The Sepoy Mutiny forms an exciting theme which has been exploited to a great effect by British writers, especially a few British fiction-writers, in their works of fiction. The varying images of the Mutiny represent changing attitudes of the British creative writers towards this Indian upheaval. Flora Annie Steel's *On the Face of the Waters* (1896) is a historical novel on the Mutiny. Crisis of British confidence during the troubled period forms the main theme of the novel and an awareness of such a crisis has been revealed in the reactions of the British characters to this upsurge. The plot of work, however, ends on a note of triumph in favour of the British. Suspicion and scepticism characterise the British attitude towards the Mutiny in this novel. G.O. Trevelyan's *Competition Wallah* (1866), a treatise on the Mutiny, incorporates a different reaction to the Mutiny. In letter IX dated Calcutta, May 11, 1863, embodied in the book British attitudes towards India before, during and since the Mutiny are clearly indicated. The first and dearest care of the leading British civilians in those days before the Mutiny was the well-being of the Hindoos. They also discussed Hindu history, literature and social life. But the Sepoy Mutiny marks the turning-point of Indo-British relations. A spirit of hostility and revenge marks the attitudes of both the races during the period. Steel appears to depict this spirit in a balanced way in *On the*
Face of the Waters. Her two other novels, viz. *Voices in the Night* (1900) and the *Hosts of the Lord* (1900) bear reminiscences of the Mutiny although they do not form any part of the theme there. In *Voices in the Night* Raymond says to Miss Drummond, 'I should like to be sure of a lot of mutiny tales, but there's a halo of romance on our side and a shadow of fear on theirs, which plays the sauce with abstract truth. I wish we could forget the whole business'. In *The Hosts of the Lord* the memory of the Mutiny still lingers. Roshan, leader of the troopers' upsurge, before hatching a plot to upset the British plan of irrigation thinks, 'The coup de main must come at once. As to what might follow, that might be after the fashion of Meerut in '57, or not. Who could tell the end of anything?' This is how Steel gives expression here and there in her novels to the sad memories of the Mutiny, and thereby creates an atmosphere of mutual suspicion and misunderstanding of the two races. The spirit of *Competition Wallah* during the Mutiny is, therefore, manifest in Steel's novels. But Edward Thomson's *The Other Side of the Medal* (1925) presents a different phenomenon. It is a treatise on the Mutiny. Thomson admits that the Mutiny 'overshadows the thought and relations of both races'. But he ends the book on a note of optimism about the British initiative in the matter of creating a cordial atmosphere where both the races can meet together in a vein of mutual understanding. This perhaps inevitably leads to an attitude of caution and care with which British characters drawn in John Masters's *Nightrunners of Bengal* (1951), a work of fiction,
respond to the Indian scene. This but unlike Steel's novel it strikes a note of caution and care. Rodney Savage born in and of the Empire is struck by a strange sense of awareness of India which makes him neither hate nor love this country. 'He found it a strange thing to hate his exile, and yet to love the country which was its place...... England was over the seas and in the north; he looked up at the blurred stars and sighed.' Although India is looked upon more or less as a land of regret by these Anglo-Indians, Joanna is not prepared to give up this life and return to middle-class non-entity in England; Rodney himself does not want to leave his regiment and the Sepoys.

John Masters's treatment of India almost resembles that of W.D. Arnold or Hilda Gregg or Philip Meadows Taylor, and does in no way exhibit an attitude of misunderstanding even when the novel deals with the oft-repeated theme relating to India and the Raj during the period of the Mutiny. From the above it is evident that the British writers, especially the fiction-writers, while dealing with the same theme of the Mutiny project varying images of India in their works of fiction, and such changing images are the outcome of judicative and emotive assessments of some aspects of Indian life and culture and represent changing attitudes of the British characters drawn in such novels towards the Mutiny.