreigner. In
related light, Douglas is a 'Pucca Brit' and the Nawab is a 'pucca royal'. The cultures and backgrounds of both the characters are responsible for this. Even though the Nawab is Oxford educated, he swears by traditional custom when it comes to the crux.

Jhabvala's *Heat and Dust* is a prime example of art as a high mimesis of life wherein she scales the pinnacles of realism. Her character-portrayals and thematics are truly vibrant, mirroring quite effectively the cultural cross-currents and dysfunctionalities engendered. Harry, the Nawab's devoted 'errand boy' and 'loyal servant', is a good example of this, despite the fact that he pines for his ailing mother back in England. The cultural cross-currents have made him dysfunctional to the point of impairment, a portrayal well-drawn with great expertise. Jhabvala paints character, action and life with remarkable fluidity. Her characters could well have been and certainly characters like them must have been. All one has to do to verify it is to read a good biography, autobiography, historical fiction, history itself, or published news media of respectable, as opposed to, hyped form. The mirror Jhabvala shows us would well be our own. If we have to limit it at all, that can only be within the psychological-existential limit which yet transcends cultures and, therefore, has little limit at all. Both disparate cultures and their idiosyncrasies as well as positivities are effectively represented. Existentialism, in the sense of choice/free will is affirmed as the epicenter and focus of meaningful existence with all that it entails. Jhabvala's *Heat and Dust* is rich in realism and cultural
realities are not brushed aside but sharply brought into focus in their genuine brilliant radiance. *Heat and Dust* will certainly stand the test of time in not only Indo-Anglian but world literature. As such, the author needs to be acknowledged as a pioneering path breaker, who opens our eyes to new vistas which we may have, perhaps, ignored. To continue to do so, would be at our peril.