CHAPTER- III
The Expatriate Tradition

This chapter attempts to place in a critical perspective Ruth Prawer Jhabvala’s exploration of cross-generation cross-familial and cross-cultural assimilation in India as manifested in her fiction written between 1955 and 1975. An examination of her work of these two decades reveals certain shifts in the nature and scope of this exploration. These shifts are seen as linked with the social and industrial development of India as well as with her self-confessed changes of response to India during the twenty-three years of her stay. At the same time, her observations are identified as a part of a literary tradition with which she has close connections that is written by European expatriates in India.

The expatriate tradition evolved out of Britain’s encounter with India and found its most powerful expression in the genre of fiction. Through the two centuries of British rule fiction writers have analyzed this encounter. Though some have supported and others criticized the Imperial policy of separateness with regard to India, nearly all the writers have raised significant questions about its validity. Being in a state of exile themselves, the possibility and desirability of assimilation in an alien land was a dominant concern in the writing of the expatriates. India became
independent in 1947, but the concern persisted. Writers like Paul Scott, Philip Masson, John Godden and Rumer Godwin continued to question the ideology that had kept the two races apart for two centuries and to analyze its effect on both.

The history starts as India has had links with the West from the dawn of her history. As early as 1500 B.C., her first European invaders, the Aryans, came through the North-Western passes and settled on the banks of the river Indus to build up a civilization, which in the course of time came to dominate and assimilate all separate cultures of the subcontinent. It was inevitable that these early Europeans would look back to the roots, and the fact that they did so almost uninterruptedly in the middle ages has been established by the historian's and scholar's antiquity. Political and intellectual connections between India and Greece, Persia forming the nexus are perceptible in the unmistakable resemblance between ancient thought and Greek philosophy and connections with Mesopotamia and Asia, the evident is several cultural parallels at certain points of history. During the middle ages, there was little or no direct contact between the East and the West. It was established once again during the second European invasion of the East following Vasco da Gama's discovery of India. Interest in the East was reviewed leading to an idealization of India in the European imagination. English Poets from Shakespeare to Southey
glorify their exotic India they had never seen. This image however was incompatible with the images of India projected by English men and women, who knew India intimately and saw her in terms of the British Raj.

A new tradition manifested itself most powerfully in the genre of fiction and came to be called as 'Expatriate' or 'Anglo-Indian'. Historically, the emergence of this tradition synchronized with the coming of the subcontinent under the political supremacy of Great Britain. But the withdrawal of British from India did not bring about its decline. The Tradition not only survived but evolved in a complementary form which is called 'Indo-Anglican fiction' or the novels in English by Indian authors. That the second tradition is a legacy of the first is evident from certain analogies that often blur their distinctive characters. The seemingly identical interest in the East-West encounter and the use of the common language provides the areas of ambiguity. However while conceding certain similarities between the two, scholars are generally separate on ethnic grounds. Thus Indians writing novels and stories in English belong to Indo-Anglican or Indo-English tradition of fiction and Europeans writing in India in English belong to Expatriate old Anglo-Indian tradition. The expatriate counterparts are M.M.Keye, Rummer Goldwin, Valerve Fitzgerald, Philip Masson, Stephen Atter and
Ruth Prawer Jhabvala. Mrs. Jhabvala occupies a special position in this tradition. The Indian family and her prolonged stay in England have made her writing ambivalent. Her initial exclusive and later fitful preoccupation with the intra-Indian context leads to a confusion regarding the stream to which she belongs. Ruth Jhabvala then, self-confessedly belongs to the tradition of expatriate writing and it is within the parameters of this tradition that her work should be assessed.

The major involvement of the expatriate writer is to offer a generalized but well-authentic view, was still as a narcissist -- a concern exclusively with the role and dilemma of that a British in India. An examination of the phases through which the expatriate novel has passed brings to light its close relationship with political history. The tradition has consistently carried with it an awareness of the Empire and has registered a gamut of emotions attained to its rise and fall. Thus the enthusiasm of the early era of the Raj, followed, in the expatriate novel, by doubts and melancholy at its decline and acute nostalgia at its passing away. The expatriate novelist is by and large, conditioned to grapple only with the issues that relate to his own race in India. The Englishman's position and prestige, his burdens and predicaments, his joys and sorrows, his strength and his weakness, his inability to understand the native character, his obsessive race consciousness and his faith in the Rule Britannia are all reflected in
expatriate writing nowhere at any point. Prior to the fiction of Ruth Prawer Jhabvala, has this tradition revealed an interest in the culture, religion or psyche to the native except as it affected the European. This is not to say that no British writer was well-versed in Indian thought and culture. Sir William Jones efforts to understand the spirit of India as genuine and he spent a lifetime trying to dispel distorted and debasing images of her civilization and philosophy. Edwin Arnold, Aldous Huxley, and T.S. Eliot were among others who did take and create an interest in India. These writers, however, do not belong to the tradition under review for they did not use India as a locale for their creative work. The assumptions that it was this tradition that was primarily responsible for the circulation of many erroneous and distorted views of Indian thought and culture is not exaggerated. Popular novels and stories geared to the tastes of the Western readership which relished a literature of escape, dominated the landscape of British letters in India till well into the second decade of the twentieth century.

