CHAPTER-III

East West Encounter in Postcolonial Context: *The Story of Sonny Sahib*

Aime Cesaire, the formulator of negritude remarks:

The colonizer, who in order to ease his conscience gets into the habit of seeing the other man as *an animal*, accustoms himself to treating him like an animal, and tends objectivity to transform *himself* into an animal . . . They thought they were only slaughtering Indians or Hindus, or South Sea Islanders, or Africans. They have in fact overthrown, one after another, the ramparts behind which European civilization could have developed freely.

(qtd. in Nandy 30)

The question which comes to the mind after reading about the process of colonization is that who is a colonizer and where does he come from? The Englishmen for almost about three hundred years colonized the Indian subcontinent and not only India but also Africa, and many more nations which are now-a-days collectively termed as postcolonial nations. But, it is not that only the British nationals were actively involved in the process of colonization, many western scholars and writers also got involved in the process through their writings. Sara Jeannette Duncan as discussed already was not British but the way her fictional world represents India is typical of a colonizer’s representation rather than being of an objective and unbiased observer.
As the chapter has been titled ‘East West encounters in the Postcolonial context’ so the focus of research shifts upon locating and identifying the colonial and postcolonial traits in her fiction and the work taken under study for this analysis is *The Story of Sonny Sahib* and the theme of the novella is superiority of the British race.

Studies on British character and colonial psychology revealed how colonialism generated an imperial myth of racial superiority and divine authority which transformed the nature of the Englishmen when they came to India... The rhetoric of power based on the destiny of the British as a governing race, generated an imperial mystique which provided an image of the ideal ruler and offered him a role to play. (Maya 20-21)

*The Story of Sonny Sahib* is the story of a little British boy, who is left behind with his ‘ayah’ as his mother died in the process of evacuation of Cawnpore and his father has no idea whether his son is living or not. The little white thing is brought up by his ‘ayah’ and her family in the remote area of Jaipur. It is however very strange to note that the boy had no effect of Indian culture and traditions. He remains a dominant and witty individual who is ‘different’ from his Indian friends only because of his colour of skin. Sonny’s sharp wit, strength, colour of skin and his blue eyes differentiates him from the others, although they share the same place, food and clothing.

This novella was written by Duncan especially for children but it lacks the innocence, which must have been there because the novella deals with a little English boy. The novella itself becomes a discourse ridden work whereby the west is manipulating and guiding the east. Parry Nodelmann in his article “The Other,
Orientalism, Colonialism and Children’s Literature” projects that there are many parallels between orientalism and the children’s literature. He describes that like orientalism, children’s literature is also a form of discourse. As in Orientalism, the occidental scholars feel that the other is not in a state to express or talk about themselves and that they must be talked about; similarly for Nodelmann as the children cannot speak or represent themselves so they must be represented and this representation, on the part of adults of the little and innocent children, induces many mature viewpoints unlike the children’s.

*The Story of Sonny Sahib* has the revolt of 1857 as its backdrop. This event or the first war of Indian independence is a major milestone in the history of India. This revolt was a result of deep dissatisfaction, long term colonization and the introduction of greased cartridges in the English army which included a large number of native Indians, who were against it. This revolt of 1857 was termed as ‘Sepoy Riots’ by the governing administration of the west and it was seen as an attempt to unite India against the colonial power of the British and restore the power back to the Mughal Emperor, Bahadur Shah, however, it changed the character of the British rule marking the end of the East India company and bringing British India directly under the crown. The ruling colonial empire overemphasized the use of greased cartridges as a sole reason for this revolt, but now almost about more than hundred and fifty years of this revolt, historians have given a whole bundle of reasons; political, economic, administrative, social, religious and military which together laid the foundation of the first war of Indian independence.

