CHAPTER-IV: COLONISER-COLONISED RELATIONSHIP: THE FICTION OF JOHN MASTERS

4.0 Introduction

4.1.0 The Deceivers

4.1.1 William's Reactions to Hindu Religion and Practices

4.1.2 The Imperialist Motivation

4.1.3 Colour Prejudice

4.1.4 Indian and the English Characters in the Novel

4.2.0 Nightrunners of Bengal

4.2.1 Race and Colour Prejudice

4.2.2 Isolation of the English as a Community

4.2.3 Kiplingesque Attitude: Father-Son Feeling

4.2.4 Religion and Customs

4.2.5 Treatment to the Indians

4.2.6 Relationship with the Princely States

4.2.7 British Policy Criticised

4.2.8 Justification of the English Rule and the Racial Pride

4.2.9 View of the British Rule

4.3.0 The Ravi Lancers

4.3.1 Relationships-the English and the Princely States
4.3.2  Imperialist Fear-the Fear of Miscegenation and Exposure

4.3.3  Sexuality

4.3.4  Teaching British Manners and Etiquettes

4.3.5  Indian Customs and Traditions

4.3.6  Indian-English Relationship

4.4.0  Bhowani Junction

4.4.1  Relationship: Eurasians and Indians

4.4.2  Atmosphere of Distrust

4.4.3  Relationship: the English and the Anglo-Indians

4.4.4  The Fear of Miscegenation

4.4.5  Relationship: the English and the Indians

4.4.6  Difference between the Fiction of Thompson and Masters
4.0. Introduction:

(John Masters was born in Calcutta on October 26, 1914. He was eminently qualified to write about India because his ancestors had been in India since 1805.) His father was a Lt. Colonel in the Indian Army. His brother, several uncles had also been serving in India. He was educated at the Royal Military College, Sandhurst and at Wellington. (He joined the Indian Army in 1934 and served till his retirement as Lieutenant Colonel in 1948.) After his retirement he migrated to the U.S.A. He started writing fiction only after his retirement. (Since for generations together the Masters family had served in India, Masters had an ambitious plan of writing thirty five novels on the Indian background with the protagonists from the imaginary Savage family and chronicling the history of British involvement in India right from the battle of Plassey to the Indian Independence in 1947.) In his novel, Coromandel! (1955), his protagonist, Jason Savage, is portrayed as a young adventurer who runs away from home in the Renaissance England and lands at the Coromandel coast in search of a treasure. There is a reference to Jonathan Savage who took part in the battle of Plassey under the leadership of Clive. In The Deceivers (1952), we come across William Savage, a district officer, who helps in rooting out Thuggee in the 19th century. William's son, Rodney Savage, is the protagonist of Nightrunners of Bengal, who escapes the massacre at the hands of the rebelling Indian Sepoys in 1857 and ruthlessly puts down the rebellion. In Lotus and the Wind (1953), Rodney's son Robin serves as a spy for the Empire in Afghanistan against the Russian infiltration. Robin's son, Peter Savage, is the protagonist of Far, Far the Mountain Peak (1957), serving as a Deputy Commissiner in Punjab in 1905, and
who wants to change India and has philanthropic attitude towards the Indians. In
Bhowani Junction (1954) we have another Rodney Savage, the son of Peter
Savage, who is a Lt.Colonel in the Army, entrusted with maintaining peace during
the nationalist agitations in 1946. His The Ravi Lancers (1972) is the war time
novel in which, however, the protagonist from the Savage family does not figure.
Together with these, The Venus of Konpara (1960) and To the Coral Strand
(1962) make up a group of eight novels written by him on the background of the
British Raj in India.

Masters came to India when the nationalist movement had gathered
momentum under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. He was a witness to the
end of the Raj and had experienced emotional and psychological crisis that the
English in India went through on the eve of the Indian Independence. As Pradhan
rightly points out:

In order to objectify his emotional crisis in his novels
John Masters went back in history in search of his roots.
He thus created a fictional Savage family whose men
(spread over in seven of his novels) have lived in India
from the 17th century onwards in various capacities. The
fact that each of Masters’ novels has a protagonist from
the Savage family, provides a sense of historical
continuity as well as a deeply imaginative quality to his
stories.¹

¹ Though eight of his novels have the Indian background, in this thesis we are
concerned only with four of his novels which cover the period from 1825 (the pre-
Mutiny period) to 1946 (the period of the Second World War and the eve of the
Indian Independence), which depict the changing aspects of the life of the
These novels are: *The Deceivers* (1952), *Nightrunners of Bengal* (1951), *The Ravi Lancers* (1972) and *Bhowani Junction* (1954).

It can be seen that the chronology of the publication of these novels does not match the period of the history of British India he is dealing with. *The Deceivers* deals with the pre-Mutiny period, when social reforms were being introduced in India. *Nightrunners of Bengal*, the first of his novels, deals with the Mutiny of 1857, while *The Ravi Lancers*, published in 1972, deals with the period of the First World War, and *Bhowani Junction*, published in 1954, is written on the background of the Second World War and the Indian unrest just before Independence.

Masters is acknowledged as the past-master in the art of story-telling. His historical novel falls in the tradition of the fiction of Sir Walter Scott and Alexander Dumas. His novels romanticize history and present heroes going through a variety of adventures and romance. He is different from the Anglo-Indian novelists of the 19th Century and even from the 20th century Forster and Thompson, in his attitude to the Indians: He is not overtly imperialistic nor is he politically motivated like Thompson. He is also not primarily concerned with the problem of relationship like Forster and Thompson. However, his heroes and the minor characters beginning from the Pre-Mutiny period to the end of the Raj give us changing aspects of the relationship between the English and the Indians. (In his postscript to *The Deceivers* he makes his intention clear in his use of history in these novels:
My purpose in this book, as in *Nightrunners of Bengal*, was to create the 'feel' of a historical episode rather than write a minutely accurate report. To do this I had to use the novelist's freedom to imagine people and create places for them to live in; but the times and circumstances of those people are fixed by history, and I believe this book gives a true picture of them.²

But barring an exception like Forster, Masters, like all other Anglo-Indian novelists, gives a key role to the Englishman. As Tapan Banerjee notes, in his novels:

The Englishman is sympathetic but the power he is given to wield is far greater than any Indian is allowed.³

Even though Masters is not overtly imperialistic, his English characters occasionally express their prejudices against the Indians and their feeling of racial superiority over the Indians. Jason Savage, for example, thought Indians to be stupid and ignorant.⁴ Angleworth, a successor to William in *The Deceivers*, thinks the Indians to be swine. Rodney in *Nightrunners of Bengal* loves his soldiers but he calls them 'half-witted sons'.⁵

4.1.0. *The Deceivers*:

Master's novel *The Deceivers* deals with the Pre-Mutiny period, when the East India Company had acquired tight political hold over India and the Company officials were interested in good governance as well as collection of as much revenue as possible. The district collectors were required to ensure good collection of revenue as well as maintain peace and law and order in their area. The novel begins with the arrival of the protagonist, William Savage, with his bride, to his collectorate of Madhya Pradesh, along with George Anglesmith, the
emissary of the Governor General. Anglesmith has accompanied the newly
married couple to present a commendatory scroll to Chandra Sen, who is a
Jagirdar and a patel of two villages owning fifty thousand acres of jungle in feudal
tenure, and was also the police chief, magistrate, mayor and tax-collector.
William Savage is transferred from the military service to the civil service through
the influence of his father-in-law, Mr. Wilson. But he is not a man to take joy in
paper-work, sending reports regularly and collect as much revenue as possible.
He is, therefore, a failure by the standards of the Company authorities. He is
unconventional in the sense that he feels more happy in the company of the
Indians rather than among his own people.

Those were the days when the Company officials under the leadership of
the Governor Generals like Lord Bentinck had begun to feel the necessity of
bringing about reforms in the Indian society. Suttee was not yet legally banned.
And the Company did not feel like interfering with the local religious customs and
practices. However, the officers at the higher level frowned upon the inhuman
acts such as Suttee.