It was strange that though Britishers ruled for Centuries, they could never affect the cultural synthesis that was surely to be expected of a country like India with its history of assimilation of races and culture. To understand this one should know the socio-historical background of India and her people.
The effects of the two European invasions of India were dissimilar in character. The Aryans came to settle, the British to colonize. The Aryans used their own culture to assimilate the indigenous cultures of India while their successors geared to a policy of separatism. The Aryans evolved Hinduism—a religion so catholic and universal as not to be a religion at all but a way of life. The word Hindu itself is a Muslim corruption of the Sanskrit word Sindhu meaning a great stretch of water and therefore denotative of the race that inhabited at the banks of the river Indus. Gradually the limits of the term were extended to incorporate all the races of the subcontinent whether they worshipped Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva or the inexhaustible range of local deities or even the manifestation of nature—the sun, the wind, the water, snakes, stones and trees. Unity in diversity being the key note of the Aryan order, Hindu society organized a complex network in the shape of the caste system to harmonize the immense range of racial, cultural, sociological and economic diversities which its history created for it in successive waves. Elastic and expansive, the caste system brought together the separate cultures of the subcontinent, it even absorbed foreign races like the Sakas and Huns who periodically invaded India. A living association of human groups evolved, each component part of the federation aware of its separate character and function yet imbibed with a collective consciousness.
Far from creating diversities and discriminations, the Hindu order actually organized disparities created by historical and sociological upheaval. Hindu and Muslims lived and worked together for centuries, agreeing to worship apart and draw water from different wells yet assimilated in the common stream of Indian life. At the same time, the Hindus incorporated much of the Muslim creed into their own faith. Several ethnic groups of India evolved religious practices that were part Muslim and part Hindu.

The first seeds of diversity were sown on the subcontinent—the Pax Britannia, which evolved a deliberate policy of separatism. Kipling’s notorious statement “Oh! East is East and West is West and never the twain shall meet” came to be regarded as epitomizing the spirit of Raj. It became a fundamental assumption that the less interaction there was between the two, the better it was for both. On the administrative level the ruler was considered supreme and infallible.

The British not only kept themselves apart, but extended separatist principle further by encouraging each community in India to maintain its own institutions and live by its own traditions. Among the consequences of British rule in encouraging diversity in India the emergence of a westernized upper-class, a community of Indian Christians and the racial cross-breed generally referred to as Eurasian. No community in India has
offered such immobility of the British era than the Eurasian which was still and still is regarded with a mixture of sexual guilt and bitter contempt by both races.

To understand the dilemma that faces the expatriate Englishman in his renewed encounter with the old country was the main question for the expatriate writer. Thus we have to study some expatriates writers for it.

The principle of separatism colors the entire range of expatriate fiction as it did that of British social life in India. Through the years the writers have concerned themselves with the cause, nature and consequence of racial dichotomies, rising significant questions on the political, social and cultural levels. Though the predicament posed have changed with the passing of time and solutions proposed have carried in tone and content, the obsession has remained.

The image of India evoked by Rudyard Kipling is analogous to the general image of India that emerges from the writings of Maud Diver, Flora Annie Steel, Alice Perrin, W.W. Hunter, Mrs. Savi, Mrs. Penny and some of Kipling's own novels and stories. The prime objective of these literatures was dissemination of imperialist ideology. To this end they propagated the racial superiority of the white that made it even obligation to rule people who were half-devil and half-child. Such a concept of the
subordinate race fitted in beautifully with the British self Image of a strong and benign ruling race which ,by virtue of the courage ,discipline and sense of fairness inherent in the white blood ,was destined to dominate .The attitudes softened somewhat with regard to the Muslim who were sometimes given favorable attributes of which loyalty not to his country or king but to his British officer is a prominent one .The writers concede certain similarities between the Muslims and themselves but they plainly debar the idea of a cultural or racial synthesis and rejects the Muslim’s right to leadership .Where there is white blood it must rule seems to be the verdict of this group .

