SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

Blending fact with fiction a historical novel leaves the accuracy of chronicled events with imagination. The novelist has the freedom to imagine people and create a historically authenticated world for them to occupy. In other words, the writer evokes the "feel" of a historical period rather than reduce his art to a minutely documented report. In the process of transmuting historical facts into a fictional narrative the writer use history in several ways. The novelist can use the past as political allegory to focus on some contemporary issue. The past may also be presented in terms of pageantry in that events can acquire a romantic aura and remain distanced from reality. Yet another aim of a historical novel can be to embody in an individual destiny the peculiar pressures and problems of an epoch. The unravelling of the individual destiny may be parallel to the historical movement of this particular epoch. Thus the protagonist's choice and experiences may not be ends in themselves but mirror a larger historical
process. To achieve this purpose historical characters like Aurangzeb or Henry may be kept in the background while ordinary and imaginary characters are placed in the foreground. The novelist's credit lies in deriving the individuality of the fictional characters from the historical uniqueness of their age.

The novelist seems to have a special responsibility to focus on the ordinary people of the past whom traditional histories have bypassed in fiction. As resistance to the kind of elitist historiography that deletes the underclass from their records, the novelist can trace grassroot politics or delve into the minds of the peasants and workers. Luckács discusses how the novelist, unlike the traditional historian can restore the balance by making the ordinary people visible, and by giving them subject positions:

It is natural that bourgeois historiography in general as a discipline of the ruling class, should have consciously neglected, omitted or even slanderously distorted these factors of popular life. Here is where the historical novel, as a powerful artistic weapon in defence of human progress, has a major task to perform, to restore these real driving forces of human history as they were in reality, to recall them to life on behalf of the present.
Luckács' words acquire another significance when we consider the tradition of colonial historiography in our country and the subsequent awareness of Indian intellectuals that the history of the people can be inscribed upon what has so far been merely the history of the State only by major reinterpretations. The past can come alive through narrative also and like any historical work, can continue the dialectic between the subjugated and the power group, between the historically established and the imaginatively constructed.

As a historical novelist Walter Scott wrote his fiction to fill up imaginatively the gaps and indeterminacies between historical events placed at a distant time. Writing about the aristomilitary class in England Walter Scott wanted to project the values of heroism, tenacity as peculiar to the members of the class. This act of glorifying the values cherished by this upper class—valour, exuberance, spirit of adventure—implies indirectly the author's appreciation of the colonial enterprise. Those who went out of England to build the empire, belonged to the upper class, if not by birth at least, through their achievement, or at least they aspired to belong to it.
Walter Scott was not necessarily an elitist by conscious political ideology but he failed to incorporate a complete vision of his times in his work because he focused only on the noble and the brave.

Paul Scott, more than a century later, was a witness to the winding up of the British empire since he served in the army during the Second World War and wrote about India on the verge of Independence. While Walter Scott lived at the beginning of England's colonial expansion Paul Scott observed and recorded its end. Their specific locations in these two different historical periods affect their work, their world-view. Walter Scott's historical novels are written more in the spirit of a tribute to England's mighty political achievements rather than as a scrutiny into the moral nature of the race. Paul Scott chooses to narrate greater upheavals in India during '40-'47 period in a centrifugal manner. The event that triggers off the plot of The Raj Quartet is not a recorded event in history, but a fictional rape in an imaginary place called Bibighar. This serves as the focal point to bring in historical details of the Quit India movement. Graphic details of the place, multi-layered legends connected with Bibighar and the actual rape offer the novelist ample scope to integrate this
imaginary event with the historically recorded national events as well as weave in his interpretations. Bibighar, in a sense, becomes a repository of metaphoric significance.

Paul Scott lends further credibility to his portrayal of the Quit India Movement by turning the town of Mayapore into a stage for political violence, and mob frenzy so as to mirror the events in the rest of India. Mr. White, a civilian and Mr. Reid, a military officer, in The Jewel in The Crown are presented as eye-witnesses of the public fury in Mayapore during the Quit India Movement. In the early sixties a British character in the novel interviews Mr. White and goes through Reid's journal about their personal reactions to a public event. These are techniques for conferring authenticity and verisimilitude to the imaginary Bibighar episode.

The novels to be discussed in this chapter are historical novels with a certain difference. One unusual coincidence is that all these narratives—The Jewel in the Crown (1966); A Division of the Spoils (1975); Staying On (1978) by Paul Scott; New Dominion (1972) (a short story "The Biography" by from A Stronger Climate (Ruth P. Jhabvala) and A Situation in New Delhi by Nayantara Sahgal (1975), incorporate a historian as a character. Our aim in this
the differing viewpoints of the author chapter is to show, and of the fictional historian. So the work becomes self-reflexive, like two mirrors facing each other. This reciprocity succeeds in capturing images and doubling them so as to add depth to the perspective presented in the fictional process. What distinguishes, this "mise en abyme" technique is that "it attributes to a character in the narrative the very activity of the narrator in charge of the narration". The fictional historian in these novels is often a commentator or observer. He is not at the centre of the political turmoil, nor is he instrumental in the shaping of history. The fictional historian sees the historical episode in the novel as "Contemporary" even (since he is an actual witness to it) rather than as "historical", whereas the author sees the past as history with the natural advantage of hindsight. But even this distortion is not absolute, because the fictional historian's perspective on the contemporary scene is actually the writer's recreation of the past as contemporary. For example, the nameless historian in The Jewel in the Crown visiting India in the sixties is primarily interested in analyzing the Bibighar episode that happened twenty years ago to gain an insight into the Freedom Movement. He interviews people of Mayapore who were
eye-witnesses of that period. Simultaneously he experiences indirectly the impact of the Indo-Chinese war in 1962 and both the historical periods assume impressions of varying degrees of contemporaniety. Guy Perron, a fictional historian in Paul Scott's *A Division of the Spoils*, recounts the horror of a quarter million death in the Punjab as an eye-witness, thus creating immediately the impact of a real-life narrator's warning against the evils of the Partition. Raymond in *A New Dominion* tries to experience the Indian past as manifested in its architecture and the Indian present through the people.  