It is interesting to note what R. Veena has to say in her essay “The Literature on the Events of 1857: A Post-Colonial Reading”. She observes that there were very few writings by Indian authors on this remarkable event in Indian history and so much of it
was being discussed by the non-Indian and especially the western authors. To quote her words, “the British had complete control not only over Indian territory but also over the literary ‘space’ within which to write about it” (2). Sara Jeanette Duncan, a Canadian writer also felt an inclination to write on the backdrop of this major event in the history of India and thus she created this fictional work dealing with the revolt of 1857 and its aftermaths. “The tenor of her novel is much more in tune with the imperial sensibilities of the era...” (Darby 96).

The novella was published in the year 1894 when India was still a colony and in the novella the author tries to justify the colonizer’s standpoint without acknowledging or bringing to surface the plight of the colonized nationals once again. In doing so the author creates Sonny sahib, a little white child, who has been left behind by his parents in an altogether alien land.

Duncan had a past of being a journalist so her style of writing also has a tinge of reality amalgamated with her imaginative capacity. As the novella unveils, it is presented that the English people are planning to leave for Allahbad from Cawnpore as they were threatened by Nana Sahib, an Indian revolutionary after the incidents of the revolt of 1857. Sonny sahib, the protagonist of the novella has been described as a “little pink baby, three days old, it blinked and throve and slept as if it had been born in its father’s house to luxury and rejoicing” (6). The baby, that was pink in contrast to the “brown skinned babies” (16) was unaware of what all was going on in his vicinity.

Tooni, the ayah of Sonny sahib was the one who doubts the intensions of Nana Sahib to let the Englishmen go as according to her, “The Nana Sahib so hated the
English; had not the guns spoken of his hate these twenty one days? Inside the walls many had died, but outside the walls might not all die” (7). Tooni’s husband Abdul, a table-waiter however pacifies her and tells her that the captain-sahib, that is Sonny’s father, would reward the two for reuniting him with his family. The poor Indian only wants some money and reward.

Sadly, this reunion of the family never occurs because Sonny’s ailing mother died quietly on the ox-cart that was carrying her to the banks of the river they had to cross in order to leave Cawnpore and Sonny was quietly taken away by Tooni and Abdul as they left the caravan, heading towards the ghat, sensing danger. The proceeding mass of Englishmen including women and children were brutally slaughtered by the Indian rebels. In this connection Parikh and Dhawan states, “Duncan’s depiction of the Mutiny is one sided as the emphasis is focused on the cruelty of Indian sepoys and treachery of Nana Sahib” (33). Nowhere the readers have been told the reasons behind such kind of violent behavior on the part of the subdued Indian masses.

As soon as chapter second unfolds the scene shifts “In the state of Chita and the town of Rubbulgarh” where, “There was no fighting because there were no sahibs. The English had not yet come to teach the Maharaja how to govern his estate and spend his revenues. That is to say there was no justice to speak of, and a great deal of cholera, and by no means three meals a day for everybody or even two” (12).

After witnessing the troublesome Cawnpore, the story shifts to Rubbulgarh, where there were no sahibs and no administration as the Englishmen were thought of being the
only ones having administrative qualities and the thing, that is to rule, was not a cup of tea for the Indian rulers according to the imperial discourse.

The little English boy at the age of mere six months was so strong that “he could make old Abdul cry out, pulling at his beard” (13) and on the other hand his elder countrymen, the white sahibs and the great lord sahib were making Indians cry and die as “the great lord sahib has ordered the head of every Kala admi, every black man, to be taken to build a bridge across the Ganges with, so that hereafter his people might leave Cawnpore by another way” (15). The high-headedness of the governing administrators gets reflected through these words of the Lord. For him Indians are like bricks and stones with which he would prepare a bridge to cross over the Ganges. This stands as a typical example of imperial arrogance whereby the colonized subjects are related to materials and objects and not as human beings.

