CHAPTER II

PASSAGES TO INDIA AFTER A PASSAGE TO INDIA

SECTION 1: GENDER RELATION AND POWER STRUCTURE

Forster's novel A Passage to India is generally considered by the critics of Anglo-Indian literature, as a clear break from and defiance against the Kiplingesque tradition. Although chronologically this novel falls quite clearly outside the period I propose to study, yet it seems to be important as a paradigm for subsequent Anglo-Indian fiction. Its theme encapsulates both metaphorically and realistically, several different aspects of the colonial power structure, highlighting the aggressive authority of the white men which subjugated its own women in the process of politically debilitating the local population. Colonialism was essentially a male enterprise that valorized aggression, and physical prowess, and invested the colonised with attributes of femininity in order to vindicate its own position. Ashis Nandy analyses this psychological orientation of colonialism in his book The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self under Colonialism.
It (Colonialism) produced a cultural consensus in which political and socio-economic dominance symbolized the dominance of men and masculinity over women and femininity.

Relegating the natives and the white women both to inferior categories, the white man subjugated both. Thus Adela Quested's attempt to define for herself an individual relationship with India outside the prescribed male structure upsets the establishment. Her predicament brings into sharp focus the co-relation between gender and racial oppression.

Some subsequent Anglo-Indian novels, (all of them written and published well after 1947) dealing with British and Indian encounter in India indirectly invoke Forster's novel, more as a point of departure than as a model. Some such novels to be discussed in this chapter are The Jewel in the Crown (1966) and A Division of the Spoils (1975) by Paul Scott; Heat and Dust (1975) by Ruth P. Jhabvala; Hot Water Man (1982) by Deborah Moggach. An assault on a white woman, real or imaginary, or a socially unsanctioned union between a white woman and an Indian is repeatedly seen as a central situation, expressing a deep-seated fear in the white race. The sexual act is perceived as a gesture of subjugation, as
a trope of power of one race over another. Considering the fact that in actuality very few such cases are to be found in the recorded history of India, the repeated use of this plot device in fiction reveals a submerged anxiety of the colonizers. The novelists may not share this anxiety, but they use it nevertheless for fictional purposes.

The conscious or unconscious patterns of intertextuality as seen in these novels indicate the writers' ambivalent relationship to Forster. Forster did not share the hyper-masculine and aggressive values of the Civil Lines in Chandrapore, which he ridiculed through the Turtons and the Burtons - but he was also hesitant about creating the feminine characters with too much power. Adela wants to be herself, but she has to go back to England. Mrs. Moore understands India, but she has to die. The later writers can unhesitatingly put the woman at the centre and reverse the earlier gender hierarchy.

At the text's unconscious level one can detect a desire on the writers' part to slough off Forster's vision of India. Some recurring motifs like the white woman's non-conformism, the blind resistance of the ruling class to a new culture, the sympathy of a conscientious white male
towards Indians illustrate the pervasive influence of *A Passage to India*.

The basic metaphor of chaos permeating *A Passage to India* is replaced in these novels by a metonymy of concrete, tangible events and relationships. The intricacy and ambiguity of the Adela Quested - Dr. Aziz relationship is substituted by the simpler biological-emotional encounters, the violations of social and racial taboo through the physical union of white women and brown men. Yet strangely the ambience of the cave incident is retained, because the site for these encounters is rarely ever a domestic space. The recurring locale for these nearly symbolic, often cataclysmic unions is always situated outdoors - a cave, a shrine or ruined buildings. The other motifs of parting and then returning, of alternating phases of loneliness and intimacy which are quite dominant in *A Passage to India* do not find place in these novels. Aziz and Fielding reunite in the third section of the novel, but at a different level of understanding. Even Aziz and Adela arrive at a new interpretation of their previous animosity. In the other novels there are no revisions of relationships, or a re-appraisal of human values. The theme of death, tragedy or estrangement is primary in these novels. Yet unlike *A
Passage to India, these novels sometimes end with a situation in which people of different races transcend ethnic barriers clearly, if not permanently. These novels, written in the post-colonial period about post-colonial situations, then differ greatly from A Passage to India which notwithstanding its liberal reputation during the British rule, now seems to embody a strong colonial consciousness. In these recent novels, characters at normal times surmount racial hurdles but generally during a crisis take refuge in their racial identity. This decision is seen as an act determined by social or cultural pressure rather than an act of individual choice.