Michael Calvert in *A Situation in New Delhi* is an Indophile who interprets Indian history as it was shaped by a national leader.

These fictional historians are not treated as the pivotal points of the novels since they have to distance themselves from the field of action and comment upon it. Just as today's media bring a game of cricket or violent riots close to us through a supposedly neutral running commentary so in the same way these fictional historians seem to be the point of immobility around which the world of action whirls. Due to this assumption of a seeming
objectivity the author can avoid committing himself to any kind of position. For example, Guy Perron in *A Division of the Spoils* reacts to the political and communal turmoil around him during the '1945-'47 period with an illusory sense of detachment and an air of self-congratulation for his objective perspective. Although when Perron thinks intensely about the detrimental effect of colonialism on the human psyche he underlines Scott's feelings about the same. In a way he is Scott's fictive persona reacting to history at a more direct level. Nayantara Sahgal's novel *A Situation in New Delhi* portrays a British (fictional) historian Michael Calvert who does not value distanced objectivity but feels that without total involvement in the subject-matter there can be no proper historical evaluation.

When history becomes the shared experience of two races, then both get involved in an act of constant intertwining and the pattern of the experience may not be symmetrical for both. These novelists' choice of Indo-British history and its influence on the subsequent course of events in India especially shows their common concern, if not a uniformity of perspectives. These British writers' historical novels, covering the lengthy encounter, evoke the
past imaginatively and evaluate it from the vantage point of the present.

The Indian writer, Nayantara Sahgal, tries to analyse the relevance of the immediate past as it affects the present.

It may be relevant here to refer to an African novel by Ngugi Wa Thiong'o *A Grain of Wheat* (1967) in which a district magistrate Thompson in Kenya is writing the history of colonial occupation of the country. He looks at Kenyan history as a phenomenon shaped exclusively by British presence and power. He feels that colonialism is the implementation of a great moral idea. He records for his proposed book the following observations:

In a flash, I was convinced that the growth of the British Empire was the development of a great moral idea... to be English was basically an attitude of mind: it was a way of looking at life, at human relationship, at the just ordering of human society.\(^3\)

A self-righteous bearer of the white man's burden, Thompson believes that the colonial masters are the great saviours delivering Africa from its primeval darkness. In a situation of double edged irony in which Thompson is abandoned by an adulterous white wife, is left to cope with a petty, scheming British community in Kenya, Ngugi reveals the fragility and pathos of Thompson's position.
While Ngugi's indictment of the colonial ideology as upheld by Thompson is clear, as a serious novelist he treats Thompson's faith in the empire with a certain sympathy. This is different from Chinua Achebe's treatment of the District Commissioner at the end of *Things Fall Apart* (1958) who relegates the entire tragic drama of Okonkwo to a dry academic paragraph in his proposed book on 'The Pacification of the Primitive Tribes of the Lower Niger'. The British administrator who took an academic interest in the history of the local people is a recurrent figure in colonial documents as well as a frequent fictional character in novels about this time.

One of the well-known instances in recent Indian fiction being the magistrate in *Tamas* (Hindi: 1974 Eng. Trans. 1980) who was so deeply immersed in the archaeology and architecture of the country that the loss of human lives in present day India could not be of any interest to him.

Fleury in J G Farrell's novel *The Siege of Krishnapur* (1972) and Laura Hewitt in *Zemindar* (1981) by Valerie Fitzgerald are sensitive enough to react sharply to the human tragedy triggered off by the colonial struggle for power.
In The Siege of Krishnapur Fleury, a young Victorian hero, arrives in India, ostensibly to write a book about the beneficial impact of Company rule on the progress of Indian civilization.

In his tentative research for material for his book, Fleury has to confront the pompous assertions of British civilians and military officers. They claim that the props of a civilization are its revenues and scientific progress, deliberately overlooking the aspects of culture and art. Fleury is further enlightened by them that the natives psychology is best understood through power-wielding and not through a mass of notes and information.

Strongly inclined to spending his time on music and poetry, Fleury postpones his work on colonial rule in India. The author quite frequently undermines the seriousness of Fleury's professed occupation by revealing the comic element inherent in his situation. His personality undergoes a change in Krishnapur when he experiences at close quarters the Indian reaction to Company's rule, and he gradually sheds his abstract notions and theories.

Fleury's proposed book becomes the fictional device through which the author more than a century later probes the complacency of Anglo-Indian society before the Mutiny. During the siege Fleury argues with the Collector and the Magistrate about the danger of their smug assumption about Britain's superiority.
Fleury's outburst that civilization is decadence since it thrives on destroying man's noble instincts may be naive idealism. But the Collector's faith in progress, stemming from the Victorian concept of Scientific advancement, seems to suffer from the same lack of vision as Fleury's. As survival becomes the primary concern for the besieged, both the Collector and Fleury learn to place their ideas and possessions in the proper psychological perspective.

Like Adela Quested in A Passage to India, Laura Hewitt in Zemindar (1981), also wants to see the real India, the Indian India which proves to be elusive while she is in the company of her British compatriots.

Although she is no historian she maintains a journal about her impressions of India and her daily life. As she dabbles in Indian history, art and literature, she admits that such efforts will not bring her any nearer to the Indian reality. It is only during the Mutiny, trapped inside the Lucknow Residency, that she undergoes a profound change, growing wise about life.