Sonny sahib is physically, mentally and aesthetically poles apart from his fellow Indian children. “He was a merry little fellow, blue eyed with very yellow wavy hair” and “quite a different laugh from any other boy’s in Rubbulgarh” (18). He is more adventurous than his coloured friends and to quote Supriya Goswami, “Sonny is a natural born soldier who has a thirst for adventure and the unknown” (44). Tooni, although was a poor ayah, tries very hard to provide Sonny with every little thing he requires. She would never let him roam around naked like his brown friends. She would manage local clothes for him anyways, but to her also he “looked queer” (17) because he was a British and Tooni used to drape him him in traditional Indian attires. He was more or less becoming a hybrid. This hybridity also crept in Sonny’s language as he used to call Abdul ‘Bap’ meaning father in native Indian language. Not only over some local words, but Sonny had
full command over the native language. It was however Tooni who used to force him to speak in his own mother tongue.

Tooni, in her attempt to let Sonny learn a few English words, which were in her active knowledge and vocabulary, was in a way trying to impose the superiority of the language of the colonizer and therefore automatically lending an inferior place to her own mother tongue. A foul play of orientalism could be located from these petty situations and the mimicry of the English words also reflects that the colonized, Tooni herein, is desperate enough to be like colonizer itself.

Commenting upon the colonial novels Denise Evans and Mary L. Onaratio in their introduction to the book *Nineteenth-Century Literacy Critism* states:

While using Britain’s colonial enterprise as the setting of their narratives, such novels also participate in the construction and propagation of colonial ideology by providing an implicit justification for British imperialism. Colonialism therefore appears in these colonial novels not only as the literal backdrop of their narrative action, but also the ideological framework that provides the raison detre of the action. (n.p.)

Being a child, Sonny had inclinations towards stories and used to hear them from his friends. “Stories of princesses and fairies and demons” (23) but was reluctant to tell the same. He preferred to pretend and as the text goes, “It was his birth right to pretend, in a large active way, and he couldn’t carry it out. The other boys didn’t care about making believe soldiers and running and hiding and shouting and beating Sonny sahib’s tom-tom, which made a splendid drum” (21). Supriya Goswami in the above mentioned
context opines that “while the Indian children . . . are verbally gifted, they are not action oriented and do not have the ability to translate their endless words into deeds. They narrate rather than enact, unlike Sonny, who acts instead of prattling on carelessly like his Indian counterparts” (40). To be a visionary is in the capacity only of the whites and not the others and this has rightly been projected throughout the text. Allen J. Greenberger also contends that, “It was the British blood which gave them their unique position . . . Even a drop of English blood is in the absence of a full blooded Briton, sufficient to bring out the leadership qualities in an individual” (13-14) and here in this case a full-fledged English boy has been left behind in India to prove his superiority over “the others”.

Sonny is very comfortable with his acquired Indian family and is deeply attached to his family (Indian) and friends, although time and again he proves himself superior to the natives, let them be kids or adults. Patrick Bartlinger in his book Rule of Darkness: British Literature and Imperialism 1830-1914 terms Sonny as “an imperial Oliver Twist” and state that, “Sonny shows the superiority of the British nature to Indian nature: at every turn his ingenuity, industry and valor clash with the ignorance, lethargy and cowardice of his Indian host” (211). Time and again the bravery, activity and superiority of the occidental Sonny have been compared with his oriental friends who are a total contrast to his capabilities. It is one of the strategies of orientalism to prove the west to be on a higher pedestal over the east.

The turn of events in Sonny’s life occurs when he is called by the Maharaja of Lalpore. Lalpore is described as a place full of diseases and “the population was entirely heathen” (45). Lalpore stands as a stereotype of a perfect colony, all in chaos and desolation. Tooni was frightened to hear that the Maharaja has called for Sonny and her
fears were confirmed by Wahid Khan, a fellow resident, who said, “I always feared the little sahib would come to a bad end. The Gods have given him no morale! What did I find him doing yesterday! Blowing an egg - a pigeon’s egg. Now, an egg is a sacred thing, Abdul’s widow - a very sacred things!” (27) Wahid Khan is pictured as a very superstitious person who considers an egg to be a “very sacred thing” and for him Sonny stands as a symbol of immorality for he broke the sacred eggs.