When William and his party arrive at the village Padwa, there on the bank
of a river they notice a woman preparing to go as Suttee. She was the wife of
one, Gopal, the weaver, who was long gone away and she had dreamt that he
was no more. William could not prevent this legally. But luckily, Chandra Sen
points out to him that William has remarkable resemblance with Gopal, and if
William were to present himself before the would-be Suttee disguised as Gopal,
the Suttee could be prevented. William agrees to do this and this is how he is led
to discover mass murders carried out by the thugs in his region. He was actually
shown the act of Thuggee by a man called Hussein, a man whose neck was lop­sided. He himself was a thug, fully conversant with their code language and their practices. Hussein had turned against the practice of thuggee because he had refused to kill a beautiful girl he loved. He initiates William into the practice of thuggee. William realizes the enormity of the operation and comes to the conclusion that to eradicate thuggee he must discover the bands operating all over the northern region and to do this he himself must join their band. Hussein becomes his companion and guide and one day he vanishes into the wilderness along with Hussein. It is a great surprise to him that even the local kings could be the patrons of the bands of thugs. His adventure leads him to the final show in a city where the thugs gather to auction their jewels and distribute their loot. It is there he finds out that Chandra Sen himself is one of the leaders of the thugs and the chief auctioneer. The last part of the novel is full of action and suspense as there is pursuit and confrontation with a band of thugs.

4.1.1. William’s Reactions to Hindu Religion and Practices:

Most of the Anglo-Indian fiction gives prominence to the Muslim characters and show respect for their religion and are contemptuous of Hindu religion and Hindu customs. In fact they show very little understanding of Hindu religion. Masters, however, is one of the exceptions because his fiction reveals his interest in Hindu religion and customs. Like other Englishmen his hero also feels revulsion to the act of suttee, but he appears to look at the custom from the point of view of the woman who loves her husband deeply:

A man died; his wife had loved him, perhaps as Eve loved Adam — 'he for God only, she for God in him'; then her spirit which was a part of his, had no house on earth; she became
a husk of flesh, untenanted, blown through by cold winds; only when her body had gone to join her spirit, which was with him, could she live again. Was there any concept more beautiful? 

His English mind, however, questions why a man, who loves his wife should not follow her when she is dead. He tries ‘to balance the beauty of sacrifice against the ugliness of waste, which is an essential of all sacrifice.’ He realizes how for Hindus, ‘creation and destruction were opposite faces of the same medal, equal energies of the same universal spirit.’

He realizes that he could not make any sweeping generalization about the Hindus. Masters appears to have made himself fully conversant with the rites and rituals of the thugs, their Kali-worship and their superstitions. His hero, William, is fascinated by the power of the cult and even feels the psychological hold it acquires on him. But as an Englishman he shares the opinion of Wilberforce, who said that Hindu gods were “absolute monsters of lust, injustice, wickedness and cruelty” and that India’s religious system was “one grand abomination.” William does not fear Hindu gods and goddesses. When Hussein tells him that the goddess Kali has given the thugs the roads of the world to kill and loot the travelers, he bitterly says:

How can a rule of Law flourish where people call themselves ‘servants of Kali’ and kill because a goddess orders them to.

And when Hussein tells him after he has eaten the consecrated sugar that he is now a strangler he reacts furiously saying “You’re talking the rankest, most idiotic superstition!” But the narrator adds, “In himself he did not think so, and was frightened, and uncannily elated.”

4.1.2. The Imperialist Motivation:

Wilson, William’s father-in-law and the agent of the Governor General, chastises William for letting Hussein go and says: “But it does not give you power to disregard the law, our law, the justice for which we are striving so hard to
inculcate a respect among the people." Wilson claims that under the Maharatta rule in the Madhya Pradesh there was no rule for law and the people had no respect for law. Even earlier Masters makes Chandra Sen say that the people are pleased with the new security and law and order established by the English.

Chandra Sen comments on the situation before the English came:

Here the people are so pleased with the new security, the first there has been in living memory, that they have found time and energy to complain about the things they do not like. Ten years ago they struggled from dawn to dusk, from sowing time to reaping time, just to keep alive, and dodge the freebooters and robbers, and fend off new tax extortions. Do you know the Saugor Pandits made me collect, and pay twenty-seven different kinds of tax in a good year? Now the people have a little time to think. And no one fills their mouths with gunpowder and explodes it if they make a protest about something. Life has changed under your benevolent government.

Masters is here indirectly justifying the imperialist hold of the British on India. It is interesting to note what Rodney Savage, the hero of the novel To The Coral Island says about William as a Deliverer of the Indians from the violence of thuggee:

It was nothing to do with the Thugs, as far as I can make out, that they call him the Deliverer. It was the British Government he saved them from, who were going to do something dreadful to them.

It shows that the primary motivation of the British was to guard their own interest in India as they had to consolidate their power.
4.1.3. Colour Prejudice:

Sher Dil, William's Muslim servant, entrusted with the job of accompanying Mary blames himself as "a foolish, jealous, black man." William reacts to the expression 'Kala admi' wondering why the Indians use such words in self-deprecation. He thinks:

Was it the conquering British who had led them to exaggerate and despise the colour of their skins? Or was it other conquerors of long ago, Alexander's olive-skinned phalanx?

And then he reassures Sher Dil telling him:

You are a good man, Sher Dil; better than I.

This shows that in the early 19th century the colour prejudice among the English was not so strong and not perhaps universal. William enjoyed the company of the Indians. He even resents the attitude of the English like Anglesmith towards the Indians. Of course, William would like his son to be white and not wheaten gold like the Sikh merchant's son.

4.1.4. Indian and the English Characters in the Novel:

As we have already noted the dominant role in the Anglo-Indian fiction has always been given to the Englishman. The Indians in the Anglo-Indian fiction by and large appear as a variety of servants in the English household, or they are at the best clerks, chupprasis (peons) in the offices. Only towards the end of the 19th century we find Indians presented in the higher ranks and jobs in the civil services. In The Deceivers, we come across Chandra Sen, who is a Jagirdar and at the same time police chief, magistrate, mayor and tax-collector under William. He is being presented a commendatory scroll by the Governor General for his
services as a tax-collector and a special emissary has been sent to Madhya
district for this purpose. William, as a district collector, has respect for Chandra
Sen, but George Anglesmith does not realize the importance of Chandra Sen. He
refers to him rather superciliously, which William does not like. In the early 19th
century, the Indians like Chandra Sen were very important to the British officers
because they were the only ones who could act as middle men between the
general public and the rulers. We see Chandra Sen explaining ins and outs of a
civil suit in the district court to William. Chandra Sen also has a distinct role in the
novel. He himself is the important leader of the thugs, and at the end of the story,
William has to confront this formidable enemy.

Hussein, the Muslim thug, who has turned against Kali and is helping
William to infiltrate and destroy the bands of thugs is another important character.
As an Indian his ambition is to acquire a job of a peon and the red coat of
uniform. He feels that only the Englishman could protect him from Kali because
the Englishman is not afraid of Hindu gods. William has to work closely with him
to learn the practices of the thugs, which he could do because he could trust him
implicitly. Being an unconventional Englishman he could achieve this rare
relationship with Hussein. The other Indian characters are honest and loyal
servants like Sher Dil, and a variety of Deceivers whom William accompanies
towards the final destination. There is a character of the Rajah of Padampur, who
unscrupulously collects money by every possible means. He is the protector of
thugs and gets money from them for this protection.

Among the English portrayed in the novel, William as a hero is presented
as an adventurer who dislikes paper work. He has different notion of justice,
which is to prevent crime rather than merely to dispense justice on the basis of evidence, which, in Indian situation, is difficult to get. He is sympathetic with the poor Indian population, and has no difficulty in moving around with the Indians, even thugs, in very uncomfortable situations. William has no confidence especially about his ability to work in the civil service. But his wife, Mary, is the one who guides him and supports him, inspiring confidence in him. Mary is presented as one of the bold heroines of the Anglo-Indian fiction, who show initiative and courage. Other English characters in the novel are minor and stereotypes.