She finds out that the only way to enter into the spirit of India is to withstand it. Undoubtedly this decision of hers has been influenced by Oliver Erskine, descended from British adventurers. As the Zemindar of an estate near Oudh, he sees India as his own home. Hassanganj, his estate, could be seen as a signifier of pre-1857 British India and Oliver as the benevolent colonial Englishman who brings prosperity to a submissive people.
His half-brother Charles's desire to inherit it appears as the latter day colonial's dream of possessing the oriental paradise. That is probably the reason why the vision of Charles and Oliver of India as an eternal elysium is not marred by the Mutiny. They see this event merely as a temporary phenomenon.

Although Oliver sees the Mutiny as an outcome of the harshness, and inefficacy of alien rule he refuses to make any significant concession to the Indian side. His final argument is that since the British have invested themselves in India, (both in the psychological and economic sense) they have a right to rule over India. That this right can only be built on the oppression meted out to Indians does not cross Oliver's mind. Could Oliver's assertion imply that the sepoys are actually wrong in trying to overthrow the British? His faith in the colonial system produces the moral platitude that the tumultuous outcome of the Mutiny will right itself in time.

The novels to be discussed in the following sections do not deal with these administrator historians or with individuals endowed with historical perceptions but with professional historians or academic scholars who have come from England to study India.
SECTION 2: THE FICTIONAL HISTORIAN AS MIRROR

The fictional historians in these novels are British, mostly of upper class and educated in the liberal tradition. In this section I will look at the semiotic value of the fictional historian how he comes to bear a dual significance as a character involved with other characters and as an academic commentator. I will see whether his approach (since he is not a centrestage political figure or a representation of a historical character) together or slices up historical events in such a way that their resemblance to acutality is altered. Probably he is the author's wishful agency for exploring the areas of history's non-actualised possibilities. These characters as scholars claim to have a certain academic responsibility of formally recording and interpreting their analysis. Away from the classroom these scholars also have to reckon with the impact of reality around them. In the process their claims of impartiality could turn out to be illusory.

In her short story entitled "The Biography" in the collection A Stronger Climate (1968) Ruth P. Jhabvala introduces Jonathan Jones, a research scholar in history, who is planning to write the biography of a great, deceased
Indian leader. Jonathan Jones' approach to Indians is through stereotypes. He prefers to adopt the view that the westernised Indian is a pathetic and disoriented figure rather than take into consideration the specific aspects of crosspollination in each case.

Jhabvala presents a paradoxical situation about this Indian leader who was very popular but his highly westernized state policies become responsible for obscuring him in public memory. Jones' efforts at comprehending this paradox, so as to formulate his theory, bring up some bizarre notions about Indian culture and personality. His assumptions reveal his lack of proper exposure to and assimilation of both Indian culture and the leader's personality. He feels that Indian leaders should not be judged by 'usual standards' - but we are not told what these are. Jones claims that Indian leaders should be judged by their background and their past. They should be from peasant origins and involve themselves in class struggles.

In the first phase of the short story we have a paradox and in later one an oversimplification of a statesman's personality, background and contribution to his nation's development. The historian's confusion is reflected in his
attempt at portraying the ideal Indian political leader. Jones does not explain why the deceased leader's western sophistication is treated as superficial and even a negative influence on the Indian masses. Jones forgets that India's political system — (an elected parliament, democracy, suffrage rights) — is a legacy of the British. If the choice of prime ministers is any indication then one may state that the Indian masses have voted into power mostly those who are from the westernized elite section of Indian society. Whether they have been successful in steering the country on the path of progress and development is an entirely different matter.

In the context of his overhasty judgments Jhabvala illustrates Jonathan's failure to estimate the leader's contribution to society. Jones' encounter with the leader's niece, who is westernized and alienated, consequently perceived as arrogant, does not help him to choose a proper perspective for the biography. As a contrast to these westernized Indians a rustic politician from a peasant background, unadulterated by the west, strikes Jones as the ideal alternative. The mutual animosity between the niece and the peasant leader suggests a wide gulf between the two
sections of Indian society that they represent. Probably Jones is romanticizing the Indian situation by seeing it through binary opposites.

Haunted by so many impressions and influences Jonathan decides to give up writing the biography, not because it is a formidable task but because as a historian he cannot make choices and distinctions. His admission of failure reflects Jhabvala's own ambivalence about the cross-cultural influences in Indian society. On the one hand it is possible to be positive about the intermingling of different heritages and on the other hand it is possible to be sceptical about the resultant hybridity.

Jhabvala's disapprobation about the Indian politician who by imbibing western influence gets alienated from the general masses, reflects Kipling's influence on her. The educated and westernized Indian no longer holds the white man's culture in awe, he demystifies it. In some cases where the educated Indian is overpowered by western culture he fails to appreciate his own legacy. For both these reasons the westernised Indian was distrusted by Kipling and ridiculed in his art. Jhabvala here reiterates the same attitudes.
The history scholar in *The Jewel in the Crown* proposes to research into the fading influence of the British empire in India by focussing on the Quit India Movement. A study of the Bibighar episode, he feels, would also contribute to his understanding of the period. Along with this study he also observes a group of white technical experts and their families in the Mayapore club, pondering on the racial distance between them and the Indian members.

The history scholar is nameless, voiceless, almost without a human identity. Nor does he ask questions or offer his own reflections. Through him Scott employs a narrative mode of drawing forth other people's, especially the elderly Indians', reminiscences about the Bibighar episode. Through this seminal event Scott wishes to probe into the peculiar love-have relationship that dominated the psyche of both the races during the 1942 Quit India Movement. At the metaphorical level the love between a brown man and white woman get asphyxiated not just by the hooligan rapists but by the white community which contributes to the violation of Daphne's moral sanctity.