Sonny was taken to the fort of the Maharaja and Tooni also went along with him, sensing danger. It was however revealed that there was no kind of problem for Sonny. Maharaja’s son, little Prince, Moti was in need of some company and so Sonny was called to the palace. Little Prince felt fascinated to see “a face of gold” (36) and thus wanted Sonny. Britons, because of their fair complexion are called as golden faced and thus a tinge of racial superiority again finds a place in the text.

The Maharaja enquired about Sonny and his age and concludes that he was “as old as the folly” (37). The folly referring to the revolt of 1857. It was at this juncture that Sonny comes to know about his history. The revelation about his deceased mother and lost father comes to Sonny through the words of his ‘ayah’. Sonny was time and again being addressed by Tooni as ‘Sonny sahib’ in front of the Maharaja. Although Sonny was not ruling yet he was being addressed as a ‘sahib’ by Tooni because of the inherent cultural mannerism of the colonized people. The narrator adds, “Perhaps nobody has told you why the English are called Sahibs in India. It is because they rule there” (41). Through this addition of words, the narrator appears to necessitate the colonial rule for the upliftment of the native, ignorant Indians. The king however feels very disgusted about a little boy being addressed as a sahib in front of him and orders Tooni not to repeat
it again. The Maharaja meant no harm to Sonny thus allows him and Tooni to stay in his
courtyard. The only thing Maharaja want was to keep Sonny for the sake of his son,
prince Moti.

Sonny and Moti delved into a deep companionship and one day Sonny was
informed by Moti about the arrival of a man of Sonny’s race. Sonny felt really excited to
hear about this as he had never seen any Englishman in his life. Moti also tells him that
the aim of the man, named Dr. Roberts, is “to bring your gods to the Rajputs” so, here
comes a missionary from the west to the east in order to preach his religion as well as his
science of medicine.

Sonny who spent his life with a muslim ayah did not have the slightest idea about
his religion. Sonny is of the opinion “Kali is so ugly – I have no heart for her. Ganesh
makes me laugh with his elephant head: and Tooni say that Allah’s not my God. ‘Tooni
says’ Sunni went on reflectively, that ‘my God is in her little black book. But I have
never seen him’” (43-44).

Tooni had a little sacred ‘black book’ in her possession and was aware enough of
it being a religious book but being illiterate and a muslim by her religion she was unable
to comprehend Sonny’s religion and thus Sonny was left wandering about his God and
the particular religion to which he belongs until he meets Dr. Roberts. Dr. Roberts was
allowed by the Maharaja to reside in his kingdom because of the sole reason of teaching
English language to prince Moti. On Moti’s persuasion Sonny also gets the opportunity to
accompany the prince and learn his native language from Dr. Roberts, a medical
missionary.
It becomes very essential to note that a prince who was to be taught a foreign and the colonizer’s language becomes a symbol of typical colonized person who wants to adapt the language as well as the mannerisms of the dominant race and ultimately metamorphosises into a hybrid individual. Not only Moti, but, Sonny also becomes a hybrid as being an Englishman he was in full command of native language, culture and the traditional attires of the colonized part of the world.

Dr. Roberts also gets a shock of his life, when he “... found a yellow haired, blue eyed English in a walled palace of Rajputana, five hundred miles from any one of his race. The boy was healthy, happy and well content” (54-55). Being utterly curious about this boy Dr. Roberts tries his level best to gather any kind of information regarding Sonny but he was not totally satisfied out of the little information he gathers about him. He wanted to enquire everything about the boy and had his own plans to take Sonny back with him so that he could reunite the boy with his lost family. His plans were kept a check upon by the Maharaja as he wanted Dr. Roberts not to disclose Sonny’s identity to anyone outside his territory until he (Dr. Roberts) completes his affixed tenure of one year in his kingdom.

