Chapter-II

Colonial v/s Postcolonial: *Vernon’s Aunt: Being the Oriental Experience of Miss Lavinia Moffat*

*Vernon’s Aunt: Being the Oriental Experience of Miss Lavinia Moffat* by Sara Jeanette Duncan was written after *The Simple Adventures of a Memsahib*. As the title clearly demonstrates, it is the story of Miss Lavinia Moffat and her experience of the orient. Marian Fowler in her biography on Duncan discloses:

On May 18th 1893, *The Simple Adventures of a Memsahib* by ‘Sara Jeanette Duncan’ was published and heralded with glowing reviews. Redney was heartened, re-energized, threw herself even more completely into the discipline of her work. Before a year had passed, also would have finished two more books, *Vernon’s Aunt* and *A Daughter of Today*. Both of them show her leaving the straight road of autobiographical fiction which she had trod thus far to wander into more fanciful fields, with much less satisfactory results. *Vernon’s Aunt* was written first - written off the top of her head to make money. (216)

As it is clear from above observation by Fowler that anything that made the image of east conform to the set stereotypes was easily and happily grasped by the west and thus the author thought it best to write a story of an English lady who would come to India to explore its vast and never ending terrain and to experience exotic lands of India. It comes out therefore that this novel was written only with a mindset to earn profits and for that
the author thought it best to portray a stereotypical image of the most talked about east for her readers in the west. The novel lacks any definite plot and pattern and seems to be an attempt on part of the author to present to the readers, particularly of the west, what they already know about the orient.

The novel is important because of the inherent capacity of the novel towards the theory of Orientalism proposed by Edward Said. Tausky’s *Novelist of Empire* suggests that the sole aim of the novel was “amusement” (190) and it was written just to amuse the readers of the occident. The novel opens and the readers are introduced to Miss Lavinia Moffat, a spinster of forty two years of age. Misao Dean in her article “‘You may Imagine my Feeling’: Reading Sara Jeannette Duncan’s Challenge to Narrative” comprehends:

The stereotype of conventional heroine as young, beautiful and competent forms the background of reading Miss Lavinia Moffat of Vernon’s Aunt. Miss Moffat is an unmarried woman who undertakes an unaccompanied trip to India with expectations of exotic adventure . . . However, Miss Lavinia Moffat expresses the reality that not all women are twenty and beautiful: She is forty-two, a spinster, and rather sure of her ability to guide the rest of the world on questions of courtesy to middle aged ladies. (193)

Miss Moffat was too occupied with the fantasy of the east that she had many sleepless nights thinking about “oriental matters” (2). She “tossed about for hours wrestling, so to speak with cocoanut palms and the sacred Ganges and a little heathen
with nothing on” and in her mind there “was a chaos of temples to Krishna and Rampore chudders, mosques and nose rings, Hindu widows and Brahminy bulls” (2). She was so obsessed with the oriental thoughts that she almost forgot the sole reason behind her visit, that was, her nephew. Information is also provided regarding her prospective visit to India in order to meet her nephew Mr. Vernon Hugo Hawkins, who works in the forest department in India. He is a high official and is enjoying a comfortable existence in his colony. He has vast forest cover under his administration and many natives also work under his supervision.

The very first chapter is a true embodiment of what Said calls ‘Orientalism’. For Said orient is to occident:

The place of Europe’s greatest and richest and oldest colonies, the source of its civilization and language, its cultural contestant, and one of its deepest and most recurring images of the other. In addition, the orient has helped to define Europe (or the west) as its contrasting image, idea, personality and experience. Yet none of this Orient is merely imaginative. The orient is an integral part of European material civilization and culture. Orientalism expresses and represents that part culturally and even ideologically as a mode of discourse with supporting institutions, vocabulary, scholarship, imagery, doctrines, even colonial bureaucracies and colonial style. (1-2)

Miss Moffat was also in the process of gathering the images of the orient as she was deeply involved in the process of reading and hearing about books of travel, to the
east, written by her countrymen. A reflection of orient is provided to her through the texts on the east. Although Lavinia had never been out of her home town in England and thus was a little hesitant to leave her place but her hesitation gave way to courage on account of watching those monkeys of the east who have been described to break open the hard coconuts and to make out that up to “what extent the natives actually were adopting our civilization, our clothes and the thirty nine articles” (2). She felt the charm towards east and thus decides to move towards it in order to explore it by herself and to see whether the descriptions she has read about the orient, were true or not.