We can see that the focus of this novel is the problem presented by the practice of thuggee before the English administrators like William. In the novels of Masters, the question of the relationship between the Indians and the English is only indirectly reflected. In fact Masters is not primarily concerned with it. Yet his hero, William, in this novel shows a liberal point of view towards the Indians. He is not repulsed by their black or brown skin, nor has he any compunction about living in the company of the Indian thugs in situations hardly palatable to the Westerner like him.

4.2.0. Nightrunners of Bengal:

Nightrunners of Bengal (1951) is the first novel written by Masters, soon after his retirement and migration to the U.S.A. It is a historical novel dealing with the Mutiny of 1857, which has been the subject of fiction for several Anglo-Indian writers. Masters, writing well after the Indian independence, brings some hind sight to the presentation of characters and their point of view. There is a subdued element of romance, exotic Indian scene, a thrill of tiger hunt and it is full of
action and adventure and intrigue, in which the English hero is at the center showing his superhuman ability to overcome any obstacle in his way.

Rodney Savage, the captain of the 13th Rifles of Bengal Native Infantry, finds Caroline Langford, a newly arrived English girl, trying to question the Indian Guru about his mystic power. The Indian Guru later turns out to be a renegade Irish soldier, who nurses grievance against the British. Later again we come to know that the Guru was one of the master plotters of the Mutiny in the area around Krishnapur, an imaginary Indian state. Rodney takes away Caroline from the scene but not before the Guru has hinted at a portent of catastrophe. The king of Krishnapur, docile and loyal to the British, is murdered. There is a coup and the Dewan of Krishnapur comes to see the British Commissioner, Dellamin, to report the matter and seek his help. The British troops under Captain Savage are sent to execute the Commissioner's policy of keeping peace and helping the rightful heir to the throne who, in this case, is an infant son of Rani Sumitra, the scheming queen of Krishnapur, who has been secretly plotting against the king as well as the British.

Rani Sumitra is ambitious and intelligent. She recognizes the advantage of training the troops of her state by a competent English officer like Savage, and proposes to appoint him as Major in her army with the monthly salary of Rs. 4000, which was a very coveting offer in those days. Savage does not accept it, though his wife, Joanna, considered it foolish of him to reject it. On his way back to Bhowani, Rodney catches an ordinary farmer carrying a bundle of chapattis in the dark of the night. When Rodney catches him, the fellow tries to hide the chapattis. The passing of chupattis from one village to the other was, in
fact, a message of rebellion, which Rodney did not know. It is noted in history and has been used by other fiction writers as well. Rodney is intrigued by the chapattis traveling across Ganga and Jumna rivers, but the Commissioner, does not pay much attention to it. Dellamin is a corrupt officer taking bribes from the little states under him. Meanwhile, Rodney discovers cart loads of weapons and follows in their track but misses them. He however comes to know that Silver Guru and Dewan are up to some mischief in which killing is involved. He finds himself among the men of Krishnapur playing ‘Holi’. Rodney confronts the Silver Guru with his true identity, but the Guru hoodwinks him telling a plausible story of Dewan plotting against the Queen to grab power and so he is smuggling the weapons and hiding them.

Rodney reports the whole matter to Col. Bulstrode and Bulstrode makes an official report about it giving one copy of it to Dellamin himself. All this comes to nothing, because soon after the rebellion starts at Bhowani. Masters takes into account all the causes of discontent among the sepoys, such as stopping the field allowance, disarming the sepoys in other places and the English soldiers shooting them down, and the fear that they are all going to be transported across the black waters, and finally they are being defiled by the cartridges newly issued to them.

In the early morning of the 10th May 1857, precisely the Mutiny starts in Bhowani, with great fire gutting the three buildings of the court group, and the mutineers run berserk killing and maiming and burning the English men and women and children in their houses. Joanna is killed and Rodney's son is half dead. But Rodney and his son are saved by Ramdass and Harishingh, soldiers
from his own infantry. Rodney is on the run, with his two year old son, in the uniform of a sepoy. He and Caroline were saved by Piroo, the carpenter, who smuggled them in his bullock cart. Piroo was an old time thug, who knew Rodney's father, William, (from The Deceivers) and was the admirer of William. Rodney himself almost loses his sanity, and distrusts anything and everyone and ready to suspect innocent villagers and kill them. But Caroline brings him back to sanity, and together they make way to Gondwara, where the English make a final stand against the mutineers and rout them completely. Rodney, of course, displays signal bravery defeating the mutineers, though they are too many. He is shown to be magnanimous as he takes Sumitra's son under his protection promising to put him back on the throne.

4.2.1. Race and Colour Prejudice:

We have noted how, William, in The Deceivers does not like his servant Sher Dil calling himself 'Kala aadmi', and he assures Sher Dil that he is a good man, better than himself. William does not nurse a strong prejudice against the black or brown colour. In Nightrunners of Bengal (hence forward NB), Rodney also resents his wife Joanna addressing the servants as 'blacks'. He does not like his wife insulting them. He says:

Joanna, will you please remember to call Indians by their race and caste, or if you don't know, "natives"? 19

and he further adds:

God damn it, you ought to know better. We of the Company's service live here all our working lives. We do our work and enjoy ourselves and lord it over the country entirely by the goodwill of the average native ...especially
the native soldier, the sepoy. If you even think of them insultingly, of course they know it and resent it.\textsuperscript{20}

Yet colour-prejudice persists, especially among the women. Robin's ayah cries after him telling him to wear 'topi' and his mother, Joanna, tells Rodney to put the hat on Robin's head otherwise, "He'll get sun-burnt and Brown, like a subordinate's child." \textsuperscript{21} When she notices Miss Langford not wearing gloves or a cloak, she remarks that she must be spoken to. "She must not be allowed to let us all down in front of the blacks." \textsuperscript{22}

4.2.2. Isolation of the English as a Community:

It is the newcomer Caroline Langford, who realizes how the English community lives in isolation in India, which has been one important reason why any significant relationship between the English and the Indians did not develop. She says to Rodney:

So India is your palace, but you live shut up with yourselves in little rooms like this Bhowani Cantonment, and the next English room is always away at the other end of the palace somewhere? \textsuperscript{23}

Rodney gives his defense saying that the civil magistrates and other administrative officers do visit the Indian villages. But Langford points out that the English do not visit the Indians socially. They do not 'live' in the Indian rooms. Rodney points out the practical difficulties. He says:

But to feel India in the way you say your Kishanpur friends do, you must become Indian, gain one set of qualities and lose another. As a race we don't do it – we can't. Women, now English ladies have to be careful. Indian customs are very different from ours, and we do not want any misunderstandings to spoil things. \textsuperscript{24}
Rodney's explanation is perhaps the hind sight that Masters acquired after so many years of Indian experience. Yet it is to some extent true that in the Company Raj, the English had to be very careful about not creating a culture shock for the Indians and even for the English women. Rodney claims that he and the officers like him know very well the sepoys and their classes and the castes. This was their administrative necessity.

4.2.3. Kiplingesque Attitude: Father-Son Feeling:

Common Indian farmer always addressed the money-lenders, Rajas and noblemen as 'maa-baap' (mother and father). When the Company officials took the place of these overlords, they began to address them in the same way. Some English officers, either for this reason or out of their personal philanthropic feeling nurtured this relationship with the Indian farmers and other low class people. This had nothing to do with either aristocratic Indian society or even the middle class Indians. When Caroline Langford observes that Rodney loves his sepoys, Rodney remarks:

Love? That's a strong word. One man here loves them — Colonel Bulstrode. He loves them as a father loves a pack of half-witted sons. For most of us it's a sort of giving: we each give all we have and we don't keep accounts.25

This is a very common affirmation of the English characters in the Anglo-Indian fiction that they are here for the benefit of the Indians, that they are the ones who give unconditionally. And there are even complaints that the Indians do not know gratitude. Masters is here reciprocating this general feeling of the Imperialist rulers. Indians for them were always 'half-witted' unable to rule themselves, not fit
for responsibility. Rodney does not say this in so many words. But he does expect his sepoys to be loyal and obedient to him and be happy with their lot.