In these novels racial conflict acquires new dimensions as we see it complicated by a gender dimension. In order to explore the post-colonial encounter between Britain and India we have to take into account the passions and conflicts of individual British and Indians as they get imaginatively re-created in the private realm of literature outside the public domain of history. Repeatedly we see in these novels, larger cultural pulls, rather than individual volition, determine the distance between the two races. While history records racial intolerance, fictional
representation of the same reality reveals the complex psychological tension, the barely controlled panic of the ruling class. Illegitimate unions become the metaphor of their deep-rooted anxiety and simultaneously an indication of their craving for a new experience available only in an exotic culture. India is doubly viewed as a symbol of inscrutability and as a regenerating, and resuscitating power.

This situation of mutual suspicion and animosity between the British and the Indians had grown as the British consolidated their position as the ruling class in India. In the eighteenth century the British had intermingled liberally at every level with Indians without fearing any loss of identity. But from around nineteenth century official policy dictated that for impartial administration the white man needed to be aloof from the subject race. This attitude continued till the end of the empires creating a British self-image that projected seclusion and superiority. Philip Mason argues that during the colonial period social distance between the British in India and the Indians grew as the number of white people increased in India to form an exclusive, elitist society. He says:-
Indeed, it is my hypothesis that in all three cases—sex, race, class the change was due to nervousness about the hierarchical position and the danger of admitting that the upper group shared a common humanity with the subordinate.²

We see in fiction how under pressure to conform to norms of the white elite the new British recruits or professionals and their wives in India chafed under the official code that stifled spontaneous responses and normal human emotions. This initial phase of insubordination to the code of the white community was soon replaced by quiet submission. Those who continued to dissent risked not only official displeasure but even social ostracism.

SECTION 2: THE ENCOUNTER

After the British rule in India was over, the English men and women who lived on here, or those who visited the country for trade, commerce or other reasons were not necessarily bound by this official code of formality, but some of them were so conditioned by historical memory or attitudes of racial superiority that they perpetuated the same behaviour pattern. Despite the external changes wrought by time, the attitudes represented in fiction to some extent remain similar. Mrs. Moore and Adela resemble
Olivia and the unnamed narrator in *Heat and Dust* in their spontaneous curiosity about India. *Heat and Dust* has a double narrative frame separated by half a century. Although the present narrative of *Heat and Dust* is situated in 1975, the past narrative, i.e., Olivia's story, is set very close to the time that Forster depicts, and the two strands of past and present are made to alternate in the novel. The fifty-year gap becomes an important historical determinant. The two stories are presented through different narrative strategies - Olivia's mainly through her letters and the narrator's through a diary. The creation of different world-views that sometimes merge and sometimes separate emphasizes certain common factors. The two lives, separated by time and circumstances, are similarly challenged by an apparently unchanged India.

In *A Passage to India* and *Heat and Dust* the British community is identically portrayed. Heaslop, Adela's fiancé and Douglas, Olivia's husband are both competent administrators endowed with no specially endearing human trait, but only with a strict loyalty to their official duties and consciousness of status. India for them is a recalcitrant region, beneath their interest but within their
power that they have to govern. Both in Forster's Chandrapore and Jhabvala's Satipur in normal times the Club is a microcosm of the hierarchy of colonial power structure, a place for polite social rituals and vacuous exchange of conversation. Adela and Olivia are contrasted against these blank personalities in an attempt to bring out the essential friction between individualism and officialdom, between human spontaneity and imperial rule.

In a way both these novels deal in a way with stereotypes of British women, either the diehard conformists (Mrs. Callendar, Mrs. Turton, etc.) or the young rebels (Adela, Olivia). None of them show any historical awareness of the many British women who braved hardships in India and sought to understand it and serve it along with their husbands. Pat Barr mentions in her book *The Memsahibs: In Praise of the Women of Victorian India* (1976) many such intrepid women of courage, e.g., Honoria Lawrence who lived in camps, rode on camel backs as Sir Henry Lawrence forayed his way into the uncharted terrain of the Punjab. In her book *The Women of the Raj* (1988) Margaret Macmillan writes about a series of British women known for their fortitude, courage and contribution to the Indian cause. These real-life women, while outwardly conforming to the exigencies of
social life, carried on their pursuit of understanding India with relentless courage. But such women have rarely entered the world of Anglo-Indian fiction where the masculine ideology of the empire is reconfirmed through stereotypical female characters.