In the mean time another major incident occurs in the life of Moti as one day he and Sonny were trotting in the courtyard when Moti was given a cake to eat by some lady through her window. The identity of the lady remains unknown and as soon as Moti opened the box to eat his cake, Sonny’s shadow fell upon the cake. Moti scolded him on account of polluting his cake with his shadow and throws it in a nearby pond. Next day all the fishes of the pond were surprisingly dead and it is revealed that the cake Moti threw in the pond was poisoned. This instance can also be seen through the colonial
perspective where the cake stands for all the negative and heathen qualities of Indian
culture and Sonny’s shadow being symbolic of English missionary zeal to act as a savior.
Unknowingly Sonny also becomes a savior for Moti’s life.

It is not only the prince of Chitta, who gets modeled on the English pattern but
Sonny also through his very short-lived contact with Dr. Roberts realizes about his
particular identity, which was otherwise not revealed to him by any of his Indian
acquaintances. He learnt and acquired his language better than Moti, as expected from a
colonial point of view. Philip Darby in The Fiction of Imperialism heralds the view that
“Sonny is strangely drawn to him . . . though of course we are meant to understand that it
is not strange at all because it is a matter of blood” (97).

The author sticks to the stereotypical images of the colonizer and the colonized
which is an important trait of colonial discourse. Homi K. Bhabha in The Location of
Culture asserts that a stereotype “is a form of knowledge and identification, that
vacillates between what is always ‘in place’ already known as something that must be
anxiously repeated” (94-95). Sticking to the notions of stereotyping, the author portrays
the colonized king as a foolish man without brain. The king wants his son to be given the
entire bottle of medicine in one go instead of a spoonful as the “royal treasury would pay
for a whole bottle” (59). He also used to hit his minister Surji Rao with his large heavy
shoe if ever he failed to collect taxes from general public. Maharaja also used to lose his
sleep over the hooting of owls. He was a brainless and superstitious fellow, a typical
Indian stereotype. On the other hand there was Sonny, a British stereotype who “was
growing fast; he was too tall and thin for nine year old” (60). A very smart and intelligent
human being from the west.
The realistic portrayal of events is one of the most appreciable qualities of Sara Jeanette Duncan. Her position seems to be ambivalent as she describes in detail about the natives of the colony and the real character of the governing empire but many a times an inclination towards the empire gets reflected very strongly. Through the perspective of Surji Rao, Duncan clearly highlight the ways, the British people employ in order to acquire cultural and economic dominance. The Maharaja decides to make a road on the suggestion of Dr. Roberts but Surji Rao was not in favor of making a road as for him:

What should come of it but more strangers? It is not desired to make a road for their guns and their horses? And talk and treaties, and tying of the hand and binding of the foot, until at last that great Jan Larrens himself will ride up to the gate of the city and refuse to go away until Your Highness sends a bag of gold mohurs to the British Raj, as he has done before. (63)

This Indian character is very clear sighted and knows what all would come to their kingdom when a road would be made. The royal treasury will lose its money and gold rapidly. The working and exploitation on the part of the empire has been reflected upon by Surji Rao very effectively. Through this character Surji Rao, Duncan tries to make a case in favor of the neglected colonized race. The people and their local administrators seem to be aware of the policies of the dominant race and thus they want to avoid any kind of interference on the colonizer’s part.

Dr. Roberts’ presence in the kingdom was not being digested by the courtiers of the Maharaja and he was ultimately killed by some of them who believed that his
medicine has pig’s feet powder and that it was because of the doctor that a bull and a child was killed. The death of Dr. Roberts had a great impact on Sonny and this impact was even more immense than the death of Abdul, who acted as a father figure to Sonny. Supriya Goswami states, “Interestingly, although Sonny is looked after by his ayah, there is an absence of mother figures (both English and Indian) in his life since her influence on him is insignificant and marginal” (45). She also asserts that Sonny is presented by the author “as a new kind of Anglo-Indian Imperial boy hero: one who is biologically English but whose allegiances to India never waver” (45). This proves that Abdul and Tooni who nurtured Sonny from his period of infancy never ever had a little impact on Sonny’s life. He was untouched by them because of his so called superior blood that he has inherited.