Since the race must dominate, it must retain its purity by resisting assimilation with the native –whether Hindu or Muslim .That such a resistance is only possible in diverse society in which miscegenation is barred and manifested in the writings of the period. Since British blood and British culture must both be preserved in their pristine states, intercourse between the races is seen as dangerous on both physical and cultural levels ,therefore ,there is no trick so low to which the conquering race may not stop to prevent a mixing of blood or which the writers of the period will not condone in the interest of maintaining the dividing line .In Rudyard Kipling and Wolcott Balesteir’s novel ‘The Naulahka’ the white businessmen Nicholas Tarvin pretends to return the Rajput Queen
Sitabai’s love for him in order to obtain a necklace of priceless gems—the possession of which will enable him to bring the rail road to his country town of Topaz in Colorado. There is nothing wrong in this as the writers see it, for it is quite in order to take advantage of the weakness of a subordinate race. Tarvin’s devotion to his country and his mission are in fact presented as heroic qualities.

With such apperception of the ideal East—West relationship, there could be no question of mixed marriages. During the early days of the Raj, when the isolated condition of the Englishmen in India resulted in marriages, though not encouraged, were not considered extraordinary enough to be given fictional representation to any great extent. The attitude hardened with the passing off years and with the arrival of Englishwomen in India, and this gradually became a dominant theme in expatriate writing. The reasons for discouraging East—West unions, as they emerge in the fiction of the period under review, have been summed up by Bhupal Singh in terms of a loss of everything that is valuable to an Englishman—prestige, friends and above all his niche in England, for marrying a native would obviously result in his never seeing England again. Consequently, many authors kill off or put aside the Indian girl to save the Englishman. In Mrs. Savi’s ‘The Daughter-in-Law’ the futility of an East—West union is held up as an example to English girls who are
foolish enough to believe in its possible success. Kipling’s approach to mixed marriage, however, offers an interesting contrast to the approaches of Mrs. Penny and Mrs. Savi. Kipling does not advocate East-West unions any more than these writers do, nor does he deal with the subject at length.

One of the few novels in which East-West marriage actually takes place is Maud Diver’s ‘Lilamani: A Study in Possibility’, Lilamani, an Indian Princess, marries the British baronet Neville Sinclair. The marriage receives the opposition of clan prejudice and disapproval from both sides, but the author’s stance is clear. An East-West marriage from the Indian point of view is an advance and from Western in a measure — retrogression. The writers like Shilland Bradley and Burn were convinced that this product of an unnatural and unholy union combined the worst characteristics of both races. Nearly to assert the lack of a moral backbone in the half-caste and emphasized the gap between appearance and reality. The Eurasian is often depicted in combining the best of both races in appearance — the features and coloring of the Celt with the grace and vivacity of the Oriental — and as extremely attractive to the opposite sex. But this moral character is seen as flawed. He can be bullying and domineering as his white ancestors, but in crisis he loses these qualities and becomes as spiritless and feeble as his native forefathers. This
mixture of contradictory qualities makes the Eurasians responses unpredictable and unreliable it is therefore not to be trusted. Bad, cowardly, selfish, garish, vulgar, lazy, stubborn, and vicious are some of the adjectives used for Eurasians of this period.

The distaste for interaction with the subject race that is reflected in the writing of the period was regretted by an Englishmen of the old country many of whom sought to improve matters though legislation. The expatriates resented this approach from people who were unfamiliar with the hurdles that lay in the way of social mobility between the races. They particularly resented the interference of Parliament whose knowledge of India was gleaned exclusively from the reports of its touring members.

That the expatriate’s distrust of the Englishman of the old country was justified is evident from the fact that though expressing concern over the lack of cordiality between the races in India, the native Englishman himself developed an ambivalent attitude to the expatriate once he was back in England. While despising him for being snobbish and separatist in India, the Englishman in England resisted and thwarted the efforts of the expatriate to emerge once again into the mainstream of English life—looking on him as a queer specimen from distant and disreputable branch of the family. Alienation from normal English society, thus, became a sequel to alienation from India. As a result, the expatriate often himself
reduced to the status of a nowhere man. While in India, he considered himself in exile and clung tenaciously to his memories of England. But back in his own country, he did not find a place and consequently yearned for India. To rationalize this love-hate relationship, India is often described as a siren who cannot be escaped by those who have known her. It was this fear of being trapped by India that provided the impetus for maintaining continued links with England. Children were sent home for education, women to recoup their health and men on extended furloughs—breaking up families and isolating the expatriate further. The Englishwoman, in particular, were seen as a victim of India. The heat and dust destroyed their health and the long separations from her husband and children. Yet the efforts of the expatriates to retain their rightful places inherited order drew a blank for the most part.

It is strange that the type of Indian with whom expatriate should have been successful in establishing the close contact, that is the educated westernized class by British rule in India, was the one from which he was most alienated during this period. It is indeed a fact that the expatriate, by and large, resented the education of the native out of fear that the later might come to occupy an intermediate position, on the cultural level, between the master and the subject races. Western knowledge for the native, it was argued, was a waste since, conditioned by his own totally
alien philosophical tradition, he could not be expected to imbibe even the most elementary Western ideas. The literature of the period is full of criticism of the policy of educating Indians.