Scott tries to actualise through the imaginary event of Bibighar the impact of violence not only on the collective
consciousness but also on the individual. It is as though he opens a certain bracket in this chapter of Indian history to include an unrealised possibility. This Bibighar episode is not just an unsolved conflict between race and individuals but between author and history. (There may not be many recorded incidents of a white woman's rape by Indians during British rule but this does not rule out the possibility of such occurrences).

To collect more information about the Bibighar episode and the broader historical pattern of the Quit India agitation the fictional historian goes through Daphne's personal diary, unpublished memoirs of the British military officer and interviews a British ex-civilian in 1962. Against the civil and military facts and figures Daphne's intimate confessions appear as counterfactual evidence which do not 'falsify' the actual history of Mayapore in 1942 but attempt to extend those lines in the historical records which were not followed up. Quite understandably most white people in Mayapore could not fathom her motive in refraining from a judicial case to settle her public outrage.
The diaries of the civilian and military officers have a vast amount of details about the events of plunder and arson that took place in August 1942. Simultaneously with the episode of Bibighar Scott dexterously illustrates how one-sided and limited these points of view are about the trauma Daphne underwent. As a result of three different available versions of the Bibighar episode—one predominantly concentrating on the law and order situation, one focusing on the political virulence and the third delving into Daphne's inner psychological turmoil—the history scholar acquires access to alternative interpretations. Lady Chatterjee arranges the different strands and helps him to see the preponderant human element in that event. Paul Scott conveys to the scholar a sense of the weight of time, the impact of memories that churn out more impressions lending sadness rather than clarity to this peculiar confrontation. Hence we are faced with one of the most important issues for a historian. What becomes material for history? By shifting events and circumstances he should pick out only that which seems to be significant not only in itself but in relationship to other events. The historian's clear interest in the defiance demonstrated by Daphne against an inimical world shows his ideological slant towards the human
element amid socio-political chaos. As the researcher listens to the account of the upheavals of 1942 in the Macgregor House, Lady Chatterjee reminds him of conserving electricity as part of the wartime economy drive. We are immediately brought back to the present time of the novel-sino-Indian war in 1962. The references to the second World War and this War link up the different time periods. In this context Scott introduces a subtle ironic twist. He seems to imply that the Indians who refuse to yield to foreign aggression from China, seem not to mind the infiltration of British technical experts and have no qualms about retaining the remnants of the Raj in Mayapore—the club, the British Electrical factory run solely and still by British capital, the Engineering College, etc. At one level Indians can tackle the Chinese but at another cannot wipe out the dominance of British institutions. Even the technological know-how imported from Britain may be seen as another kind of encroachment. The entry of the British in India after '47 as technical experts spells the era of another kind of dependence.

While seeing the present Mayapore the researcher visualizes an aminated connection between the tangible now
and the glorious then. He wonders whether this sense of the
interminable past and the present is conveyed only to an Englishman like him . . . .

...as a result of his residual awareness of a racial privilege now officially extinct, so that,... bereft of responsibility and therefore of any sense of dignity other than that which he may be able to muster in himself, as himself, he may feel himself similarly suspended, caught up by his own people's history and the thrust of a current that simply would not wait for them wholly to comprehend its force...

Scott reveals a paradoxical situation where the historian feels he is in the grip of history. The subtle nuances accompanying the character's response to history shows his natural awareness, his assumption of limited responsibility. While judging British involvement in India he admits that the upsurge of history does not explain itself to those caught in it. Scott indicates the complexity of the historian's position who has to analyse and interpret events of which he is himself a part and over which he has no authoritative grip.

At the club, the research scholar assesses the attitude of the British technical expert who dislikes dark people, secretly coveting the kind of privilege the coloniser enjoyed. Scott captures this sentiment in the following words:
In his heart he also shares with that old ruling class of English he affects to despise a desire to be looked up to abroad, and shares with them also the sense of deprivation because he has not been able to inherit the empire he always saw as a purely ruling class institution.

Scott subtly insinuates that the history scholar is less racially prejudiced than the technical expert. Since the scholar's humanistic attitude has to be established by the author so this comparison is used to serve the purpose.

As the researcher's plane flies over Mayapore he can distinguish by the lights of MacGregor House the position of the Bibighar ruin. Symbolically he seems to grasp the essence of the upheavals only after distancing himself from the actual site. Bibighar emerges as a repository of historical significance only when he moves away. His final impressions of Parvati and Lady Chatterjee indicate that he has associated them with the history of Bibighar.

An idea of Parvati as a girl admirably suited to her surroundings where there is always the promise of a story continuing instead of finishing, and of Lady Chatterjee as the repository of a tradition established for the sake of the future rather than of the past.

We see the researcher continuing the story further as his purpose is to record the intricacies and also the outcome of Bibighar event. The girl, Parvati is used as
a motif that detracts from the Bibighar much of its gruesome impact on the reader. Towards the end, the novel seems to integrate into itself the tradition of folklore, a tale can be expanded at will keeping its inner structure intact.

In *A Division of the Spoils* Scott focuses on the turbulence during the years before Independence. Guy Perron, a fictional historian in this novel, arrives in India in 1945 to study the disssolution of the empire from an academic perspective. Scott judges Perron's validity as scholar by setting him amid many personalities and opinions. Mohammed Ali Kasim, a prominent Congress leader, has the capacity to create history but like Perron decides to observe and comment on it. His withdrawal from the Congress and dissatisfaction with the Muslim League suggest explicitly that on the eve of independence India is left with no political alternatives. The Congress and the Muslim League are projected by the author as opportunist parties, trying to make whatever capital they can.