4.2.4. Religion and Customs:

One obstacle which always came in the way of any proper social relationship between the English and the Indians was the unfamiliar Indian religions and customs. Rodney (at 4.2.3 above) makes it an excuse to keep the English women away from their Indian counterpart. Indians, had this fear in mind that the English would convert them to Christianity using their political power. The official policy of the Company was not in favour of the programmer of the enthusiastic Evangelical priests to spread the religion in India. But some Company officials, in their private capacity, did try to convert the Indians to Christianity. Rodney, in this novel, complains to Lieut. Colonel Caversham:

And then, you know Major Myers takes a Bible down to his lines when he's — well — not sober? And tries to convert the men to Christianity and rants at them about the wrath of God? Just by chance I happened to overhear one of my sepoys ask Naraian the other day if it were true that we were going to force them all to become Christians. That could be really serious, if they believed it.26

Masters here is trying to build up one by one the causes of discontent among the Indian soldiers. Nevertheless the fear of the loss of religion in the minds of the Indians had been there. They were not ready to share food with the English, and if they invited the English at home, they kept their utensils separate, which is the fact noted by the other Anglo-Indian novelists like M.M.Kaye.
4.2.5. Treatment to the Indians:

When the English have their entertainment programs, the Indian servants and even the ayahs who take care of the children are not allowed to be present. A telling example is the way Dewan of Kishanpur is treated when he arrives to Bhowani to report the murder of the King. The Dewan is not allowed to enter the club hall where the English officers meet socially. Before he enters the club, he is made to take off his slippers and ushered into the billiard room to meet Dellamain. Caroline Langford is shocked to see this. She exclaims:

But he is the Prime Minister and the Commander-in-Chief of the State. They can't treat him like that.

The English really take a very poor view of the Indian States. Col. Bulstrode for example, remarks about Kishanpur:

It's only a piddling little state. One company infantry, one troop cavalry will do.

He further says contemptuously:

...two hundred John Company sepoys are more than a match for any damned pack of rajah's ragamuffins.

4.2.6. Relationship with the Princely States:

The episode of the King's murder at Kishanpur and the way the English look at it illustrates their imperialist attitude. Commissioner Dellamain sends troops to prevent rebellion against the Rani. When Caroline asks Rodney, "Why do we interfere?", Rodney answers:

We ...the Company ...can't permit the endless succession murders and civil wars that there used to be in the states. We don't allow any rajah to mount the gaddi until we have
recognized him as the lawful heir to his state. Then we've forbidden many states – including Kishanpur – to have a big army; it might be dangerous. Well, when we prevent a rajah from defending himself, we have to undertake to do it for him – and we do.  

The English were not here really to do justice. They had to protect their empire, and one part of it was to keep the princely states happy by not interfering in their domestic matters. Silver Guru makes the point clear when he says to Rodney:

Governor General will weep no tears if the Rani is murdered.  
Lord Canning would never tell Dellamain to have it done as a Mugul would – we are a hypocritical race, sir The reason? She is very unpopular with the people. A palace revolution is better than a people's revolution, because it does not alarm other rajahs.

However, the princes of the states are required to extend hospitality to the English officers inviting them for parties and hunting.

4.2.7. British Policy Criticised:

Again it is Caroline Langford, the representative character of the liberalist reformers, who criticizes the British policy of using double standard while dealing with the socio-political scene in India. She broods over the political turmoil at Kishanpur and the British non-committal view about it. She thinks:

There are not two standards for us, for the English – only one. We must keep our standard, or go home. We must no, as we do now, permit untouchability and forbid suttee, abolish tyranny in one state and leave it in another, have our right hand Eastern and our left hand Western. It is not that India is wicked; she has her own ways. If we rule we must rule as Indians – or we must make the Indians English.
But this was not the official view, and nor was it the view of an average English administrator. During the Pre-Mutiny period, the Company did not want to interfere with the social and religious matters. We have already seen while discussing *The Deceivers* how William hesitates to take action against Suttee because there was yet no law against it. But we also know that the princely states were treated rather high-handedly in the case of successions.

4.2.8. Justification of the English Rule and the Racial Pride:

Being an Imperialist, Masters tries to justify the English rule in India either through the Indian characters or through his hero Rodney:

...nothing was foreign to India, for India was illimitably varied. A foreigner was a man who did not guard the past and foster the future; above all, a man who did not love. In this little village men ... became foreigners when they walked ten miles. But he and every Englishman need not be foreigners anywhere. The task was plain — to love, as a father his son, a son his father, a lover his mistress, a priest his flock....Here, where the shadow of one brown man defiled another, English pride of race mattered nothing; India accepted it as she accepted the tiger's perpetual hunger and the ruthless passing splendour of the Moguls.  

The father-son relationship and the justification of the English rule based on it recurs here. Like perpetually hungry tiger, the English also have a natural license to prey on the Indians, and the Indians should accept it as they accept the tiger or they accepted the Mogul rule. The racial pride of the English is justified setting it against the low and high caste division of the Indian Hindu society. We have already seen this being debated in Thompson's *A Farewell to India*, where he shows how Indians resented the arguments like this.
4.2.9. View of the British Rule:

But Masters' hindsight sometimes allows him to take an introspective view of the British Rule in India. Rodney brooding over the situation, makes a kind of confession on behalf of the English:

After the blind selfishness of two centuries, the hour had come. From here they could ruin themselves with power, or step forward as giants of understanding, forerunners of a new work of service.34

And Masters makes the Silver Guru say:

...the English have ideals of freedom for themselves. How would you like to be ruled at home by an Indian company of merchant adventurers?35

The question remains unanswered. But the imperialist argument still persists as Rodney retorts:

The Company is not going to lose India. And- and if it did, do you think Indians are fit to rule themselves, or protect themselves, yet?36

It was this attitude thinking of Indians as 'half-witted', corrupt, liars and unable to carry out responsibility with courage and fortitude, which irked the Indians and made relationship impossible.

4.3.0. The Ravi Lancers:

The Ravi Lancers, published in 1972, is written on the background of the First World War. It is a story of Warren Bateman, the Commanding Officer of the 44th Bengal Rifles, who later commands the Ravi Lancers, and the Indian Prince Krishna Ram, the heir to the 'gaddi' of Ravi. Since two squadrons of the 44th Bengal Rifles were affected by anthrax, they could not be sent to Europe on war.
Krishna Ram, who is very much anglicized, and admires the excellence of the British Army, is eager to take part in the war alongside the British, and wants to offer his Ravi Lancers to replace the two squadrons. The Viceroy agrees to the proposal, but Bateman does not like it. Even the Colonel Hanbury is against it because he is afraid the Indians would learn to kill white men in the war, and would happen to see what they are not supposed to see. He evidently meant that the Indian sepoys should not be exposed to the real life of the English masters in England, the squalor of the slums, the drunkards, the ordinary white women ready to do anything for some money. The fear expressed by the Colonel comes true. In England Krishna Ram and other Indian officers under his command come in contact with the English civil life, meet the white women, English as well as French, when they go to fight war in France. At first even Krishna Ram is rather inhibited, but very soon they become bold enough to develop relationship with them. The Indian sepoys begin to visit English and French prostitutes.