During colonial times the authors and writers used to write copiously regarding the orient as it was the most favored and loved topic. Everyone in the west wanted to know about what exactly the east stands for and thus people (common masses) of the west used to grab and gobble up everything that used to describe the occident. Allen J. Greenberger also holds the opinion that “the images created by these authors were bound to have their effect . . . It was these images, that people coming out to India held, which influenced the way in which they saw India” (2). Thus colonial discourse was providing every single detail regarding the east that the west required and these images certainly had their impact upon the thinking of the occidentals. They believed these images to be true and were fascinated by them as Miss Moffat was taken away by these images of the orient and was desperate to experience the orient on her own.

Lavinia also decides that she would not send a word of information regarding her arrival to her nephew, Vernon, as she plans to surprise him with her visit. Vernon was an orphan and there was nobody to take care of him except Lavinia when he was a small boy. As soon as Vernon acquired the ability to take care of himself he opted for a job in
India. She has not seen Vernon for the past eleven years but was sure enough to recognize him as soon as she would see him. For her “Vernon had inherited the Moffat nose” (5) and she was confident of recognizing it anywhere in the world.

After a very long journey via France and Italy and after her encounters with so many people *en route* Miss Moffat ultimately lands in Bombay that was “a deep, keen and bitter disappointment to me. I cannot now say quite what I expected, but it was something different- quite different.” (26). The oriental travel literature has presented a typical colonial image of India to Miss Moffat and actually she encountered nothing of that kind in Bombay. In Bombay she found the coconut palm skyline to be replaced by “a mass of city buildings;” (26) temples were replaced by universities and Yatch clubs and the native Brahmins with white robes were replaced by a “large number of fat, intelligent looking brown gentlemen” (27).

Through all this opposite description of the oriental lands, the author seems to hit at the basic process of stereotypification. Miss Moffat was shocked to see a total reverse of what has been told to her though the books she has read about the orient in England. Lavinia was in a state of ambivalence. She was shocked to see the progress and finds that whatever she has gone through in the books on orientalism was all doubtful. In this novel although there is no fine plot or an engrossing story yet there is this ambivalence in the nature of the narrator that is worth concideration. The images in Lavinia’s mind were altogether different from what she actually experiences herself.

She was also surprised to see the Indian gentleman, who never appeared in any of the oriental literature she has read. These natives were very much opposites of the
heathen images of the same. The native’s heathen image that was floated in The Simple Adventures of a Memsahib is now being shattered by the author herself. Natives are not little black pitiable stuff. They wore “coats and trousers . . . spoke excellent English, and carried gloves and umbrellas” (27). These natives with coats and umbrellas and the English ways of dressing are the ‘hybrids’ of the process of colonialism. They are mimicking the colonizer to be acceptable and thereby playing a significant role in order to let themselves be heard and seen. All this really shocked the lady visitor from the occident.

On her arrival to Bombay, and as soon as she left the streamer, she was surprisingly received by her nephew. Although Lavinia finds him changed but she could not make out that the person she is going on with is not Vernon. She felt that probably because of the climate of India, Vernon has changed a lot. Lavinia is taken by the ‘probable Vernon’ in a “carriage driven by a black in a red coat and a white turban and bare feet, with another one standing up and clinging on behind” (31). While travelling to a hotel in the carriage Lavinia enquired Vernon about the black population of India. The blackness of the natives creeps back into the text although the narrator finds the Indian men to be really different from what she has read about. Colour of one’s skin plays its crucial part in determining the superior position of the colonizer. This usage of the term ‘black’ gives an undue air of superiority to the whites. Allen J. Greenberger says that “the British novelist saw their countrymen primarily in terms of ‘racial characteristics’ so they saw the Indian” (42) and somehow similar seems the case with this Canadian novelist.

The author in this study is not British but a Canadian yet she relates to the colonizer because of her racial affinities and thereby portraits Indians in a different hue. It
cannot be denied however that the author is observant enough to see the visible changes in the Indian masses, who were adopting the new ways of life. Her situation also seems to be ambivalent like her character Lavinia.