The news of killing of a medical missionary in Lalpore resulted in military action against the kingdom. The British army was sent to Lalpore in order to settle the affair with the king of Lalpore anyways, peacefully or violently. The king was very calm and relaxed because he had in his possession the latest ammunition imported from Russia. This calmness was however fragmentary as one day the guns were tested and it was discovered to the king’s surprise that the cartridges were filled with charcoal and very less of ammunition. King was shocked and thus punished his chief treasurer Surji Rao who made this significant deal and earned profit. Rao was humiliated publically and was commanded not to show “his black face again” (77) by the king. After this event the narrator adds on that to call Surji Rao a black faced one was rather unfair “as the Highness’s own complexion was precisely the same shade” (77). The colour of an individual’s skin has been given undue importance. One black person cannot command
other black person and it seems that it is only the duty of the whites to command the opposites and label them according to their colour of skin.

The army that was sent to reconcile everything with the king of Lalpore had established their camp nearly half a mile away from the fort of Lalpore. One day Sonny and Moti heard the English bugles and Sonny, “was immediately attracted by the beauty of the sound” (Darby 97). He was totally spell bound to hear the music and a connection was established between him and the music as soon as it entered its receptor’s senses. The result was a very enthusiastic and bright eyed English boy who otherwise had turned tan by the Indian winds. There erupted a feeling of oneness and a sense of identity in Sonny’s mind after hearing the music.

The protagonist of the novella is constantly searching for his lost identity as is the case with the postcolonial texts, where a search for lost identity is carried on, but on the second consideration, as the text has been written and published during the colonial reign thus renders a colonial connection to the same. An encounter among colonial and postcolonial can be traced throughout the novella. There is also ample use of native words in the text. This induction of native’s mother tongue in an English text renders it a postcolonial colour.

The realization of being the one belonging to an altogether different world results in a self-analyzing Sonny. He leaves for his ayah in the dark of night to get the “black book, with my god in it” (86). He wanted to know about himself, his religion and the place where he belongs to so, he decides to leave the palace without telling anyone along with his only possession, the little Black Book. Sonny’s escape from the fort in the dark
can be interpreted symbolic of his escape from the darkness of Indian living into the light of the Empire.

Sonny is caught by the camping army officials but they do not harm the boy as they find him, “being, so light complected for a native, Sir,” (95) so, once again colour plays its role, had there been a dusky or dark coloured person, he would definitely have got a very rude treatment or may be a gun shot. However, Sonny was taken immediately to colonel Star, who actually is the biological father of Sonny. The colonel however was not aware of the fact as for him his son and wife have been killed during the Cawnpore violence.

The bravery and loyalty of Sonny’s English blood is tested when he is enquired about the fort and the ammunition lying with the king. Sonny refuses to betray his Indian master and declares, “I am English but the Maharaja is my father and my mother” (101). Sonny therefore acts as a bridge between the two cultures, preserving his very English blood as well as being loyal to the country where he was nurtured. According to Supriya Goswami, “India replaces the absent English mother, and the little English boy is able to shower his love and devotion on his adopted motherland” (45). Therefore, towards the end of this fictional work there is reconciliation between the British and the Indian side. The King of Lalpore surrenders to the wishes of the crown and hands over the murderer of Dr. Roberts to the English army. Sonny clears his stand point to the residents of Chitta that he did not betray them.

Although an attempt has been made to bridge the cultural gap yet the narrator through the narrative, once again confirms the place of English ruler in India when it is
told that colonel Starr also supports Sonny and tells the king that Sonny did not utter a single word against them.

‘But he did keep silence,’ said the Colonel, looking straight into - the Chitan's sunken eyes. 'I asked him about your men and your ammunition. I commanded him, I threatened him. I give you my word of honour as a soldier that he would say nothing.’ The English in India are always believed. (108)

The king ultimately, believed this thing because of their (the Englishmen’s) superior claims and position. Sonny is united to his father when Tooni recognizes and reveals everything to colonel Starr, “The memsahib had gone in the cart — and the chota baba —the Sonny Sahib—had always had good milk—and she had taken none of the memsahib's ornaments, only her little black book with the charm in it” (110) and everything is resolved.