Krishna Ram is invited to visit Bateman's house, where he meets the members of Bateman's family. He has already met Diana, Bateman's sister while she was in India. Krishna Ram eventually falls in love with Diana, and she too reciprocates his love. They meet secretly in France, which Bateman comes to know later. This is the beginning of the personal conflict between Bateman and Krishna Ram. Bateman would like to turn the Indians into perfect English soldiers in brown skin. The situation is very different in Europe, where the Indians are fighting on the British side, and are being treated according to the army code, which is common to all. On the war front Bateman is at first flexible in his attitude towards the customs of the Indian soldiers. He allows them to observe their festivals, though he himself does not take part in them. Hindu tradition like putting
a 'tikka' on the forehead is at first objected to by him because it shows that the Indians think differently from the English. He does not approve of the Panchayat system of taking decision followed by Krishna Ram and feels that Krishna Ram is incapable of taking his own decisions. When in England, he invites Krishna Ram to his house and introduces him to the members of his family. But his attitude to Krishna Ram hardens when he discovers that his sister and Krishna Ram love each other and meet clandestinely. He books Krishna Ram for court martial on the charge of dereliction of duties, but he knows that Krishna Ram, being a prince could not be punished. He is completely demoralized when he discovers that his wife is unfaithful to him and has love affair with Ralph. Utterly disappointed, he finally commits suicide. Diana does not marry Krishna Ram because she believes Krishna Ram to be the cause of her brother's suicide. Indian infantry is scheduled to return to India. Krishna Ram and his cavalry of Ravi Lancers remain in Europe to fight war to the end as he had promised Bateman.

4.3.1. Relationship – the English and the Princely States:

The English officers – civil or military - seem to have comparatively better social interaction with the Indian nobility in the princely states than they have in the British Indian. The English club plays a friendly cricket match with the team of Ravi State. Krishna Ram is a good cricketer admired by Bateman. Krishna Ram invites Bateman for dinner, and Bateman accepts to have Indian food with him rather than the food cooked for the English officers. When Bateman learns that Krishna Ram is the Major in his state forces, he says:

Then for heaven's sake don't call me "sir". I'm only a captain, and should be calling you "sir". 37
But Krishna Ram tells him:

But you know I'd only be a subaltern in your regiment ... if I were allowed into it.\(^{38}\)

He knew that the Indians, prince or otherwise, would not be recruited in the all-English regiment, and would never be officers to command the English soldiers. Even when Krishna Ram was a second in command to Bateman in the regiment, he was not supposed to order the English soldiers. Bateman admires Krishna Ram, but remarks:

Seems a nice chap, though I don't envy these princes at all ... raised as petty gods to find when they grow up that they really have no responsibility.\(^{39}\)

Bateman is here giving a general opinion about the princes of the state. They believe that these princes were lazy, spoilt and take to drinking or worse habits than that. While in India, Bateman would like to invite Krishna Ram to his mess, but he has doubts. "There were those in the regiment who would not take kindly... prince or no."\(^{40}\)

As a prince of a state under the British, Krishna Ram has admiration for the English and their ways. He has a typical view of the English held by many princely states in those days. He says to his grandfather:

I do not think we should ever fight the British. I think we should learn from them. Why is it that they can rule India with 800 officials? And the British soldiers outnumbered two to one by Indian soldiers? It is because they have a superior civilization. We are backward and ignorant. We will remain in subjection, and will deserve to, unless we learn from them, and improve ourselves. But if we don't fight beside them, they will continue to look down on us. If we do, they
cannot refuse to give us what we then will have earned – greater freedom to rule ourselves.  

This is Masters speaking through Krishna Ram, who makes this a plea for getting his grandfather’s permission to take Ravi Lancers to Europe to fight. His grandfather does not consider the English friends, but he accepts that the Princely States are the vassals and the British are better overlords than the Muslims. We find such Imperialistic arguments in the fiction of Masters. Though he is writing in 1972, he has not been able to grow out of these notions of the British Empire.

4.3.2. Imperialist Fear – the Fear of Miscegenation and Exposure:

When the Raja of Ravi offers the Ravi Lancers to replace the anthrax affected squadrons in the British army, there is a lot of misgiving about allowing Indians to fight the white man’s war. Colonel Hanbury observes:

I think we are laying up trouble for ourselves in sending any Indian troops to France at all. It’s a white man’s war, and they’ll learn to kill white men. The sepoys and sowars are going to meet white women very different from memsahib. They are going to see things it would be just as well for all concerned that they should never see. Even the most loyal of them are going to return here questioning and wondering.

The Colonel, who still retains the memory of the Mutiny, is suspicious of the states forces because they are the Indians not trained by the British, but like those whom the British fought at Plassey. In his opinion these Indians are:

...individually brave, often enough, but idle, corrupt, self-seeking, vicious when your back’s turned.

He gives advice to Bateman saying:
If you don't want these Ravi fellows to run away the moment a German says boo to them ... or lie around smoking bhang when they ought to be inspecting stables ... or bribe the dafadars for small favours ... you're going to have to drive them, take no excuses, show no mercy, right from the beginning. 44

But Bateman is not going to treat all the Ravi officers as scams. He thinks:

It would be a wonderful opportunity to get to know a class of people the British really had nothing to do with – the educated Indians of the upper and middle class. He would get an insight into the soul of another India – perhaps the true India... unmoulded by British hands or British attitudes. 45

Masters tries to show that there was a change in the attitude of the new British officers, who were unaffected by the memories of the Mutiny.

4.3.3. Sexuality:

Ravi Lancers were on the battlefront in Europe. As soldiers they needed women, and in England or in France willing women were obviously to be found. But Krishna dared not ask Bateman about this need of the Indian soldiers. In India it was unthinkable for an Indian to even touch a white woman. Krishna recalls how in the days of Mutiny the whole villages were wiped by the British for the crime of raping a white woman. Colonel Hanbury had already expressed this fear that the sepoys and the sowars would meet white women very different from the so-called memsahibs in India. One sowar complains to Krisna:

Surely the public women of this place should be opened to such as us, for ... 46
The Indian soldiers needed money to be cured of venereal diseases and to pay to the military police. Krishna could not take out money from the imprest account because it was against rules. He broods over this and thinks:

The army was doing nothing, because of British Puritanism and because of their feelings against allowing Indian troops to couple with white women. But why should Indians suffer for the guilts and fears of Europe? Why should they not seek solace from the bloody battlefield in European yonis?  

Dayal Ram, the handsome Indian officer, confesses his encounter with the British women also and tells Krishna:

Highness, the English are different from what they pretend to be. The women certainly ... and, I think, the men, too. The women present affront so cold, so stiff, and formal .... but only approach them and they are as hot under their skirts as the loosest women in Basohli.  

He narrates how Lady Harriet, a peer's daughter, a noblewoman, fell for him in his very first visit. Masters, writing in seventies, seems to take a critical view of British women, whether of low or high class society. His hero, Bateman, also shows open mind about the Indian sexuality displayed in the Indian temples.

Bateman discovers homosexual relationship between the Indian soldiers and is very critical about it. However, Masters shows how homosexuality existed in England also. Masters' attitude to sexuality appears to be liberal, but his hero, Bateman, is shown to be conservative. He is also shown to be a staunch imperialist in the sense that he would not allow such vices of the colonial subjects to be reflected among the English.
4.3.4. Teaching British Manners and Etiquettes:

On the troopship, Brigadier-General Rogers noticed one Indian Officer, Mahadeo, eating rice with his hand and instructed Hanbury to train the officers in table manners and etiquettes. Warren Bateman carries out the training, but he feels:

... why should they be forced to comply with our customs?
They were grown men, part of a civilization considerably older than the European. 49

Krishna Ram, however, cooperated with Bateman and his officers willingly learned the British customs and manners, using knife and fork at the table. Captain Sher Singh told them to eat, even pretending, with the mouth closed, like Major Bateman-sahib showed us. The real trouble, however, was in using WC. The Indians were not accustomed to use the Western styled lavatory. A deck-chair collapsed as one British officer was sitting on it. And the Indian officer present on the deck giggled. The colonel of the British infantry told Bateman that the British officers, don't like being made fools of by black men. We are a regiment of British infantry, you know. Bateman realizes how the British officers like this colonel find it difficult to think of Indians other than 'niggers'. Bateman realizes that the 'terrible twins’ who laughed at the British officers are being treated harshly just because they were Indians. Officers like Bateman occasionally show their dislike to this biased treatment of the Indians. But the Imperial attitude appears to pervade the whole rank and file especially among the army people coming from India.