Miss Moffat ultimately comes to know that the person she thought to be Vernon was not actually him but one Mr. Jamieson, who came to the port in order to receive his sick wife and because of Lavinia’s facial resemblance to Mrs. Jamieson, he thought her to be his wife. This mystery is very ironically resolved. Although Lavinia had a different plan to surprise Vernon but in return she herself was taken up by a shock. Finally she had to send a telegraph to her nephew informing him about her arrival in India. Now she could not afford to be alone and wander in an entirely alien land.

Miss Moffat then started her tedious and long journey to Rajabad by rail and describes it as:

My journey to Rajabad was not in any way remarkable, except for the time it took. It took an enormous amount of time—two days—to a very short distance on the map. This had its advantages; one had so many more favorable opportunities for observation than are to be obtained in an ordinary English train, that seems to be dispatched for the mere purpose of getting from one place to another. As we passed through the country I could look out of the window and see the whole of rural India slowly gyrating round a palm tree on the horizon. I could examine the architectural details of the small temples made of mud and whitewashed, with an inferior kind of decoration, apparently in pink or yellow sugar,
round the base of their domes, that cropped up out of the ground here and there as we went by. I could count the tail feathers of the bluejays that sat on the telegraph lines, and observe the curious configuration of the humped Indian cows that tried in vain to induce us to keep up with them. I was enabled to make a fair estimate of the population of the innumerable little villages we passed, odds and ends of brown thatched huts up to their ears in green millet and yellow wheat, and I usually counted three old women, five babies, four goats, and two pariah dogs. (53-54)

Through a little window of her railway coach, during her two day long journey, Lavinia has the opportunity to look at the rural India. The rural India was exactly like what she has pictured in her mind. She came across many ‘heathen and unpronounceable’ stations in addition to a few known ones. The manner in which the narrator describes the locale of villages and railway stations of India is a typical example of oriental description of the same. Not only the local population but the places have also been termed as heathen.

. . . The platform was full of native people in the most original clothes of the most variegated colours, all talking together and running in every direction at once . . . I saw satin coats without sleeves embroidered in gold, in connection with the most dirty and disreputable white cotton neither garments of extremely peculiar cut . . . I noticed some wearing turbans like beer-kegs, and long beards, while others were less dignified but more jaunty in little round embroidered caps . . . whether, it was a cap
on a turban, beard or a moustache, the head that wore it was wagging as if nothing could ever stop it. (55)

During her two day long journey to Rajabad, Lavinia Moffat was able to locate a few Englishmen on the stations. She was interested in enquiring from them about India and the Indians but to her sheer disappointment she found them to be as ignorant as she herself was. Her fellow co-passenger, a memsahib, told her “that her husband would not allow her to have anything to do” (58) with the natives and that everybody from their part of the world behave in the same manner.

The narrative highlights the attitude of the English community with respect to the natives. The ‘racial arrogance’ of the British comes in the way of establishing strong ties with the colonized community. This difference / otherness have also gone into the minds of the natives who also do not prefer to share their meals with Lavinia in the compartment of the train. It is not only the colonizers who are embittered but the colonized people are also full of hatred and disgust for the colonizer. Their feelings for one another have been reciprocated.

It cannot be denied that Lavinia was an imaginative and sensible lady who finds the ‘Eastern Salaam’ very humble and beautiful. She is able to discover some positive qualities of the nation and the natives. Lavinia also observes that, “Nothing is more annoying in India than the persistence with which people lament their fate in living there and shut their eyes to the blessings not to say the luxuries, which they enjoy” (64). Thus she takes a stand and speaks out about the way the British community lives in India, quite enjoying the royal treatment they get but still lamenting about their fate in India. Indian
mannerisms also get a positive response from Lavinia. She is quite fascinated to see the country.

Two kinds of images of India, one that has been created in the mind of the orientalists and another, the factual image that Lavinia has encountered were haunting her continuously. At times she would love the exotic salaam and at the other instance she would feel the loneliness in this vast and futile wasteland.

These responses were however short-lived and as soon as Lavinia reached Rajabad station, she felt reluctant to leave the station and waited for Vernon to come and pick her up. While waiting for her nephew, she felt very annoyed at him. With every passing minute she thought that, “he had abandoned his only living female relative to the wild beasts of India without any other protection than a sun-umbrella. It was excessively unfeeling” (69). While waiting on a railway platform and in one go Lavinia forgets about mannerism and beauty of India and thinks about the wild beasts and jungles. The pictures she had in her mind, before leaving England, of India suddenly haunts her mind.