Sonny thus becomes a symbol of pure English blood and this English blood is having its particular traits and among those traits is to guide and protect his subject race. Sonny protects the people and the Maharaja of Lalpore by not revealing anything about them and their fortress. He believes it to be his foremost duty to defend those natives. Allen J. Greenberger is of the opinion that, “the British acceptance of what they see to be their duty is one of the major marks of their superiority” (21). The author establishes this superiority with the help of her English protagonist who was morally, culturally and physically superior. He becomes the savior of Lalpore and its people who turn violent and kill one of Sonny’s countryman Dr. Roberts.
The revolt, otherwise called the mutiny of 1857 marks amongst the most violent incidents during the imperial reign in India. The revolt shook the very foundations of the empire and the Englishmen were thrown back to think about themselves and their Empire. “The struggle against colonial oppression not only changed the direction of western history, but challenges its historical idea of time as a progressive ordered whole” (Bhabha 59) and Duncan being very aware of the after effects of the revolt of 1857 therefore in her fictional world, created a little English boy who manages everything perfectly well. Neither does he betray his own race nor the one that nurtured him.

Homi K. Bhabha in *The Location of Culture* states “To live in the unhomely world, to find its ambivalences and ambiguities enacted in the houses of fiction, or its surrounding and splitting performed in a work of art, is also to affirm a profound desire for a social solidarity” (27). To relate it to the work under scrutiny, it can be made out that Sonny’s stay, his habits, his ways and behavior everything is well balanced. He has been portrayed as a typical Englishman but towards the end a well-bred English boy emerges who is trying very hard to bridge the two cultures of the colonizer and the colonized.

Colonial period was no doubt a period of oppression, hatred and violence but the ambivalence of this particular period lies in the fact that it was during this period that the cultural interactions and modifications also occurred and it was the result of these interactions that the author creates a boy, that too English, who was meant to act as a savior for his brown acquaintances and thereby saving them from the wrath of the Empire.
Hutchinson suggests, “The abolition of the East India Company and the establishment of Crown rule were the assurance the (British) nation, required that India did indeed now ‘belong’ to the nation and not just a handful of Englishmen. (qtd. in Supriya 46) and this very realization therefore resulted in the making of such Englishmen who were concerned with “bridging” the cultural divide like Sonny. Duncan’s novella rises above her contemporaries who portray the British boys and men as undauntedly dominating and mastering their subject race. Here is “Sonny, the country - born Mutiny child who is able to unite and bring together two opposing worlds with grace, maturity and wisdom” (Supriya 46). It is however not at all denied that Sonny became an instrument for the colonizer and the colonized to intermingle because he was the one belonging to the colonizer’s part of the world.

D. Maya in *Narrating Colonialism* holds the opinion regarding the English people as, “Their behavior in India was conditioned by the imperial role founded on the myth of Britain’s racial and cultural superiority and molded by the colonial ethos. They tried to identify themselves completely with the role . . . It is an instance of the role taking over the role player” (20). Therefore, in her fictionalized India, the author presents a protagonist belonging to the colonizer’s race as an instrument for establishment of strong ties between the two cultures. He is superior culturally and therefore able to do such kind of noble deeds. Sonny is a typical example of what Bhabha calls a ‘hybrid’. For Bhabha the salient characteristic of colonial culture is its hybridity, its ‘in-betweeness’ and this hybridity has the capacity to intervene in the process of colonization and is an instrument to bridge the voids among the cultures which are otherwise opposites. According to Genevieve Gagne-Hawes “Hybridity is re-envisioned as a means by which the ideal
Anglo-Indian displays his ‘real’ knowledge of India and properly exerts duty in the course of imperial rule” (117-118).

To conclude, therefore Sonny is a typical hybrid in Bhabha’s sense who is trying his level best to be a savior for his Indian subjects and on the other hand wants to acquire everything that belongs to his own culture. He wants his lost identity back so that he can conform to his own sect of people.