4.3.5. Indian Customs and Traditions:
Indians have a tradition of holding a Panchayat and coming to a decision in any problem. Bateman at first thinks that Himat Singh has no self-confidence. Himat Singh, on board the troopship, listens to his subordinates who allow more space to the white soldiers, and crowd their hammocks close together disregarding his orders. Bateman, as an Englishman, cannot tolerate this, because he does not understand the Indian ways. According to the English, there ought to be one man who could be held responsible and who must have an authority to carry out the policy. When he points out to Krishna Ram that Himat Singh is incapable of acting on his own initiative, Krisna Ram explains:

I think it's our panchayat system. All important questions in our villages are decided by a panchayat, a council of five elders. They are advised by anyone who has special knowledge or interest, and that sometimes means the whole village.50

Bateman's attitude is flexible, but Krishna Ram feels:

There is much that I would be sad to see the end of.... Even panchayats ....but noting will really change or improve until our ways of thinking are changed. Better education for instance. Better health and more real medical care, not the old superstitions.51

There is an order from General Rogers that caste marks may not be worn in uniform. The Indians put on 'tilak' on the forehead, which they are not allowed to do while moving around in their uniforms. When off duty, the army men are like a family, and the soldiers need not stand at attention when the officer comes. But the Indians soldiers accustomed to their native tradition do not understand this.

Indian music is an irritant to some British officers. Bateman himself is quite used to it and he is also able to recognize a 'raga', but to others it was a
nuisance. The twin brothers in the army have a gramophone, which they start playing but a British captain very rudely stops it shouting at them and says:

    Perhaps that'll teach you to play your dirty Indian tricks with British officers. 62

Festivals like 'Holi' were not to the relish of Bateman or other British officers. Though Bateman allowed the Indian soldiers' celebrations of 'Holi' and 'Diwali', he himself did not like to take part in it. When the Indian troops came directly under the Imperial command, the Indian soldiers were told not to spoil the uniforms by coloured powders and not to wear 'tilak' marks. Panchayat system was also abolished.

4.3.6. Indian-English Relationship:

Indian army officers find themselves treated better in England by the British army officers as well as civilians. Bateman invites Krishna to his house and he was treated in a friendly manner by his wife, sister and others. In the army, in the regimental durbarnd the Indian soldiers were allowed to express themselves freely. When one British officer, Flaherty, who himself is a black Eurasian, calls the Indian lance dafadar 'a black ape', there is a complaint against him and he has to apologize. Bateman, however, notes that the Indians who resent being called 'black' by the white officers, sometimes describe themselves as 'blacks'. One trumpeter in his regiment says to him:

    Sahib, I am an ignorant black man ... 63

Krishna was overwhelmed by his first impression of England. He was impressed by 'the discipline, hard work, courage and justice. ... the sense of majesty, of ease with which this massive power was supported, of grace shown in the parks and the flower boxes.' 64 But at the same time he is reminded of his grandfather
describing how British troops had bayoneted the rest of the royal family in Basohli during the Mutiny. Krishna and other Indian officers at first feel uneasy when the English ladies treat them courteously and in friendly manner. Harriet Symonds invites Krishna to join her group for a party he ‘stared at her, helpless as a rabbit before a weasel.’ Krishna later learns that Harriet is the daughter of a peer, the Earl of Hanwell. When Krishna is convalescing after being wounded in the war, Lady Pennel comes to see him and says:

It is nice to see our gallant Indian fellow subjects fighting at our side for our Emperor ... and our king. However, the picture is not as rosy as that everywhere. We' have already noted the discrimination made in the case of Indian soldiers in the army. The British senior officers take care that no white soldier would come under the command of an Indian officer, though Krishna Ram, Bholanath and others are quite competent.

Bateman, as an Englishman, tries to discipline The Ravi Lancers in such a way that they should turn English soldiers in brown skin. Bateman has a dual motive in this. It is his personal war against Krishna Ram, who, in his opinion, represented all that was opposite of what he felt and thought. Besides, Bateman knows about the love of Krishna Ram and Diana. He cannot tolerate the idea that Diana should marry an Indian though he is a prince. Krishna Ram at this stage is determined to take back his regiment to India. He gives his reasons:

The war is becoming more inhuman every day. Our gods are human, and allow for war, but not for mechanical destruction. They are not themselves mechanical and cannot tolerate mechanization. But every day the war forces us to become more like machine- like, less human.
and so—according to our belief—less divine, for the gods that humans worship are themselves, really, human too.\textsuperscript{65}

Krishna tells Bateman that Indians have proved themselves good soldiers according to the British standard, and yet they still think like Hindu Indians. He also tells Bateman that European civilization proved to be a disease for them:

\begin{quote}
In trying to learn the European way of making war we have learned European ways of thought. The ties that bind us to our own principles, our own ways of thought, have been weakened, or destroyed. There have been rapes and petty thefts, all entirely foreign to our men. Absence without leave, desertions even ... unheard of before we came here lying to escape punishment deliberate waste. We have caught a disease ....\textsuperscript{57}
\end{quote}

Krishna accuses the Western civilization as having double standards:

\begin{quote}
...the false Christianity that preaches love, and kills ....that teaches poverty, but takes, that preaches tolerance, like to Mr.Fleming ... and rejects ... the fever that enabled Europe to conquer Asia, and believe that there was nothing to be learned from conquered.\textsuperscript{58}
\end{quote}

Masters, thus, makes allowances for the Indian point of view and criticizes the western civilization and Christianity.

4.4.0. \textbf{Bhowani Junction}:

\begin{quote}
\textit{Bhowani Junction}, published in 1954, is also a historical novel on the background of the fag end of the Second World War and the Indian Independence movement, with political cross-currents in the country. This particular novel by Masters attracted great publicity on account of a film made on it and secondly because it is the novel in which Masters depicts the life of the
Anglo-Indian community caught up in the dilemma of their national identity, whether to remain in India and become Indian citizens or to go back to England, which some of them like to believe as their 'home'. As Stephen Hemenway says:

*Bhowani Junction* is certainly one of the most unique novels of India because of its concentration on the Eurasian minority point of view at a time when the new India would be plunged into the struggles for power and influence which attend the birth of any new nation.\(^59\)

Masters himself says in his authorial foreword of this book:

In spite of the fact that I have altered, by a few months, the date of the mutinies in the Royal Indian Navy, I hope this book is also a work of history — because I have tried to give the 'feel' of the times and a sense of historical perspective.\(^60\)

The novel is presented in the first person narratives of all the three central characters, Patrick Taylor, Victoria Jones and Rodney Savage. Rodney Savage, the small state of Krishnapur, the family of Rawan give the novel historical continuity, linking it to the period of Mutiny and the career of the 'Savage' heroes in the history of India.

Patrick Taylor, the Anglo-Indian railway employee, is in love with Victoria Jones, who herself belongs to an Anglo-Indian family of an engine driver, Mr. Jones. Victoria is not only beautiful; she has also very impressive personality and great common sense about the situation of the Anglo-Indians in India at the dawn of Indian Independence. The action of the novel is centered round the railway station of Bhowani and the district of Bhowani. The major characters in the novel and the incidents and situations in it are related to the railway station and its surrounding areas. In 1946, there was an atmosphere of change in India.
The end of the British Raj was certain. The British government was going through the motions of transfer of power. The agitations were still going on. But at the same time the factional politics within the Indian National Congress was rife. There were rebel elements who believed in bloody political revolution and their confidence was boosted up by the Indian National Army raised by Subhashchandra Bose in Japan. There was mutinous atmosphere in the Indian Royal Navy also. The rebel extremists were busy in India sabotaging railway lines and looting government treasuries and weaponry. The district of Bhowani is the little picture of the whole of India as conceived by Masters in this novel.

There is a derailment of a train near Bhowani, and the railway employees like Patrick Taylor jump to the conclusion that it is sabotage. Since there was a fear of mass level agitation by the Congress and the sabotage activities on a large scale, a contingent of Gurkha Rifles under the command of Col. Rodney Savage is sent to Bhowani to help the district collector, Govindswamy, who is an Oxford trained Indian official. The police chief, Lanson, the English officer is already helping him. The army is specifically concerned with the safety of the railway tracks since the British troops are being transported by trains.