Purvis, a British economist in India working as diplomat is disillusioned with Britain's role as an arbiter of India's political fate and disgusted with India for suffering British tyranny. Negotiating with the government
of India for the transfer of power under the false designation of an economist, Purvis is tormented about his hypocrisy. Probably this is the reason, why his comments on Perron's professed aim of objectivity are so scathing. Purvis insists that it is the hidden political double-dealing behind the scenes that create history and not the surface public events. Purvis' suicide becomes a signifier of his personal bitterness, his mental neurosis. Scott emphasizes that a historian, although due to circumstantial problems has to function with a limited knowledge of facts, yet it is his ideology that finally gives a coherence to his data.

Purvis, despite his knowledge about diplomatic negotiations, could not analyse in depth their impact on the general political movement in India. His rash comments showed the acrimony of a man who could neither accept a new world order, i.e., a decolonised society nor reject his fraudulent mission. Guy, less self-critical, perceives the dream of India's independence as an imminent reality. Scott seems to argue that it is the historian's foresight, and not the diplomat's first-hand knowledge of intrigue, that can analyse the new chapter in history.
For Merrick this new chapter in history becomes a nightmare since his social, moral and psychological identity is bound up with the empire. Merrick's death-wish fits as an indicator of his refusal to identify himself with an England whose imperial aggression has exhausted itself. Through Merrick Scott portrays his uneasy feeling about colonial violence, stereotyping the stock psychological attributes of an aggressor: sadomasochism and homosexuality. In the colonial context the British self-image was aggressively masculine and the Orient was invested with femininity, supposedly a sign of weakness. The psychological rejection of femininity in all its attributes tended towards a sterile assertion of maleness. Merrick's homosexuality to that extent is almost metaphoric in its cultural connotation. There is also the corollary fear of being exposed after an intimate surrender before the opposite sex, of entering into a power equation. Sarah Layton refers to him as the dark, arcane side of British character. Probably her statement implies that the other white characters in the novel basically display some fair or at least normal acceptable human traits. There may be a duality in Paul Scott's attempt to concentrate all the negative forces of the colonizing enterprise into one character, thus exempting the others.
from guilt. Scott seems to be looking at the last phase of
the empire as dominated by two principal traits of British
character: the disciplined officer discharging his duty and
the aggressor embodying a single-minded lust for power.
Scott presents a third aspect of what he considers to be
British character also, the critical, analytical observer
whose profession and passion combine in history. Thus,
Perron as history scholar is set up as a counterfoil to
Merrick's aggression and brutality. Perron ideologically
opposes all human oppression and embodying the liberal
humanistic spirit in the British ethos, condemns colonialism
as unethical.

Perron realizes that the actual experience of being in
India as a non-commissioned sergent with his historian's
faculties intact, has its own hazards. In India he feels
that it is difficult to distinguish between the past and the
present for time is a continuous, unchequered flow. Perron
finds it rather strenuous to relate his knowledge of history
to the actual situation around him. Scott's narrative
strategy is to present great historical figures like Gandhi,
Nehru or Mountbatten on the periphery of the action in the
novel. Due to this, Scott need not interpret large scale
public events in which these great figures were involved. Scott seems also to endorse Perron's interest in the obscure, insignificant individuals involved in the freedom movement rather than those who are giants of history.

Scott avoids an idealization of Perron's character. Perron is seen as an upper-class radical who suffers from political illusions and yet uses his family connections liberally to suit his purpose. Perron does not acknowledge the non-academic factors that deter him from being a committed historian. Obsessed by a fear of involvement, Perron limits himself to his academic theories which protect him from the rebuffs of reality. Paradoxically he is sensitive to the human element in life and his response to trifles indicates a determination to relate these to larger issues of history. Through him Scott takes up simultaneously the complicated issue of what history considers relevant and on the other hand the ordinary people's attitude towards the involvement of history. Therefore as independence draws near, Perron is shocked at the manner in which England can at one stroke forego her moral responsibility towards India, wipe out all impressions of India from her racial memory and transfer power without any psychological strain. He makes the following observation in his diary:
Getting rid of India will cause us at home no qualm of conscience because it will be like getting rid of what is no longer reflected in our mirror~ourselves. The sad thing is that whereas in the English mirror there is now no Indian reflection... in the Indian mirror the English reflection may be hard to get rid of because in the Indian mind English possession has not been an idea but a reality; often a harsh one.

Perron's analysis of British nonchalance towards India shows his growing sympathy with a nation trying to be born. Philip Mason comments on the same historical situation absolving England of its responsibility in this transfer of power. He tries to prove that colonising India was not England's conscious choice but rather an outcome of a historical process; hence relinquishing India becomes for her an act of grace. Mason legitimizes England's policy towards India.

The times had changed and in the twentieth century something more was needed than a rule that was just, impartial, benevolent and considerate. India was passing through three revolutions at the same time, social, industrial and political. And in revolutions there is no room for impartial leaders. India now needed a leader of her own people, a partisan with strong, indeed violent views on such questions as child-marriage, industrial slums and manhood suffrage.

Unlike Mason, Paul Scott interrogates the British position and even that of Guy Perron, who, unable to bear the pressures of historical reality around him escapes to
England for a brief Sojourn. Perron justifies his withdrawal by asserting that a prolonged association with the British in India will deprive him of his objectivity. Scott's distrust of a historian who has to escape in order to retain his perspective comes through. Before Perron leaves India he

re-lives the trauma of the Bibighar as he imagines shadows emerging from the Mogul Room of the Summer Residence where he was staying at Pankot.

Scott's structural device of introducing a circular pattern in the novels of The Raj Quartet is in full evidence here. Perron's vivid recreation of the trauma which Daphne underwent (when the hooligan rapists emerged from the shadows) nullifies his constant claim of historical objectivity because he gets fully involved in the Bibighar episode at this point. His sensitivity to this event draws a full circle not only around Kumar and Daphne and himself but also around all those involved in that drama of passion and power.