An Indian character, Abdul Karim Bux, enters the novel on the railway platform at Rajabad, when he finds Lavinia highly terrified to see a huge elephant fast approaching the platform. Lavinia had never seen a creature as huge as an Elephant and thus was out of her wits. In her fit of fright she took refuge behind Abdul Karim Bux, who was standing on the platform. He enquires of Lavinia’s whereabouts and informs her that the elephant that has arrived there belongs to Mr. Hawkins and that he has sent this huge thing for her to ride on to his abode at Nuddiwallah, fifteen miles from Rajabad.
The native master of the elephant has lost the letter Vernon had sent for his aunt while feeding sugarcanes to his huge possession. He felt a deep sense of guilt for losing a valuable thing and thus begged pardon from Lavinia by trying to put his head under her feet. This gesture on the part of a native was very much predictable in a colony. They have been treated as filth and non-entities and thereby have lost their dignity and self-esteem in the process of colonization.

The treatment given to Hindoos and Muslims residing in the same place also finds illustrations within the text under study. According to critic Allen J. Greenberger:

Of all the various Indian groups it was the Muslims who were most favored . . . not only are the muslims seen in a favorable historical light because of their conquests, but they are depicted as possessing the values of activity, masculinity and forcefulness which . . . were the most important values. The Muslim is represented as being smart, capable and full of resource. (45-46)

Following the pattern of her British contemporaries the author introduces an Indian Muslim hero who comes to save Miss Moffat from an approaching danger that was too huge to handle by Lavinia alone. Lavinia was reluctant to leave for Nuddiwalla, fifteen miles from Rajabad, along with “two hindoos and an elephant” (84). For her hindoos were totally untrustworthy. She therefore requests Mr. Karim Bux to accompany her, on the elephant to Nuddiwalla as Lavinia felt Bux’s face to be “full of amiability, of sincerity, and at that moment of devotion to me. 'I believe you will,' I said. 'I believe I
may trust you!’ and I gave him my hand. He took it with some embarrassment, but shook it warmly” (75).

Karim Bux happily agrees to accompany the lady to her destination. Lavinia occupied the front seat of the Howdah where as her co-traveler “Mr. Bux very modestly sat down besides the servant behind” (90). During the course of their journey Mr. Bux and Lavinia had some time to exchange their views. Lavinia discloses, “I have come to India prepared to take a very deep interest in her people . . . The orient has always had a very great charm for me” (92). Lavinia thus represents a typical orientalist whose main aim of coming to India was to discover it from her own point of view. They wanted everything to conform to what they have read in their books.

On the other hand is Karim Bux, who felt highly elated of the idea of helping an English woman and plans to befriend Lavinia. He wants to impress the English lady and tells her about himself and his life. He was actually a “failed B.A. - not succeeded B.A. In this country B.A. is better than failed B.A., but failed B.A. it is also something” (94) and was also working in the forest department. Although Bux was very much pressing upon being well acquainted with Lavinia but the help, company, nature, qualification and occupations of Mr. Bux has the least effect upon Lavinia. She was not at all inclined towards him physically, mentally or emotionally. She was of the opinion that, “After all, what was Abdul Karim Bux to me? I answered to myself sternly - a heathen. His mere speaking English and wearing spectacles could not remove the barrier, I told myself” (94).

There was a deep george between the colonizer and the colonized and the colonizer had so defined the two that they could not ever fill that gap and thereby a
natural distance was created between the two groups. Lavinia being a member of the colonizer’s group was very much aware of her position in the process and thereby was resolute enough to remain in her boundaries and not to develop any kind of personal likings for the colonized people. Bux’s fantasy of befriending an Englishwoman was thus shattered as Lavinia wanted to maintain the gap that had been made by the orientalists. Allen J. Greenberger also suggests that, “India might provide an enjoyable experience, but the Englishman was expected also to realize that he is an Englishman first and foremost and that he should not let himself get involved with India” (32).