Feeling claustrophobic in the enclosed world of the club and dissatisfied with their emotional life, both Adela and Olivia seek channels of escape. These two women discover that the India they see from the shaded portico of the club is different from what they find when they step outside the Civil Lines as explorers. Although they seem to be involved with Indian men, but actually both the Nawab in *Heat and Dust* and Aziz in *A Passage to India* sense in these women a potential threat to their racial identity and gender complacency. Subconsciously reacting to these women as alien and subversive elements, they need to erect a wall of defence against them. At first Aziz identifies himself by turns with all the Mughal emperors - with Babur and Aurangzeb and others, thus building up his self-esteem by heroic associations. The metaphor of 'soaring' is skillfully used to indicate his inflated sense of ego during these moments of historical invocations. Suddenly after the
cave incident he finds himself plummeting down, reduced in
scale: he realises he is merely an oppressed subject. His
acquittal at the trial, which follows with an equal
suddenness, leaves him more critical of his own worth than
of Adela's integrity. The Nawab in *Heat and Dust*, despite
imminent bankruptcy and criminal dealings, seems very
confident of his own intrinsic worth. This shift from
illusion to reality at the metaphoric level results in the
case of the Nawab and Aziz in different ways. The Nawab
exercises greater control over Olivia who cannot escape his
clutches. Aziz distances himself from British India so as
to feel unthreatened in the Hindu Kingdom of Mau. Adela and
Olivia err in treating individuals as symbols, in
identifying Aziz and the Nawab with the vast and mysterious
reality called India. They also arouse in the men responses
whereby the women are essentialized; they become symbols of
their race - either to be treated with hostility, or to be
used as pawns in the power game. Ranks are closed against
Adela and Olivia because in British opinion they have
transgressed the social code of keeping Indians at a
distance. The Indians also turn hostile because these women
identified with their oppressors. Thus from both sides
they get isolated socially and emotionally. Adela's and
Olivia's creators question the condemnation heaped on these rebels and place them in changed circumstances for exposing their better intentions.

Just as Aziz comes to an understanding with Fielding and opens up his 'past' with Adela to judge her better, so the female narrator in *Heat and Dust* comes in touch with Harry to explore the 'past' of her great-aunt Olivia in order to comprehend the actual factors that shaped her fate.

Although Olivia is impetuous by nature and Adela more cerebral in her approach to life, yet both are endowed with sensitivity and a strong sense of individuality. Adela's exoneration of Aziz seems to stem more from her nervous exhaustion than from a logical conviction. Similarly Olivia's rabbit-like movements during her crisis illustrates Jhabvala's inability to sustain her character's bold spontaneity. Both the novelists seem more anxious to bring the novels to a satisfactory close than to sustain the credibility of the characters, because we see both Adela and Olivia are stripped of their judgement and spontaneity in the climactic moments of the novels.

However unsatisfactory the treatment of the climax may be, it is nevertheless, worth speculating why in both cases
the novelists chose women to be the vehicle of non-conformity. The men who came to India agreed to be part of the colonial machinery, hence did not choose to be free agents in this country. It is possible that many of these men voluntarily subscribed to a code of conduct that satisfied certain urges deeply embedded in their mind. Analysing the psychological implications of colonialism Mannoni excavates certain buried complexes that attracted a "predestined colonial" to such a life.