Anything that disrupts the dividing line between ruler and the ruled is seen as dangerous. Encouraging the native to rule out of his inherited boundaries is, therefore, both foolish and corrective was provided by making the intellectual Indian the ridicule in expatriate fiction.

A similar psychology determines the choice of locale for the novels of this period. Bengal, the seat of the British government in India and the land with which the ruler had the longest and close contact, is conspicuous by its absence. Almost all the novels are seen with the jungles, mountains, villages and army camps of the Punjab and North-West frontier province. The reason for this obviously is the writers found the representation of the illiterate but study of loyal peasant soldier character type safer for circulation than Bengali who was embarrassingly Anglophone and inclined and nationalist at the same time. It was this last element that was particularly hated and feared. The nationalist, it was alleged, was spreading the notion of hatred for the white race among innocent subjects.
Rudyard Kipling was hailed by Nirad C. Chaudhari as a writer of those works will be of lasting value to those who want to know not only British India but also timeless India, conveys the sum total of the experience of Indian religion and philosophy in two novels, 'The Naulakha: A Story of West and East Kim'. An analysis of the two and a critical estimate of Kipling's stance with regard to the separatist principle will help us to get a balanced view of the ideology during this period, for Kipling is not only the leading suitor of his times but one who is, within the limits of the imperial.

Though Kipling makes the projection of the mysterious East more complex and abstruse in Kim, his message remains the same. Kim, like his creator and unlike Tarvin, has been brought up in India and is familiar with the characteristic and behavior of her people. Consequently, his encounter with the spiritual does not shock and bewilder him as it does Tarvin. The theme of the novel, in the ultimate analysis, is contained in two options, 'Shall Kim follow the Asian insights of the lama and putting an end to material striving allow the soul to pass beyond the illusion of Time and of Space of Things' or 'Shall he become an imperialist spy? Kim's decision is disappointing and not only to Indian readers. He further can go with the admirers of Kipling is to an acceptance, with reservations, of Lionel Trilling's view that the dominant emotions of Kim are love and
respect for the aspects of Indian that the ethos of the West does not usually with leniency. ‘Kim’ is certainly the first novel of the tradition in which a question is raised about the western culture.

The most powerful corrective to the separatist principle is provided by E.M Forster’s ‘A Passage to India’ (1924). He unlike his countrymen in India, believed in the innate brotherhood of man. He says “I believe in personal relationships, one must be fond of people and trust them if one not to make mess of life, and it is therefore essential that they should not let down” (1)

Forster’s disappointment at imperial Britain’s failure to create multi-racial and integrated society in which personal relations between the two races could flourish is revealed in their failure of the Aziz - Fielding friendship. Aziz and Fielding let each other down in ‘Passage to India’ not because they are racially conditioned by each other but because they are caught in a situation where they had no meeting place. Forster puts the blame for the failure of individuals to connect in India to the imperialist creed, is amply borne out in the text of the novel. This message is conveyed in a unique in ‘A Passage to India’. Developing the plot line, scenario and characterization of a typical expatriate novel of the time, the author provides his readers within inbuilt frame of reference which guides his responses in a manner articulated to make the novel a
brilliant exposes of imperialistic doctrine and a critique of Western culture. The world of ‘A Passage to India’ is as conditioned by the principle of separation as that of Kipling and Diver.

In the opening pages, Forster uses the authorial voice to chart the divisions that provide the key to the unfolding of the theme of potential union and is breakdown that lies at the core of the novel. The barrier that separates the Indians from the British is actual.

Mrs. Moore, Fielding and Adela represent the spiritual, the intellectual and rational approaches to India. They are looked upon as disruptive forces by the colonials because they pose, each in a distant way, a threat to the creed. In a world that is governed by blind faith, these are individuals with ideas and ideas are fatal to caste. Mrs. Moore, Adela and Fielding are then insufficiently equipped to meet the challenge of India. Their approaches, being alien ones, prove inhibitive and they are made to suffer a loss of faith. In 1924, the same year as the publication of ‘A Passage to India’, Rabindranath Tagore appeared in its English translation. Inclusion, unity and love are aspects of Hinduism that Forster emphasis in ‘A Passage to India’, projecting by contrast the orientation in exclusion that only in the West based religion such as Islam and Christianity but in Western thought and culture. Of all that characters in the novel, the only two who seems to be aware of this aspect of India are Ralph and Stella.
Physical and spiritual decedents of Mrs. Moore without her traditional Christianity, their expectations of the country to which they have come from free from any kind of conditioning. Thus despite their brief appearance, the novel represents what Forster believes is the right approach to India. The final implication of the novel is that if Fielding is unworthy of relationship with Aziz, the later is incapable of it in Imperial India. The immediate consequence of the publication of ‘A Passage to India’ was an awakening of British moral conscience. ‘A Passage to India’ was into merely a milestone in the history of expatriate fiction, it changed its entire direction. This change is reflected in the changed image of India as well as altered tone in which the writers reject the possibility of synthesis. Following Forster’s lead, a number of writers regret the failure of the races to Forster’s lead, a number of writers regret the failure of the races to connect and put the blame on the ruler-ruled impasse. Writers like Dennis Gray Stoll and Phillip Mason express the yearnings of Indians to make contact with the British and criticize the cold aloofness with which it meet.