In Staying On Paul Scott traces a link between the history scholar, Mr. Turner and Guy Perron. Turner is a student of Perron, who is now a Professor of history in England. Thus there are two generations of historians
connecting the colonial and the post-colonial era. Although Turner is to study the colonial period, yet he can do so from the vantage point of modern India. Sarah, now Perron's wife, writes to Lucy Smalley about Turner's particular hobby.

He's a very good amateur photographer incidentally and especially interested in old British gravestones which sounds awfully morbid to me, but I told him there are some family gravestones. Pankot.

The reference to epitaphs and gravestones reinforces Lucy's growing sense of alienation. Scott introduces motifs of stagnation and decline to emphasise the impending death of Col. Smalley: the weeds in their garden, antiquated household, old films and records and the physical decrepitude of the inhabitants.

Turner reaches Pankot supposedly after Col. Smalley's death. Throughout the novel this fictional historian remains absent, but the news of his approaching visit to Pankot inspires Lucy Smalley to hold imaginary conversation with him and view her own life in terms of history. Thus a character becomes the catalyst for the movement of the narrative.
This technique of prompting a character to hold a monologue as though in response to a listener's queries enables the central strands of the novel to cohere together. Loneliness, bouts of insanity, social alienation, economic pressures, arrogance of upper-class Indians, vivid imagination, outbursts of humour—these combine to form sad and sometimes amusing pictures in Lucy's mind.

Mr. Turner is one sort of professional she has never met before. In her past, the research scholar was never a familiar figure yet Lucy now fits him into a known, tangible category—the patient listener.

Her recollections of her past, her life in wartime England and in colonial India would now fall in the category of memoirs and become raw material for history. Memoirs in their own right could be a very important and helpful source for constructing the ambience of the past as K.K. Dyson has shown in her book *A Various Universe* (1978). In her book we come across valuable socio-cultural and historical informations gleaned from the memoirs of 18th and 19th-century British men and women in India. Recent experiments in recording oral history has shown that the private
experiences and memories of ordinary people give us an insight into the quality of life led at a particular time that objective accounts of the world of power, politics and legislation cannot do. Lucy's reminiscences illuminate an uneasy and insecure life led by the petty British official in India which never gets projected in any official account. But here the focus is not on the public domain, but on the predicament of the private individual and her sense of alienation and loss.

Lucy's perceptions about the colonial past would not have allowed Turner to draw neat conclusions or categories about the British in India. For each British person the experience of being in India was different. The colonial system was like a machine that expected mindless obedience from every member. The empire had thrived on exploiting Indians but its survival was also dependent on a parallel regimentation among its own people.

This psychological repression distorts Lucy's independent views about India. She could have built up human relationship with Indians but was deterred by the collective racial arrogance of the British community whose fringes she inhabited. Lucy never quite recovered from the Anglo-Indian
society's superciliousness towards its lower ranks. This sense of deprivation produced by a hierarchical system permeated her domestic life. In her imaginary conversation with Turner Lucy argues that in colonial India socializing between the British and the Indians would have destroyed the mystique of the raj. Its insularity protected itself from the curiosity and strange, disconcerting influences of the Indians. By reconstructing her past Lucy thinks of letting the historian glimpse its internal fissures beyond the smooth surface of Anglo-Indian life.

Despite Lucy's oppression by the power structures of the raj she was totally identified with the image of the ruling community. This paradox is extended further when she assumes categorically that Mr. Turner will understand and support her view and like her draw neat conclusions or categories about the validity of the racial divide. Probably Lucy does not understand that there is a great difference between the world-view of a surviving member of the raj and a young British research scholar in the post-colonial era. This difference is deliberately played upon by the author to emphasise strongly that Mr. Turner would analyse the annals of the raj from a different angle. His academic training untainted by the colonial experience and
his upbringing in a totally different atmosphere would make him a person very unlike the one Lucy has fondly created in her mind.

The fancies created by her mind are not related to her present shabby world of Pankot; they enhance and brighten up the events of her past life. The Smalleys judgingly admit that although the system had suffocated them, it had nevertheless granted them the props of power and privilege. Now bereft of such trappings and neglected by history, Lucy complains about her plebeian status. Therefore she rehearses a series of imaginary conversations with Mr. Turner in which she would be able to represent her plight without any interference from her husband. While formulating her thoughts she reveals a deep-rooted desire to be brought to the limelight, to be visible in the pages of a book written by a British historian.

Lucy's satirical references to themselves as museum pieces indicate the sadness with which the last members of the raj regarded themselves in post-colonial India. Their retirement in the hill-station Pankot reflects their wish to recreate the earlier phases of their lives in a cold country. Ignoring India and the long years of close
association with Indians, she shuts her eyes to recall images of England: "If you close your eyes, Mr. Turner, there is no telling where you are". 11

Like other fictional historians and researchers mentioned in this chapter, Raymond, in A New Dominion by Ruth P. Jhabvala, looks at post-colonial India as a vast panorama of great historical significance. His curiosity and analytic temper lead him to record his impressions in his letters to his mother or in his journal. He was born in India in a family that had on both sides people who served the country. His sense of history is reinforced by the family's recollections and reconstruction of their past in India. But Raymond begins his own journey of discovering India. Through his eyes Jhabvala presents India in its social, cultural, religious contexts. Jhabvala uses this figure of the fictional historian as a literary device to link together the various aspects of the sketches of modern India and her people.