... a person free from complexes - if such a person can be imagined - would not undergo change as a result of experience of the colonies. He would not in the first place feel the urge to go to the colonies, but even should he find himself there by chance, he would not taste those emotional satisfactions which, whether consciously or unconsciously, so powerfully attract the predestined colonial. 3

Most of the white men came to serve in the colonies because the situation here satisfied a craving for power in their nature. Their wives or fiancées did not necessarily share the same desire, hence became potentially more interesting characters for the fiction writer. Not bound by the grid of officialdom, they sometimes saw the Indians whole, as a people with their own culture and myths or as individuals with whom personal interaction was possible.
The man-woman relationship in the novels is interracial, the female partner in each case being white. The location for the crucial moment of narration is invariably outside enclosed domestic space - a cave or a shrine. Such isolated places exist beyond the realm of British subjugation where no visible sign of white authority has been inscribed. Nor is the site frequented by Indians. Placed beyond the architectural network of civilization, the cave harks back to certain primordial elements in human life. The Sati shrine in Heat and Dust is built around the mysterious cult of fertility that lies outside the cold precision of logic and medical science. Located in natural space, these areas of encounter between the white woman and brown man acquire some mythic significance outside the domain of history.

In Heat and Dust the anonymous narrator's sojourn in post-colonial India, fifty years after her predecessor Olivia's unfulfilled life, echoes the pattern of Olivia's life, emphasizing the continuation of some of the older attitudes. Her boredom and loneliness in London are a parallel to Olivia's claustrophobic existence in British India and are only to be overcome by the rich, exotic possibilities of the "real India". The parallel motifs
continue in an almost schematic manner. The unnamed narrator commits herself to Inder Lal at the same Sati shrine where Olivia had yielded to the Nawab and both become pregnant. Through this deliberate repetition Jhabvala tries to emphasize that the crumbling of the social crust to reveal emotional impulses brings both the women in touch with an ineffable aspect of India that resists change. But this myth of unchanging reality in a way undermines the historical dimension of the novel.

As in Olivia's case so in the unnamed narrator's case a white man becomes part of the emotional tangle. Unlike Douglas, Chid is a disillusioned British spiritual seeker who tries to exploit her for his material benefits. Inder Lal is a shrewd and diminutive character who flaunts his white friend in public and makes love to her surreptitiously in private. This becomes his method of sublimating all his repressed instincts and soothing his sense of frustration generated by his job as a mere clerk in a small town. The brown man - white man - white woman confrontation in this case is a sublunary, insipid replica of the gorgeous pattern in Olivia's life. Inder Lal does not have the flamboyance of the Nawab, Chid does not have the aura of
power that Douglas possessed and the unnamed diary writer's affair lacks the colour and romance of Olivia's escapade. The stultified dimensions of Chid's and Inder Lal's personality, their pettiness and dullness of reduction. Not only are these relationships demeaning and miserable but so are also the material circumstances in which the diary writer finds herself. In her squalid shabby quarters no love blossoms, no friendship is developed. The daily zeal of recording facts is done more with a documentary-maker's precision than with genuine introspection. Yet, despite the meticulous record-keeping, her life and circumstances clearly lack the historical and political significance of Olivia's life. Unlike in the case of Olivia, the anonymous narrator's illegitimate child brings about no public opprobrium. A marginal member both in post-colonial western society and in India she stands in no fear of ostracism. She keeps her child as a safeguard against future loneliness and like Olivia she too withdraws to the mountains.
Just as the narrator in Heat and Dust chooses to bear the child of an Indian father, so Daphne Manners in The Jewel in the Crown (1966) struggles against a hostile British society in the forties to give birth to an illegitimate child by her Indian lover, Hari Kumar. Olivia's tension springs from opposite desires: she wants Douglas to remain ignorant about her affair, but she also wants to prolong her relationship with the Nawab. To maintain a façade of respectability Olivia decides to terminate her pregnancy. The nameless diarist in Heat and Dust is glad to have a child even without emotional support from Inder Lal. Daphne's posthumous child grows up with an Indian aristocrat, Lily Chatterjee, who protects her from social stigma. The three illegitimate offsprings in the two novels have different fates, but in each case the crucial and deciding factor is the mother's attitude.

Paul Scott goes beyond stereotypes by portraying Hari Kumar as an individual with a unique predicament rather than as a stock Indian character. Having received a public school education in England, Hari Kumar has an edge over
some of the British characters like Merrick who hate him for his insubordination and for his class superiority. Daphne responds to Kumar at a personal level, and the race or power dimension comes in only after their relationship becomes public knowledge. The British community ostracises Daphne because her position undermines their imperial ideas about race. Hari Kumar's education in England reveals to him the intrinsic character of the British from the inside. He is not in awe of them and in fact judges them by their own liberal standards prevalent at home (equality, justice, fair play) and finds these lacking in their conduct in India.