Imperialism, in the post-Forster era, is seen not only as freezing goodwill and sympathy between the races; it is also held responsible for bringing out the worst traits of both. Unlimited power renders the British officials of Orwell’s ‘Burmese Days’ corrupt, decadent, despotic, and
reveling in the degradation of the native. The authors hatred of the tyranny that is unleashed in the nature of administration emerges with vitriolic power in the novel.

The authors of the post-Forster period evolved a new kind of hero who was the exact anti-type of the old. The passivity and lack of success that characterizes Flory of Orwell's 'Burmese Days' and Thompson's 'An End Of the Hours' indicate worthwhile attitudes to the East in terms of authorial stance. These new heroes do not dominate their environment like Kipling and Diver's heroes did but to understand it, thus laying themselves open to their Indian experience in the manner advocated by Forster. John Masters, though often inviting the charge that he is a follower of Kipling, create a character in 'The Night runners of Bengal' who regret that British are more interested in Britain than in India. The question of cross-cultural communication then continues to occupy a central position in the fiction written by the expatriates. The writers are inclined to take up the same negative stances with regard to its possibility as those of their predecessors. But the tone in which they state their convictions is a changed one. The strident voice of superiority gives way to one of deep melancholy. While agreeing with masters that one of values can only be at the cost of other, Rummer Godden often conveys a question that losing the Western in order to gain the Eastern insight be
worthwhile experience. Indian Spiritualism is a force within black issues. It dominates the entire vision of the novel and articulates message.

Following Forster's lead, Godden depicts Hinduism as significant, dynamic and inclusive and projects by contrast the narrow prejudices of traditional Christianity. The nuns of black Narcissus reject the idea of any other than themselves participating in their worship but the inhabitants of Mope turn Sister Ruth's grave into a holy shrine. The holiness of the Sunnyasi, termed 'inhuman' by Sister Clodagh, encompasses Good and Evil, Life and Death, Creation and Destruction as the equal energies of a single universal spirit. Religious issues recede into the background in Rumer Godden's 'Kingfishers Catch Fire'— the conflict as it emerges in the experience of the heroine being a cross-cultural one the novelists energies are directed at exploring and analyzing socio-cultural differences particularly as they relate to personal relations between the races. The optimistic note struck at the conclusion affirms Forster's faith in a meaningful coming together of East and West in independent India. 'Kingfishers catch Fire', written in 1953, nearly thirty years after the publication of 'A Passage to India' most Englishmen and Women writing during the interim period could see the ill effect of East-West synthesis as it is materialized in India. 'An End of the Hours' is a powerful indictment of Imperialism which precludes a spontaneous emergence of
cultures. The same spirit is visible in the depiction of the Eurasian who continues to feature in the novels of the tradition as a resentment, emotional instability, prejudice and futile identification.

Fictional writing after Forster, then, projects an image of India that is radically different from that of the imperialist writers. In one area, however, the writers betray the old reservations in the paucity of the image and voice given to the native. Orwell, Masters and the Godden sisters were familiar with Indian Languages and Indian modes of living. Yet they refrain from depicting intra-Indian interactions and are reticent about giving important speaking roles to Indians. Indians continue to remain in the background till, with the arrival of Ruth Prawer Jhabvala on the Literary Scene, the focus shifts from the Indo-British context to that of the Intra-Indian. Her studies of cross-generation and cross-familial alienations within the Intra-Indian context in the first half of her literary career inspired by her recognition of the separations that constituted Britain’s all too visible legacy to India. Apart from the political one of partition that left, India faced with problem of absorbing millions of immigrants from Pakistan, British also left India culturally raven. Western education led the young to declare war on the old. Thus there was a generation gap. Modern concept of material progress and the claims of the individual clashed with the traditional ideals and collective
consciousness, sparking of alienations and traditional norms. Thus we find in Ruth Jhabvala's work a sensitive exploration of these assimilations. Thus she belongs to the tradition with which her identification becomes difficult. Thus she depicts Indo-European encounters in her latter half of the writing career.