Lavinia’s journey on the elephant through dense forests was enjoyed by her as she narrates;

Besides, it was a great deal more like any other forest than you would expect—trees and thick bushes and vines, and here and there a cleared space. It was very silent, though, and I was glad of Mr. Bux. But for the thoughts he aroused I should have had creepy sensations. I saw neither serpents nor wild animals of any sort—nothing but little yellow butterflies that fluttered along in front of us, and a bird that called and flew now and then in the distance. (99-100)

After her long and adventurous journey on an elephant through the tropical regions of India, Lavinia finally arrived at Naddiwallah to meet her nephew Vernon. It was to Lavinia’s surprise that “Vernon himself had not orientalized in the slightest degree. He was even more British than when he left home” (167). He warm heartedly welcomes his aunt and takes her to his abode, a tent house, in the middle of the forest. She was
taken to her tent where she was most uncomfortable. She felt really bad to stay in a tent but or Vernon she could go to any extent. Although she wanted to gather the oriental experience yet it was the last thing she would have opted for. She felt that her “nephew was evidently living like a savage” (106) in the jungle of India in a shabby tent.

Lavinia called for the servant who prepared tea and scolds him for putting less water and more tea in tea pot. She calls him a “poor ignorant heathen” (110) and teaches him how to make tea properly. Vernon was a little scared to show Lavinia her tent but she assured the boy:

You needn’t worry . . . it isn’t as though I were a stranger, you know. . . I am prepared for remarkable experience I have become convinced lately that the life of Littlehampton is confining, and I knew I should find the best contrast to it in the Orient, where you, fortunately, were. I may say that it is my aim to gather up remarkable experiences, and already, I have laid by several . . . (111-112)

John Mcleod in Beginning Postcolonialism asserts that, “A westerner traveler to oriental lands was not just moving in space from one location to another, potentially they were travelling back in time to an earlier world” (44). Similar was the case with Vernon’s Aunt who seems to be going backwards in the time machine, leaving every luxury of Littlehampton to the jungles of India. The only reason of respite to her was the wardrobe that she found there in her tent at Nuddiwallah. She was unable to find any object belonging to her occident except this mighty wardrobe, which functioned as a moral support to her.
The narrator has emphatically described the night in the jungle with full moon. This description needs appreciation for its picturesque quality. It is here only that the orient seems really exotic and interesting to her. She notices every single detail of her surroundings and hears the stream rushing through the forest.

Lavinia was very nervous, although she denied it in front of Vernon, of sleeping in a tent that too in a forest and above all of India. She felt nostalgic of her room and her bed after taking a look at her bed in the tent. “Feathers in the winter, horsehair in the summer, and a good spring mattress were what I have been accustomed to ever since I could remember” (129). This feeling of nostalgia for lost home is a typical postcolonial trait and here very shrewdly the colonizer has been treated as the one who is alienated and lost in the colonized world.

A misadventure is added to Lavinia’s diaries when a cat creeps inside her tent while she was trying to sleep in her abode. Highly frightened, she went out of her wits and rushed into a nearby camp of Mr. Jones pleading him to kill the animal that has intruded inside her tent. Being in the middle of an oriental jungle, and hearing so many voices and cries from the nearby forest, Lavinia believes it to be a ferocious carnivore like a leopard or a cheetah but it came out to be a poor cat which became an easy target to Mr. Jones’ gun.

Pages have also been devoted by the narrator describing the mighty as well as minor animals. Elephants and camels residing in the same camp where Lavinia was staying attracted her. It is worth consideration that like her negligence of the natives in The Simple Adventures of a Memsahib here also the author adopts the same attitude and
animals are given more importance over the natives. Elaborating upon Said’s *Orientalism*, John Mcleod observes:

Crucial to Orientalism was the stereotype of the orient’s peculiarity. The Orient is not just different; it is oddly different – unusual, fantastic, bizarre. Westerners could meet all manner of spectacles there, wonders that would beggar belief and make them doubt their western eyes . . . but ultimately its radical oddness was considered evidence enough of the orient’s inferiority. (44)

It was firmly believed by the occident that orient was their opposite and thus the occident acquired every positive attribute so that its opposites could find a place with the orient. To her utter surprise one day Lavinia receives a letter from Mr. Bux and once again a huge misunderstanding creeps in. Lavinia thinks the letter to be a marriage proposal from Karim Bux. Lavinia wants to resolve the matter and writes a reply to him but is unable to send the same as Mr. Bux has not mentioned his address on the letter. She was desperate enough to meet him and clear her stance but “could not take long walks in the jungle in the hope of meeting him I was too much afraid of meeting other things” (148).