The novel largely deals with the complexity of the problem of the Eurasians, who are represented in the novel by Patrick Taylor, Victoria Jones, her father Mr. Jones, her sister Mary and a number of other minor characters. There are two views held by the Eurasians or Anglo-Indians – the extreme view of Patrick Taylor, who hates Indians, and though he knows the inevitability of choice to remain in India, finds it difficult to come to terms with the situation. The other view is represented by Victoria Jones, who thinks that Anglo-Indians should cast their
lot with the Indians becoming Indian citizens, marrying Indians and being assimilated with them. Until the arrival of Rodney Savage, the relationship between Patrick and Victoria is rather smooth. But complexity develops as Rodney and Victoria are attracted towards each other. Masters, in this novel, plays with an idea of the Englishman marrying a Eurasian girl, but it does not come off as Victoria, the practical realist, extricates herself from the situation. Masters has also introduced the possibility of an Anglo-Indian woman marrying an Indian. Victoria is drawn towards Ranjit Kasel, Patrick's assistant. She even prepares to marry him by accepting Sikh religion, but she finally realizes the impossibility of acquiring the culture of Indians in general and of Sikhism in particular.

The Indians are represented in the novel by Surabhai, the Congress politician, Kasel's mother – the Sardarni Saheba – who is a militant lady taking part in the secret activities against the British, Kasel himself, who is a railway employee and keeps himself away from active politics, but is supposed to be the Congressman at heart. There is Govindswamy, the collector, who has soft corner for the Congress faction of the doves. There are Muslims practicing factional politics trying to defeat the policy of the Congress. In the fiction of Masters the Indian characters have secondary roles, as we notice in most other Anglo-Indian fiction, and comparatively, though there are many of them they are stereotypical. In this novel Masters has presented Kasel, a young Indian railway employee, with some sympathy and understanding. The British officers like Lanson are shown to be getting on well with the Indian officer like Govindswamy. Neither Lanson nor Rodney Savage show disrespect to him.
The atmosphere of suspense and intrigue is created by the political activities of the Congress and the Muslim League and the revolutionary activities of the militant Indians like Sardarni Saheba and mysterious P.K.Roy. There is a search for hidden explosives and uncovering the plot of sabotaging the railway train carrying the British troops. As usual, Masters does not forget to exploit sexuality and romance with gorgeous Victoria and her suitors. The novel ends with Victoria casting her lot with Patrick, who really needs her.

4.4.1. Relationship: Eurasians and Indians:

In the Anglo-Indian fiction, so far, we have come across the problem of the relationship between the English and the Indians. But in this novel we seem to have a tripartite relationship — the Eurasians and the Indians, the Eurasians and the English and the English and the Indians. The Eurasians like Patrick have inherited the racial hatred and the prejudices against the Indians from the English. They face a complex situation at the flag end of the Raj. They do not like to identify themselves with the Indians, but at the same time they are aware of the fact that the English hate them as the 'Chhee Chhee' people. Eurasians like Patrick Taylor consider themselves superior to the Indians. We can see how he is impatient with his assistant, Kasel. He refers to Indians as 'wogs', the English slang for the Indians. For him 'home' is England, and when he says 'we' or 'us' he identifies himself and other Eurasians with the English. He says, "We are called domiciled Europeans. Most of us have a little Indian blood — not much, of course." And he very much regrets it but cannot help it. The Eurasians put on a topee to save themselves from getting brown skin. This is again the practice borrowed by them from the early English migrants to India. We have noted how
in *Night Runners of Bengal* Joanna, the wife of Captain Savage, insists on his little son wearing a topee so that he should not look like the subaltern’s son.

After 1940, there was a competition between the Anglo-Indians and the Indians to get a job in the railways. Indians began to be employed as the crew in the railways, and the Anglo-Indians began to feel that the Indian ‘wogs’ were depriving them of their jobs. The Anglo-Indians have a school of their own – St. Thomas School for their children, but its future is in dark because very soon the Indian government would come to power, and they would not help such school if it does not pay its own way. Victoria, who has been to Delhi, and who has the outsider’s view of the Anglo-Indians, knows the reality better. She says:

> We think God fixed everything in India, so it can’t alter. The English despise us but need us. We despise the Indians, but we need them. So it’s all been fixed – the English say where the trains are to go to, we take them there, and the Indians pay for them and travel in them.

Patrick himself is aware of the predicament of the Anglo-Indians. He sits and broods over what he said to Victoria about going home:

> I sat there feeling a little sick. That last thing I had said, about going Home, was mere foolishness, and I knew it. The whole point that made it impossible to give way, even to argue, was that we couldn’t go Home. We couldn’t become English, because we were half Indian. We couldn’t become Indian, because we were half English. We could only stay where we were and be what we were. Her Colonel McIntyre was right too. The English would go any time now and leave us to the Wogs.
Though he knows reality, Patrick is not ready emotionally to come to terms with it. Victoria’s heart and head, both accept this reality. She has the fresh outlook on the Anglo-Indian problem. She says to Patrick:

You don’t realize how fresh and free it is to be English or Indian. Why must we torture ourselves with ideas that we are better than some people and worse than others? Why don’t we put on dhotis or saris if we want to, and marry Indians? I don’t despise anyone now, and I don’t fear anyone. I’m just me, but I’m not in a cage any more, like I think you are.64

This predicament of the Anglo-Indians can be seen in Victoria’s vacillation between Savage the Englishman, Patrick the Anglo-Indian and Kasel the Indian. She takes time to make up her mind and finally accepts Patrick because she realizes how difficult it is to be other than an Anglo-Indian.

4.4.2. Atmosphere of Distrust:

There is mounting pressure of the freedom movement and the activities of the revolutionaries. As a result the English as well as the Anglo-Indian employees distrusted every Indian, specially the Hindu. Patrick suspects Kasel of being secretly a Congressman. The stationmaster at Pathoda is ‘trembling with fright and excitement’ because the District Engineer, who is an Englishman, claims that the derailment of the train is sabotage and the stationmaster must have seen what happened. He is frightened because he is as good as suspected of sabotage. Patrick remarks, I wouldn’t have been surprised to find out he was another of these secret Congress wallahs.65 There are rumours and fears. Govindswamy, the collector tells Patrick and Victoria:
I have recently attended a Governor’s conference, as some of you know. The government of India think trouble is brewing—industrial trouble, railway trouble, and perhaps worse. They think situation will be much the same as in nineteen forty two. That is, the Congress high command will recommend a campaign of non-violent non-cooperation, with the object of hurrying the British out of the country. ...The high command will merely say, “Don’t cooperate” ...Don’t give the Collector any petrol for his car.  

There is also a rumour that some Congress men want revolution “to make it impossible for the Congress itself to rule after the British go.” These Congress men, according to Govindswamy, are the left-wing faction of the Congress, whose actions are dictated by the Russians. They would not like orderly hand over of power to the Congress because they want complete revolution. Govindswamy tells them to keep an eye on any Indians they knew and tell him of any suspicions they had. When Govindswamy tells Patrick that the army battalion coming to Bhowani would be Indian battalion, Patrick is disappointed because he, ‘never trusted them in this kind of show. After all, they’re Wogs themselves, even if they are in uniform.”

4.4.3. Relationship: the English and the Anglo-Indians:

The Eurasians or the Anglo-Indians consider themselves to be superior to the Indians, but at the same time they feel inferiority complex in the company of the English. They are always conscious of the fact that they have blood of the blacks in their veins. They are also conscious of their manners. The Eurasians gather on the platform to receive Sir Sullivan. Patrick notes how they “were making more noise than the Wogs.” He further notes, “We always do when we
get excited. The English people never do." Even Victoria notices this. Victoria is also conscious of the 'worst trade marks' of the Anglo-Indians in Patrick – "inferiority feelings, resentment, perpetual readiness to be insulted, all the things which she wanted to get rid of in herself." She does not like Patrick wearing his topi all day and night to show that he was not an Indian. Victoria also knows all the names the English use for the Anglo-Indians – "chhee chhee, half-caste, eight-annas, blacky-white".