Now the expatriate writer Ruth Prawer Jhabvala's writing should be explored. This part consists of Ruth Prawer Jhabvala's novels pertaining to this theme. She is one of the European writers currently writing about India. Born in Jewish family, she was aware, from the childhood, of her racial history of rootless, and having married a Parsee was exposed to racial history of exile. She has also been an expatriate thrice over. In consequence, she brings a greater degree of personal involvement to her exploration of assimilation in India than her predecessors of the expatriate tradition for most of whom their state of exile was incidental and temporary. The extent and nature of Ruth Prawer Jhabvala's involvement is perceived in her complex response to the question of cross cultural assimilation as revealed in her autobiographical writing and manner in which this response is transmuted into the varied responses of her Western characters. In her last novel written in India, 'Heat and Dust' (1975), the novelist structurally interlocks two planes of time, fifty years apart, in order to examine the differing depths of the alien's penetration.
into the separate India’s of 1923 and 1975. Drawn from different segments of Western life both past and present, her Western characters represent each in a special way, some aspect of their creator’s quest for assimilating in an alien country. With Ruth Jhabvala’s racial and personal history of exile this amounted to a compulsion. Although Ruth Jhabvala became a British citizen in 1948, she was not destined to make England her permanent home. Although familiar with the country through the novels of the expatriate writers, she was not sufficiently enthused by them to wish to visit India. As from Germany to England, the transition from England to India was smooth and easy—more, it was a wonderful experience. She was enchanted. The intense joy of discovery finds expression in delighted stream of adjectives and evocative phrases in her autobiographical writing.

“I Still can’t talk about impact India made on my innocent—meaning blank and unprepared mind and senses. To try to express it would make me stutter. I entered a world of sensuous delights that perhaps children other children enter. I remember nothing of it from my childhood.”

Perhaps her Jewish ancestry with its Eastern basis was at the heart of this recognition. It was as if this impact made by India percolated through layers of consciousness to open up some deeply buried ancestral memory.
Whatever it was, it is certain that her creative instincts found in the Indian scene an outlet the like of which she had never experienced. And all that time she was recording her experience of India in novel after novel, adapting for her purpose the old English novel of manners that had found its most chiseled expression in a delineation of the static English society of the eighteenth century and early nineteenth centuries. Thus, the harmonious resolution that is fundamental to the comedy of manners became, in Ruth Jhabvala's early novels, the natural corollary to the clashes and tensions of Indian family life.

The community she chooses to identify with and delineate in her novels was, curiously enough, not the Parsee community. Instead she turned, with interest, to the Punjabi refugee—also an alien community trying to adapt itself to an unknown ethos. She noted the resilience with which the Punjabi overcame the trauma of partition: the quickness with which they came to new roots that by time they became vigorous and strong as the original inhabitants.

In her Essay 'Myself in India' published in 1966, she describes western reactions (European and American). India as sort of cycle with stress stages: “first stage tremendous enthusiasm everything in India marvelous: second stage everything Indian not marvelous: third stage everything Indian abominable” (3). For some it ends there, for others the
cycle renews itself and goes on. On that she bases this generalization is not clear, particularly in her confession has in the first ten years of her life in India she had herself off from everything European. Whether she had as many westerners in the next few years on the level of reaction that warrants such a universalization is very doubtful yet she assures her readers that the cycle of response she is particularly opposite to the experience of those who tend to be liberal in outlook and have been educated as sensitive and receptive to India. Unfortunately, she goes on to retain this mood of openness for any length of a country that proves to be too strong for western nerves.

Whatever was oriental in her was apparently not strong enough to sustain a lasting relationship of love with India. By her own admission, then a state of alienation accompanied by a drastic change of vision followed the first phase of exuberant identification.

"I still wrote about India but now seen from a European point of view. I became a European sensibility again, and now I saw everything as perhaps I should have seen it sensuous delights but had to struggle against all the things people have to struggle against in India: the tide of poverty, disease and squalor rising all around; the heat -- the frayed nerves; the strange alien often inexplicable; often maddening Indian character." (4)
This contradiction lies at the heart of Ruth Jhabvala’s love—hate relationship with India—a relationship that has remained unbroken even after her departure from India and the revision her once abandoned Western heritage her European reclamation has been faithfully and accurately recorded in all her autobiographical writing and interviews and has the tone for all her fictional writings after 1960.

In the essay ‘Moonlight, Jasmine and Ricketts’ Ruth Jhabvala attempts to describe, within the limits of Western terms and concepts of emotions that shapes the Westerner’s response to India on the second point of the cycle emotions that have been her most own and have been externalized in those of her characters. The most tangible of them is the Westerner’s reaction to the heat and dust of India. The press of Indian poverty and yawning gulf between the rich and the poor is another source of disenchantment a factor that promotes the fearful metamorphosis that the European in India is susceptible to.

After sometime her Western character senses that they do see have done so for generations and centuries and that the gap between affluence and poverty in India produces two kinds of response. One is a frenzied grasping of whatever is within reach. Indifferent to the claims of others and the other a resigned surrender of life’s fruits in the knowledge that the enjoyment of them can at best be temporary. Both states are equally
explicable within the context of Indian experience but are startlingly alien to a twentieth century Western sensibility. In consequence, Ruth Jhabvala's Westerners are often seen as grappling with something intangible in India.