Like Adela and Olivia, who seeking an alternative to the British club walk into queer destinies like the Marabar Caves and the Sati shrine, Daphne also blunders into Bibighar. In The Coffer Dams (1969) by Kamala Markandaya, the female character, Helen Clinton avoids the British Club. Drawn to the primal spirit of the isolated jungle she meets her tribal Indian lover there. Even in a later novel Hot Water Man (1982) by Deborah Moggach, we find the central character Christine evading the Club and refusing to comply with the standards set by her British husband Donald, manager of a multinational company in Karachi. The club thus provides a convenient symbol for the complex web of
attitudes and values that condition race and power relations among the British and the Indians.

Hence we note that in these novels the place of encounter is topographically distant from the Club, the Civil Lines, the Indian residential quarters and general human habitation. Symbolically this place—a shrine or a ruined monument or even the caves—is located outside civilization, and signifies a site of spontaneity or passion of elemental human instincts, where racism recedes temporarily. Because historical tensions that control human behaviour in society are absent in this situation, it assumes a metaphorical poignancy in fiction and offers many possibilities. In the case of Daphne and Helen it makes a fusion of two kindred spirits possible and a relationship is forged that transcends racism at least momentarily. But invariably in each case the woman is a westerner, and it is the Indian male who is at the helm of affairs, controlling the situation.

The distance between the MacGregor House where Daphne stays with Lili Chatterjee and Bibighar where the love between her and Hari Kumar finds full expression, is psychologically formidable. The legends associated with
both the places are tragic in nature. The impossible task of lovers who wish to cross the barrier of race is described thus by Patrick Swinden in his study of Paul Scott:

The history suggests that the MacGregor House and the Bibighar Gardens are closely connected by the passions of those who have inhabited them in the past. But it also suggests that the connection has always issued in violence, and, finally separation - especially when the lovers have tried to cross the seemingly impregnable barrier of race. An invisible river runs between the two places.  

It is a moot question whether the relationship between Hari Kumar and Daphne is doomed because of their racial dissimilarities. The place of encounter is not accidental but chosen deliberately because no public place can be a rendezvous for interracial lovers in British India. Although the first meeting and the development of the relationship take place in interiors of houses yet the fulfilment needs a secluded spot outside domestic space. It may be remembered that Aziz first met and befriended Adela in Fielding's house. Before the consummation of their love had taken place in the sati shrine the Nawab had charmed Olivia in her own bungalow. Daphne met Kumar in MacGregor House a number of times and only afterwards did Bibighar become a place for their tryst. Elsewhere in Scott's novel A Division of the Spoils Sarah Layton and Ahmed were...
mutually attracted within the confines of the Nawab of Mirat's palace but their relationship gained a poignancy during their ride together. At the mimetic level one can explain this by pointing out that the two races had a social and formal meeting-point, but that did not allow any scope for real closeness beyond polite interchange. Privacy had to be sought out in a natural setting outside the domain of institutionalized encounters. Secluded and isolated spots like a cave or a ruined building thus provided real alternatives.

Daphne's courage leads her to cross the formidable distance to her destiny. As Bibighar is the site where Daphne overcomes the final shreds of racial superiority in herself, she thinks of this place to be outside racial prejudice. Yet ironically the place for the two lovers, also becomes the site for a collective and brutal assault on Daphne's body, combining gender atrocity with racial hatred. She analyses the inevitability of the rape and concludes that the sight of her intimacy with Hari broke the last sexual taboo with regard to the white woman.