Raymond is a character of many dimensions. In the novel, Lee, a British character, accuses him of being a tourist in India with a globe-trotter's shallow approach to life. Miss Charlotte, an aged missionary trying to revoice
the extradition orders issued by the Government of India to her missionary organisation, finds in him an enthusiastic fighter. Gopi finds in him a devoted friend who covertly desires an amorous, almost homosexual relationship. Margaret, another British character, brands him as the analytical westerner who does not approach India with his heart. Thus the figure of the curious chronicler in India is seen from different points of view. Raymond is all these yet these are only fragments of his real identity. And he discovers to his great sorrow that nobody really wants to know him. He witnesses the confusion and the passion of people around him. Lee accuses him of being 'controlled', an index of Raymond's key personality, which allows him to glean impressions and form them into a coherent whole. When this self-control reveals a fissure, Raymond expresses his passion for Gopi, who is nonchalant about a mature relationship. Asha, enamoured of Gopi, draws an analogy between Raymond and her brother's British tutor Peter, also a homosexual, who stayed on in India for the sake of his lover. Several references to this incident of the past seem strangely to link Raymond further with India. He is not only recording contemporary history but is also a part of this vast panorama called India both in the past and in the
present. He writes to his mother about his complex experience of being in India.

"...but this is not a place that one can pick up and put down again as if nothing had happened. In a way it's not so much a country an experience, and whether it turns out to be a good or a bad one depends I suppose on oneself... I am working on this study of shrines... A slim volume of specialised interest."  

Thus Raymond is not only actively engaged in digging up, as it were, a part of India's past but also letting India bury a part of herself deep in him. When Gopi and Raymond go to visit a mosque Gopi is unable to share his friend's enthusiasm for it. Raymond finds it quite accidentally, unaided by guide books, so the scholar in him gets absorbed in this unexpected discovery.

These quick details enliven Raymond's deep involvement with India, belying the assumption of the other characters that Raymond represents the superficial western responses to contemporary India. Jhabvala indicates rather painstakingly that there can be no one prescribed response to India. To prove her point further she portrays Raymond's commitment to Indian music.

...(Raymond) had grown very fond of India music. It had become for him like a distillation of everything he loved in Gopi and everything he loved in India. These two were now inextricable.
Raymond during his philanthropic work with Miss Charlotte, an elderly British missionary, meets some old British people in the mission home who are slowly turning into a part of Indo-British history. They resist India fatuously but fail to evoke any sense of responsibility in their parent organization in England. Once the mission is closed down, they will be destitutes; an ironic situation for those who were once members of the ruling class. Their perfect disregard towards the future cannot help stirring Raymond's sympathy. One tottering old lady shows him her father's trophy awarded for his bravery in Lucknow in 1857, thus associating herself vicariously with a glorious past.

Raymond exhorts Rao Sahib to revoke the extradition orders issued by the Indian Government to Miss Charlotte's mission house. Rao Sahib wriggles out of the situation because deep down he considers the presence of foreigners in India as an anachronism. In this instance Jhabvala's irony is directed at Rao Sahib, carefully sparing Miss Charlotte who like Col. Smalley in Staying On had invested herself in India but got no dividends out of it. This in itself is a pathetic situation and would not bear further ironic treatment.
The motif of gravestones that Scott had used in *Staying On* appears in this novel also. Jhabvala suggest the drop of the curtain on Miss Charlotte's life when she takes Raymond to the old British cemetery. She points out some interesting graves - most of which date from the nineteenth century but a few are more recent. Some belong to people whom she had known when she had first come out to India. One can visualise a similar situation in the graveyard of Pankot where Lucy could be showing to David Turner not only old graves in the British cemetery but also a recent one, her husband's.

Somehow this morbid tone in *A New Dominion* creeps into Raymond's association with others, especially Gopi. He will have to bury his relationship with Gopi because this young Indian does not seem to have a profound sense of human relationships. The motif of the cemetery recurs again in the novel when Raymond goes to Maupur (Rao Sahib's native constituency). He writes to his mother about Maupur during the colonial period. Trying to capture its old ambience he describes the few British families which eked out lonely, miserable lives, cut off from the rest of the population. While visiting the graveyard he finds that half of these
belong to children. The final ironic twist to Raymond's observation of an obscure area of history comes when Margaret, a British spiritual seeker, is buried in Maupur. Margaret's miserable death, reflects to some extent the melancholy and disoriented life of the old British families in Maupur.

Once Raymond returns to Delhi and its elite circle he has another experience as disconcerting as the one in Maupur. In a group of diplomats Raymond can easily detect their tone of smugness when they talk about the special relations between Britain and India since they shared two hundred years of history. An Indian bureaucrat brutally subverts this rhetoric by saying: "You fostered yourself on us and it took all we had to throw you out again. If that's what you mean by special relationship".14

Raymond honestly searches for a perspective to view the present but finds none and is surprised to see the Indian and the British guests in the party jointly condemning American English out of a complacent sense of superior civilization.

As against these people at the party there are the old British people at the mission:
Some of these old people have such stories to tell of the past, they really are an embodiment of history and I wish one could get it all down just as they tell it...

Raymond cannot make such diverse experiences of his cohere in an account of modern India. He sees the old British people as a parenthesis of history which will become redundant as soon as he leaves the country. The British diplomats are insulated from India. Finally Raymond the researcher decides not to make use of such confusing material since this does not fall into his area of specialization - i.e., shrines of all religions.