Victoria's impressions of Macaulay, the assistant of Savage, represent perhaps the general feelings of the Anglo-Indians about the English. She feels, "Macaulay was typical of the British. He was pleasant when it suited him, cold when it suited him, and all the time selfish, cunning, lord of all he wanted to take." When on the railway platform Macaulay is pawing Victoria, Savage snarls at him. Patrick is happy about it, but he interprets Savage's anger to the English feeling that "it is degrading for British officer to play around with an Anglo-Indian girl." On the other hand it is interesting to note what Rodney Savage thinks of the Anglo-Indians. When he introduces Victoria to Molly Dickson and her husband, Steve, he notices Steve's eyes flickering. Steve, when he first came to India, was full of the usual British Service notions about 'native troops' and 'the babu mentality' but he grew out of it, Rodney says. In other words he did not feel revulsion to the Indians and was friendly with his Gurkha and Dogra troops. But his eyes flickered because Victoria was Anglo-Indian, a half-caste. Rodney comments, "Anglo-Indians weren't brave, or even despicable. They were never in situations where they could be either. They were only comical. They tried to marry British soldiers. They spoke like Welshmen. They wore topis at midnight." At the club, where Rodney takes her as a guest, Victoria has to suffer veiled
insults from the English women. Mrs. Lanson, the wife of the English police officer, deliberately turns the conversation on the topic of going back 'home' that is England. She knows Anglo-Indians like Victoria have no 'home' to go to. She turns to Victoria and says: "All this talk of Home must be awfully boring for you, Miss ...?" Younger English people tried to patronize Victoria and deliberately tried to hurt her because they really wanted to hurt Savage. Though the English men like Rodney do not nurse strong dislike against Anglo-Indians, even Rodney calls Victoria 'starkie' once and Victoria does not forget it.

4.4.4. The Fear of Miscegenation:

We have already noted how the English, 19th century onwards, had become conscious of the purity of their blood and their race. The colour prejudice and the feeling of superiority of race made them hate Indians and fear the possibility of inter-marriages between the Indians and the English. In the Anglo-Indian fiction a number of writers have treated this theme of inter-marriages showing them to be unsuccessful. Anglo-Indian girls like Victoria's sister, Rose Mary, try to find English husbands for them and some of them may be successful. Rose Mary for example is trying to marry Howland, and goes paying social calls to English women like Molly Dickson to understand the life in England. Molly is sympathetic to Victoria and she even admires her. She tries to warn Victoria that "everything isn't wonderful for Anglo-Indians in England, not in the upper classes." And she also reminded Victoria that if they had children one might be as white as Rodney and the other very dark, darker than Victoria's mother. Even Rodney in his heart of heart understands that the fate of 'Miss Starkie' was a hurdle in their way. He remembers two kids in England, one white
and one dark, and people blink at them and they have to force themselves to
treat the dark one the same as the white one. If a dark son was born to them
people would say Victoria had gone into bed with a Negro. There is a poem that
derides the Anglo-Indian girls. Victoria recites bitterly to herself:

There was a young lady called Starkie
Who had an affair with a darkie,
The result of her sins
Was an eight some of twins—
Two black and two white and four khaki.

Howland, who wants to marry Rose Mary, is also in two minds and would like to
compare notes with Rodney Savage, because he thinks Savage is also going to
marry an Anglo-Indian girl. He asks Savage for his considered opinion about
marrying an Anglo-Indian, but Savage rebuffs him.

4.4.5. Relationship: the English and the Indians:

The Indian characters which figure in this novel are political persons like
Surabhai, Sirdarni Saheba, her son Ranjit Kasel, who is a railway employee and
Govindswamy, the Collector. Compared to the other novels of Masters studied
here, in this novel the Indians play major role since they represent the forces of
opposition. P.K.Roy, who appears in the last action of suspense, is the
revolutionary presented more as a criminal rather than as a political activist.
Surabhai, a local Congress leader, is most of the times ridiculed and made a fool
of by either Savage or Govindswamy. Savage has a good word for him when he
characterizes him as romantic (as opposed to realistic or practical) but
courageous. He is also shown to be gullible as he takes rumors seriously.
Sirdarni Saheba is a militant leftist, who distrusts the Congress leaders including
Nehru, Patel and Gandhi. She is shown to be courageous, resourceful and capable of intrigue. She is capable of taking quick decisions in the crisis as we can see from the incident of the murder of Macaulay at the hands of Victoria. Govindswamy, as an Indian bureaucrat, has very cordial and friendly relationship with the English officers. Victoria notices how "The Collector and Colonel Savage made a strange pair, but the ties between them were very close." Govindswamy is educated in England and shows it in his speech. The English officers like Lanson and Colonel Savage have frequent meetings with him and they treat him as an equal. These Indians have only formal and official relationship with the English. There is hardly any social encounter between them. Govindswamy is invited to the exclusive European club, which is a change in the atmosphere in the last phase of the British Raj. But he goes there in his official capacity.

Masters' heroes are all military officers who command a battalion of the native soldiers. In *Nighrunners of Bengal*, Savage commands the Bengal Light Infantry and he is proud of his Bengali soldiers, whom he describes as the salt of the earth. In this novel Rodney, his grandson, commands Gorkha Rifles and he is equally proud of his Gorkha soldiers. He has personal feeling for his attendant Berkhe. He enjoys Indian folk songs and music. However, the English community in general does not figure in this novel. We do come across them in the Club, but they mostly talk about war and going home. They do not seem to be worried about leaving India and are far from being nostalgic. The English women as usual exhibit their racial attitude, directed here not against the Indians but against the Anglo-Indians. It is Victoria who notices highhandedness with which Savage
deals with the striking railway employees. She feels, "he wouldn't have done it if they had been English, or even Anglo-Indians."81

There is racial discrimination against the Indian railway crew. The European and Anglo-Indian crews are excused from duty on shunting van trains where there is no separate running room for them. They resent sharing the same running room with the Indians. Whether it is Masters, Thompson or Paul Scott, the Indian leaders of the national stature are treated rather casually through the reactions of the English characters. There is rank prejudice against Mahatma Gandhi. All the three have directly or indirectly made their characters voice the opinion that Mahatma is instigating violence in his so-called non-violent agitations. And another strong prejudice is that in his 1942 Quit India Movement, he was thinking of inviting the Japanese to replace the British. The revolutionary Indians like Sardarni Sahiba are also made to talk disrespectfully of Mahatma Gandhi. Like others, Masters also turns his blind eye to the fact that the Indians in great masses follow the Mahatma and revere him.

4.4.6. Difference between the Fiction of Thompson and Masters:

There is basic difference between the fiction of Thompson and Masters. Thompson was actively engaged in the political turmoil of India. The small district created by him in his fiction was the mini-India reflecting different thought currents. Thompson is also seriously involved in the relationship between the English and the Indians. And his characters like Alden and Jayanand Sadhu and others debate it out. But Thompson's effort is only cerebral encounter between typical English and the Indian characters. He fails to bring together the two communities in their social and cultural life. Masters, on the other hand, does not
have an intention of examining relationship between the English and the Indians. His English characters are men of action and adventure and they hardly nurse the kind of racial hatred and prejudice as the civilian English officers do in other fictional works. If any racial attitude is expressed, it is mostly by the English women in his fiction. In Bhowani Junction he has elaborately treated the problem of the Eurasian or the Anglo-Indian community. And the racial prejudice as well as the fear of miscegenation is strongly expressed in this novel in relation to the Eurasians rather than the Indians. Masters is, of course, delineating the facts of the situation in this respect. It is made abundantly clear how a marriage between a Eurasian girl and an Englishman is impossible on account of serious racial prejudice prevalent among the English.
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