The rape can be seen as the cumulative metaphor for the love-hate relationship between Britain and India. The
precipitation of political events led to violence between the British and the Indians in the early 40's culminating in 1942. Despite the political tension Hari Kumar and Daphne hope for a possible human relationship at a personal level. Metaphorically Hari Kumar and Daphne represent individuals being violated by the collective force of a historical movement. Another psychological violation takes place when Merrick cross-examines and physically tortures Hari Kumar to extort information. Scott wishes to illustrate through this image of brutality that personal idealism cannot withstand the hostile pressure of history. Traditionally rape is seen as a metaphor of colonial aggression where the land is penetrated by alien powers. In this case the reversal of roles like Daphne being molested by Indians, underlines the system of violence that affects both sides eventually. Ashis Nandy analyses the complex chain reaction that colonial aggression set in motion:

It (colonialism) de-emphasized speculation, intellection and caritas as feminine, and justified a limited cultural role for women - and femininity - by holding that the softer side of human nature was irrelevant to the public sphere. It openly sanctified - in the name of such values as competition, achievement, control and productivity - new forms of institutionalized violence and ruthless social Darwinism.
Scott could be suggesting through Daphne's suffering that the messiah of love and peace is always jeered at by the crowds, especially since in this case she is from the oppressor's group. Daphne's intimacy with Hari infuriates Merrick not only because she has turned down his proposal of marriage but because Daphne has so little esteem for upper-class respectability - something he passionately aspires to. Through Merrick's frustrations Scott illustrates the subterranean snobbery of the British in India who value a man more in terms of his class than his performance. Aware that his suppressed homosexuality, is associated in other white people's minds with his low-class origin, Merrick calculates that his marriage with Daphne would be an ideal camouflage. Since Merrick's sexual perversion brings him in close contact with Indian male vagabonds, he directs his revulsion both towards them and himself. While cross-examining Hari, Merrick inadvertently reveals not only his homosexuality but also his neurotic complex about Hari's exclusive public school education. When he cannot put Hari on a court trial for lack of proper evidence Merrick targets this young Indian as his victim. By torturing Hari Merrick thinks he can perform his own psychotropy i.e., get rid of his homosexual urge, his complex about his low class origin.
and forget Daphne's refusal to marry him. Merrick fails in
his purpose because it was based on a false presumption and
secondly because he encounters great moral strength in Hari
Kumar.

In *A Division of the Spoils*, the fourth novel of *The
Raj Quartet*, Hari Kumar emerges on his own as a powerful
political commentator with a philosophy of his own. Analysing
the Partition which he terms aptly as "Pandora's Box", Hari Kumar illustrates the evils that will be unleashed
on the sub-continent with the departure of the British. Hari Kumar apportions reproach equally to the British and to
the Indians for failing to master the situation. Scott
briefly shows that Hari Kumar has degenerated into a cynic
despite his traumatic experience. Daphne's death in 1943
spares her mercifully the political catastrophe of
Partition, but she has a premonition about it while she is
finally separated from Hari Kumar in 1942. She opted for
Hari's love in a vain attempt to mitigate the cataclysm born
out of Indo-British relationship. Metaphorically it is as
though the best in English character befriends India in its
plight. What is mediocre, perverted and vengeful in British
character, represented by Merrick, is determined to destroy
this union.
Hari and Daphne's child, Parvati, growing up in the MacGregor House cannot be free from the stigma attached to her birth, yet she gives the impression of being a creature of light-hearted joy, music and brightness. In the brief glimpse we have of her, she sings a morning raga which her grandmother's (Hari's mother) friends had sung at her departure for her in-laws' house. The song creates a link among three generations - Hari's mother, Hari and Daphne, Parvati - highlighting continuity and life. Probably Scott wishes Parvati to emblematise a positive consequence of Indo-British encounter.

In *A Division of The Spoils* Sarah Layton's remarkable encounter with India begins with her furtive visit to Lady Manners' shikara in Kashmir to see little Parvati. She later mentions how she was struck by the elderly lady's wisdom, poise and admiration for Daphne. This is how Sarah gets drawn into the net of the Bibighar narrative, its threads of tragedy and brightness. Sarah's own circle containing her family, Guy Perron and Kasim will eventually intersect with Merrick and will be blighted by his repression and arrogance in the same manner as Daphne's was.
Before she herself is aware of her attraction for Kasim, Merrick warns her against him exactly as he had once cautioned Daphne against Hari Kumar. The superimposition of Merrick on two sets of situations emphasizes his baleful influence and his hold over other lives. He shocks Sarah by emphasizing the fact that she bears physical resemblance to Daphne.