A certain degree of distancing from immediate experience is imperative for the production of good quality creative work, and that Ruth Jhabvala's fiction is sometimes excessively influenced by her personal response. She overlooks the fact that in novels like 'A Backward Place' and 'Heat and Dust', Ruth Jhabvala does succeed in presenting an objective image of Indian reality. Detachment as particularly perceptible in her characters conceptions with India have nothing in common with her creator's nor do their destinies. In Ruth Jhabvala's images of Indian in 'To Whom She Will', 'The Nature of Passion' and 'The Householder' there is no sign of anger or revulsion but which is later seen in some of her novels. Ruth Jhabvala's confrontation with India as the confrontation between two of the strongest spiritual impulses in the world. This confrontation is not confined to the poverty, backwardness and disagreeable climate of the country. It involves a struggle ending in failure, to come to terms with Hindu spirit.

The basis of Ruth Jhabvala's dilemma in phase of her life in India a dilemma that is at the heart of almost all her fictional writings after 1960.
explicable within the context of Indian experience but are startlingly alien to a twentieth century Western sensibility. In consequence, Ruth Jhabvala’s Westerners are often seen as grappling with something intangible in India.

A certain degree of distancing from immediate experience is imperative for the production of good quality creative work, and that Ruth Jhabvala’s fiction is sometimes excessively influenced by her personal response. She overlooks the fact that in novels like ‘A Backward Place’ and ‘Heat and Dust’, Ruth Jhabvala does succeed in presenting an objective image of Indian reality. Detachment as particularly perceptible in her characters conceptions with India have nothing in common with her creator’s nor do their destinies. In Ruth Jhabvala’s images of Indian in ‘To Whom She Will’, ‘The Nature of Passion’ and ‘The Householder’ there is a no sign of anger or revulsion but which is later seen in some of her novels. Ruth Jhabvala’s confrontation with India as the confrontation between two of the strongest spiritual impulses in the world. This confrontation is not confined to the poverty, backwardness and disagreeable climate of the country. It involves a struggle, ending in failure, to come to terms with Hindu spirit.

The basis of Ruth Jhabvala’s dilemma in phase of her life in India a dilemma that is at the heart of almost all her fictional writings after 1960.
Transmuting personal experience into concept. She poses the pivotal question: is it possible for an alien, whose spiritual roots have been nurtured in Judaism and its sequel Christianity, to achieve a meaningful assimilation with India. Her personal response, at this stage, is negative. One could, if one tried, she says, wipe out prior conditioning, adopt an attitude of unconditional surrender, allow oneself to be sucked down into that bog of passive, intuitive being, that is the norm in India—but that state could at best be temporary. The rational would, one day or other, reclaim its own.

Ruth Jhabvala's life changed in pace and quality from that time onwards. She had rarely left Delhi started traveling extensively, looking for locations for her screenplays. In consequence, the settings of her novels which until then were confined to Delhi were extended to include a number of cities and towns of Northern India. Filming also brought her new relationship and occasional spurts of hectic activity out of her self-inflicted seclusion.

In 1975, at the peak of her career as novelist and screenplay writer, Ruth Jhabvala decided to leave India. Her choice of the United States for refuge from India was in contradiction to her claim of a European reclamation. She had consistently identified herself with Europeans, she had declared herself homesick for Europe yet when the time came to
make the change it was in favor of a country which was not only new but also one in which she was relatively unknown. Some of her short stories had appeared in New Yorker. She had a number of admirers, which included literary critics, in America, but it was microscopic compared with that of England extensively interviewed in the afterglow of her two greatest triumphs—the Booker Award for ‘Heat and Dust’ and John Smith Guggenheim Memorial Fellowship for ‘Poet and Dancer’. One of the question repeatedly put to her was the reason for her choice of the United States for emigration from India to foreign. Following her departure from India, her creative impulse has registered a steady decline and her fictional output had suffered both qualitatively and quantitatively. In these twenty two years she has written only four novels ‘In search of Love and Beauty’ (1983), ‘Three continents’ (1987), ‘Poet and Dancer’ (1993) and ‘Shards of Memory’ (1995) and a few short stories. This flagging of inspiration may be the consequence of her vision of her new country. Her comments on the American way of life and her observation of the changes wrought in her own personality within a few years of her arrival in the States are significant. The bulk of her writing in this final phase, her four novels in particular, are concerned with the central American problems of loneliness and neurosis.
Ruth Jhabvala probably tries to shut it out in the same way that she tried to shut out the heat, the dust, the poverty and filth of India and with as little success. "I am a born outsider." She admits in the final analysis "always looking in through the window. I would love to stay in one place. But I'll never settle down, never accept a place as home." (5)