SECTION 3: THE INDIAN PERSPECTIVE

The final section of this chapter deals with a novel written by an Indian and not by an English novelist, in which too figures a British historian looking at modern India with the intention of writing a book on an important political figure. Michael Calvert, although he has written biographies so far and not books on historical movements, yet the task and the methodology of the historian hardly differ from that of the biographer. In Nayantara Sahgal's A
Situation in New Delhi Michael Calvert claims that a historian can be passionately involved in his subject-matter and yet render justice by recording and analysing the details precisely. Calvert is an unmistakable Indophile. His marked inclination towards India led him to write a biography of Lord Canning. The author suggests that emotional ties with the subject may not necessarily be an advantage as Calvert thinks. As the novel unfolds we see that his conviction about his deep involvement with the Indian reality gets repudiated. The events and their outcome elude his academic perspective making him seriously concerned about the degeneration setting in in India. His friends and close associates in India plunge into the socio-political turbulence with the hope of regenerating new life for India while Calvert skeptically takes shelter in his academic theories. Calvert's illusion of involvement can be seen in contrast with Perron's illusion of objectivity. This raises an important issue: Is the fictional historian then, being at the periphery of events unaware of his limitations? Armed with theories and a perspective he has developed through years of study Calvert seems to slice out only portions of significance that the historical events present.
Calvert's instant, unrestrained eulogies reduce India's just deceased leader, Shivraj (to whom Michael is profoundly attached and indebted) to a mythical figure emerging as the reincarnation of a mighty god from the Indian pantheon. The justification that follows such a perception of mythical proportions actually render Shivraj into a cardboard figure.

In *A Situation in New Delhi* we have a triangle formed by the historian, the figure of Shivraj and the author. The obvious historical parallel to Shivraj is Nehru. The other characters in the novel like Devi, Shivraj's sister, Usman his friend and Rishad his nephew have a sharp historical consciousness. Michael's role consists in drawing out their fears, hopes and illusions and give it an academic shape. Michael's task thus becomes a complex one - to depict in his biography not just the greatness of such a leader but how to interpret the new turmoil brewing in the country. Michael argues that had Shivraj been present he could have offered the appropriate answer to the present turbulence. He does not realize that when one leader becomes the solitary answer, the unique support for a tottering nation, its people lose their self-confidence. The self-complacency that sets in the people's consciousness slowly alienates them from the solution of their own problems.
We are not offered a counterpoint to Calvert's perception. Like him, the author chooses to be monotonously nostalgic and euphoric about Shivraj, reiterating his superiority to the new generation of politicians. By adopting the biographical form of the novel (the focus is mostly on Nehru though under a fictitious name) Nayantara Sahgal could not show the masses' participation in nation-building during Nehru's time and the support rendered by his political contemporaries. Her flaw as an author lies in making Calvert echo her opinions on Shivraj and not offer a different perspective. Lukacs' views on the shortcomings of the biographical form of the novel become relevant for A Situation in New Delhi.

We may generalize this weakness of the biographical form of the novel by saying that the personal, the purely psychological and biographical acquire a disproportionate breadth, a false preponderance. As a result the great driving forces of history are neglected. They are presented in all too summary a fashion and related only biographically to the person at the centre. And because of this false distribution of weights what should be the real centre of these novels - the given historical transformation - cannot make itself felt sufficiently strong.16

Nayantara Sahgal could have explored the inner logic of the social transformation taking place as experienced by the fictional historian. Somehow as the narrative unfolds
itself the element of biography acquires predominant value. The reader agrees with Lukács when this structural flaw of the novel is not compensated by any other qualities. Or may be Sahgal did not wish to write a comprehensive history of contemporary India.

SECTION 4: CONCLUSION

An ironic distance deliberately maintained between the author and the fictional historian adds to the credibility of historical interpretations in the novel. The thrust of the narrative is to see the fictional historian as a character among the other characters, distinguished from the rest only by a heightened historical consciousness.

The distinction between the author's and the fictional historian's viewpoints is not presented in the text in terms of greater or less authenticity but in terms of the 'deep' structures created in the discourse and the characters who become the signifiers.

In The Jewel in the Crown the nature of reality is rendered problematic by presenting the perspective of
different characters on the same sequence of events. Although the period is brilliantly evoked and the Indian characters are convincingly portrayed, yet one has the feeling of being at a distance from the actual happening. The reader is twice removed from the events. What happened in Bibighar is narrated to the historian, through whom the images of Daphne and Hari Kumar become vivid for us. The impact of the narrative is often forceful because the tale is re-created minutely through several stages of its progression, like Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1902). The contemporary Mayapore that the researcher visits is visualised by him mostly in connection with its past, hence Bibighar seems to remain alive even after the lapse of a few decades.

Guy Perron's illusory notion of objectivity is constantly rebutted by Scott's illustrations of his shortcomings as commentator. As character, Perron is forever trying to accumulate information and impressions that might help his understanding of Indian history later on. This technique allows Scott to focus on many details which do not actually carry the narrative forward, but in themselves offer the reader an amazing wealth of informations about a bygone era.
In *Staying On* through Lucy's continuous flow of statements and reminiscences we see the deliberate loopholes in the narrative that Mr. David Turner may not be able to recognize. Lucy's authoritative and sometimes sentimental comments on the British empire might not impress the fictional historian although the pathos of her present situation might evoke his sympathy.

*A New Dominion* projects Raymond as a scholar who is forever trying to discover the inner dynamism of the Indian reality but at the end succumbs to his sense of exhaustion and leaves India. Jhabvala paints his limitations as a character dexterously and shows how these affect his commitment to his academic research on shrines of all religions.

Michael Calvert in *A Situation in New Delhi* fails to keep his sense of history intact as he has to confront reality. The India he projects in his book and the India that he encounters in New Delhi are so different that he cannot fit both in his historical perspective. Upon closer scrutiny he can be identified as the author's mouthpiece for presenting her ideas.
The complexity of attitudes and images that are evoked by the mutually reflective presence of the author and the historian in the novel imposes upon the reader a sense of history unfolding before them. He hears their two voices creating a multi-dimensional drama of events.