There is also a little description of native servants, Radabullub and the dhobi. They appear to be very clever and have a tendency to cheat their master Vernon by manipulating the accounts. There was a huge army of servants, meant for different works and they all are presented in the same shade of being lazy and corrupt as they were in *The Simple Adventures of a Memsahib*. Lavinina started teaching them some of the rules of
the kitchen and it resulted in sudden deaths of the servants’ relatives including Radabullab’s. Vernon was aware of the reason behind the sudden deaths of the relatives and persuaded his aunt not to interfere with them and Lavinia felt offended.

Lavinia started her other jobs like mending the clothes of Vernon and watching him act like “a whole High court” (168) in front of those natives who use to come to the camp to convince Vernon on account of their goats “eating the lower branches of Government forest trees” or themselves “cutting a few down to sell” (167).

Lavinia was waiting in the meantime, for any other communication from Karim Bux, but received none. On the affixed day Karim Bux came to meet Vernon and Lavinia finds both of them in violent mood. Vernon was kicking him and in return Bux was threatening Vernon of bad consequences. It was finally and hilariously revealed that Abdul Karim Bux was an employee at the Forest Department and that he wanted Vernon’s aunt’s favors while settling his cases with the administration. It was all chaos and misinterpretations on the part of Lavinia, however the problem was resolved and Lavinia felt relaxed. She finally left her nephew’s camp on account of not being able to be accustomed to it and narrates the difficulties to Vernon:

I found a brown hairy scorpion as big as a crab, with six little scorpions on its back, in the crown of my bonnet, Vernon. Last night rat ate off the whole middle finger of each of my best black kid glove . . . I fear you are right. It is difficult at my time of life to become inured to this country.

(194)
After leaving her nephew’s camp at Nuddiwallah she travelled largely and gathered more experience of the orient in order to pile it up in a book. She convinces the readers that her experience remains more or less the same like her predecessors except her early experiences with India.

After that I travelled largely, and my diary is full of the most valuable records of what I saw at such places as Cawnpore, Benares, Delhi, and Calcutta, I visited twenty-seven mission schools, forty-three temples, eleven native bazaars, an opium factory, and the Taj; and I have a book of photographs which now forms the great attraction of my afternoon teas at Littlehampton. Mr. Grule, who manfully succeeded in evading Letitia Bray in my absence, declares that with their help my conversation enables him to realise the East perfectly. Our book club has four volumes of travels in India by different authors, however, who seem to have noticed exactly the same things. My earlier experiences appear to be the only ones which have not been published before. It may seem unnecessarily modest on my part, but that is the reason I have confined myself to Nuddiwalla. (194-95)

Vimal Dhawan and Jitesh Parikh regarding *Vernon’s Aunt* contends that, “The gullible British public loved such puerile stuff. The inevitable snake - a python in this case - centipedes and other such creatures also make an appearance to complete the circus show that was India” (33). To quote from Edward Said’s *Orientalism*, “Every writer on the Orient . . . assumes some Oriental precedent, some previous knowledge of the Orient,
to which he refers and on which he relies. Additionally each work on the Orient affiliates itself with other works, with audiences, with institutions, with the Orient itself” (20).

The stereotypical orient has been projected with all its notorious things. The places are not properly named. At one instance Lavinia says that Mr. Jones “was one his way from something-pore to something-nugger” (119). It was not necessary for the west to name and identify the east, it was all the same. Her experience of the orient was typical that is to say from civility to barbarism.

Vernon’s Aunt tells Vernon’s friends in the camp that she “had come to throw about my nephew the influence of home” (121) as she felt that eleven year’s stay in India might have drastically changed her nephew. The purpose of her visit was no doubt to have a look at the oriental land but she also wanted to see whether her nephew has changed or not as he was living away from his motherland in an alien and savage land. To her surprise she found him to be “even more British than when he left home” (167). C.C. Eldridge also opines that “The ruling class ruled from on high, remained aloof, deliberately cultivating a social and physical distance from their subjects . . . The environment was ignored and its people were kept at arms length as much as possible” (168).

This proves that a barrier was erected by the British in India. They hardly bothered about any kind of conversations with the natives. Vernon was totally unaware about his servants serving in his camp. He hardly cared about what and how they managed everything. He was only concerned about his task being done on time by them.
Duncan tries to bring out the aloofness among the two societies but does not devotes herself only to this cause in this particular work of her fiction. It gets highlighted, but not discussed thoroughly because of the author’s affinities to the centre instead of the margins. India has been presented through a white man’s perspective and throughout the novel, the wide gulf between the Indians and the Britishers is brought to the notice of the readers.