In the concluding remarks of her commemorative lecture on Neil Gunn in 1980, she tries to offer the sum total of her experience as an expatriate. Likening herself to a fickle woman who frequently changes her lovers she says "Perhaps after my first disinheritance and my calm acceptance of it, of so cheerfully pretending to be English, and then Indian and then Anglo-Indian, changing color as I changed countries may be I will just have to go on doing it, changing countries like lovers." (6)

Her Indian characters also represent aspects of this quest. One of Ruth Jhabvala's major contributions to the fiction written by expatriates in India is her contribution to the Intra-Indian context into a tradition of writing that obsessively viewed India as it affected the European. In her first five novels and in many of her early stories Ruth Jhabvala explores Intra-Indian interactions on the cross-generation and cross-familial levels. The clashes and resolution she depicts, in this early phase of her writing career, reflect in a vicarious way, her own predicaments and their resolution vis-a-vis India.
Now if we observe the analysis of the novels of Ruth Prawer Jhabvala which are mainly pertaining to this theme we will observe that, assimilation, in the entire context of Ruth Jhabvala’s fiction, has a wide range of connotations that reflect the development of the novelist’s response to India. In her first two novels ‘To Whom She Will’ (1955) and the ‘Nature of Passion’ (1956), assimilation is perceived in terms of a collective identity shared by members of joint family or clan. The family—a microcosm of the clan—is viewed as functional structure in which each part is assigned a role in accordance with conventional norms. When one part usually a young woman becomes conscious of the limitations of her individual freedom due to these inhibiting norms, a struggle ensues between her and guardians of the structure. The collective identity is threatened and the generations are alienated. However, as Ruth Jhabvala sees it, the Indian family succeeds in resuming its collective identity by stretching its norms on the one hand and inducing assimilation by the power of wealth and weight of an established tradition on the other.

The growth of Ruth Jhabvala’s fiction is at one level, a paradigm of the history of Indian, in the fifties, sixties and seventies. Her fourth novel ‘The Householder’ (1960), is set against a background of India’s industrial development and National Planning as well as that of a newly awakening female consciousness. Assimilation, as it emerges in such a context, is no
longer the state of being merged in Joint family or clan. The protagonist of the novel yearns to be a part of some giant mechanism such as Indian bureaucracy for only thus will he gain a collective identity with other workers. On the familial level, assimilation threatened, in the early years of marriage, by clash of cross-familial influences and emerges of dominant female consciousness.

In her next novel, ’Get Ready for Battle’ (1965), Ruth Jhabvala depicts an Indian characterized by vast gulf between the have-not’s and a disintegration of traditional norms. The central character of her novel is an old woman who, unlike the rest of her family is on a quest – not for security in a cross, materialistic world but for an escape from it. Paradoxically it is she who is truly assimilated for an assimilation is no longer viewed by the novelist as a collective identity in any material order but as an affinity with universal life that is vouchsafed the person who overcomes the temptations of the material world and works and suffers with the poor and degraded.

‘A Backward Place’ (1968) marks Ruth Jhabvala’s shift from the Intra-Indian context to that of the East-West encounter as manifested in Indian. Her growing awareness of herself as an exile described her autobiographical writing finds an outlet in the depiction of cross-cultural clashes in this novel and the two that follow ‘A New Dominion’
(1972) and ‘Heat and Dust’ (1975). In these novels Ruth Jhabvala explores the consciousness of western expatriate in India and depicts his struggle to effect or resist assimilation. The alien’s assimilation follows the pattern etched in ‘Get Ready for Battle’ except that for him there is an additional first phase. Before she can share the suffering of the deprived sections and be vouchsafed an elemental affinity, she must surrender to India as to lover through a spontaneous immersion into the mainstream of Indian Life. In her last two novels Ruth Jhabvala warns that alien against kind of merging that he is susceptible to in India. This is seen in terms of a total obliteration of personality and voluntary destruction of all that is distinctive in oneself at the behest of a religious charlatan. In the novelist’s assessment, in this final phase of her life in India, the first kind of merging holds out the hope of spiritual salvation and the second spells spiritual annihilation.

Though Ruth Prawer Jhabvala did not come under the spell of Indian Spiritualism, she visualized a spiritual destruction in her novels and from her autobiographical writings it is reflected that in last twenty years she was not interested in India. Hence from her personal and literary choices it is reflected that she has created a drama quite unique in the history of Expatriate writing.

References:

2] Gooneratne Yasmine, ‘Silence, Exile and cunning, the Fiction of

3] Chakravarti Aruna, ‘Ruth Prawer Jhabvala, a Study in Empathy and

p. 57.

Publishers, 2004, Pg. No 64.

, New Delhi, 1996, p. 102.