This triangular race configuration underlined by a struggle for power is internalized by Merrick to such an extent that he cannot bear to see this pattern undermined by Daphne and Sarah. To Merrick the concept of sexual gratification is aggressively masculine therefore his own trait of homosexuality creates in him a greater sense of ignominy. In retaliation against his deviant sexual behaviour with young Indians, Merrick wants the white woman to remain uncontaminated by the overt eroticism of India. Daphne and Sarah break away from such colonial regimentation because for them India is not an illusion created by white fantasies. Their attempt to explore beneath the colonial construct in order to seek the reality of India has been aptly described by Patrick Swinden thus:
But what Daphne did in fact, and Sarah was to do in her heart and mind, was to expose this artificial reluctance (to contemplate the sexual involvement of British women and Indian men) to the test of their sexual demands. In their different ways they both opened their personalities to an India that lay far beneath the important, though, for the time being, imposing illusions which the British had constructed out of their own collective imagination. ⑥

Kasim and Sarah initially met during a ride together, when apprehending the imminence of an unusual proximity he hesitantly reined his horse and Sarah resumed her normal pace. Nothing really happens on this occasion but the reactions of her family towards this brief morning exercise reveal its anxiety and insecurity. Sarah however remains inwardly unaffected by their fastidiousness. An accomplished and rational woman, Sarah leads an intensely private and isolated life. Instead of revolting against the empty, regimented life of the British in India she only chafes against it quietly. She knows that her growing association with Kasim will result in a difficult but nevertheless a different experience. Why does Scott repeatedly create this pattern of a white woman's protest against British community through her relationship with an Indian? One reason could be that Daphne's sudden and unexpected death at childbirth, or her exit from the narrative, creates a certain void. Sarah qualifies as a
dissenter and steps in to take her place. It could also be that Scott generally wanted to focus on rebellious British characters towards the end of the empire, and women provided more likely instances of such nonconformity than men. Sarah Layton sums up the quality of her relationship with Kasim Ahmed, thus: "Ahmed and I weren't in love. But we loved one another. We recognized in each other the compulsion to break away from what I can only call a received life."7

As the relationship progresses Sarah has a premonition that with the end of British rule, their life in India would be radically disrupted. She visualizes herself as a victim of this rapid change and decides to leave India. She has no inkling that the demand for India's independence would reduce some Indians into victims and some into persecutors.

The Raj Quartet begins with the description of Edwina Crane sitting by the corpse of her Indian colleague murdered by an Indian mob, during the riots that tore apart India in 1942. It ends with Ahmed Kasim becoming a victim of the Partition riots. When Kasim dies at the hands of the rioters who drag him out of the train in which Sarah is also travelling, Sarah becomes distraught with grief. Sarah at the moment of Kasim's fatal danger is too bewildered to
react but later in a penitent mood holds her instinct for self-preservation and values of British India deeply embedded in her responsible for her cowardice. She condemns imperial rule which has perpetrated violence on Indians and is withdrawing hastily from the onus of decisions or responsibilities. But Scott does not spare her and stresses how indelibly she herself is a part of the colonial system. The racial residues in her personality prod her to a philanthropic and safe act of passing water to the dying Partition victims lying along the railroads. She intends this act to mitigate her guilt about letting Ahmed meet his murderers outside the train compartment. Both Ahmed and Daphne, even in death, teach Sarah about revolting from the life and values that are imposed from outside. The death of Kasim and Daphne may be a literary device to keep the flow of narrative moving. But this strategy, despite its predictable complacency, lends a tragic grandeur to the ill-fated nexus of love relationships in The Raj Quartet.

Like the female narrator in Heat and Dust, Donald the British sales manager of Cameron Chemicals, comes to Karachi to dig up his roots there. He is basically a conventional middle-class job-holder whose rebellious
British wife Christine subsequently gets involved with a Pakistani. Deborah Maggach's novel Hot Water Man (1982) follows the familiar triangular pattern of encounter, separation and fear of miscegenation.

To supplement her vague romantic notions about the subcontinent Christine begins reading A Passage to India and identifies herself with Adela in her boredom and curiosity for exploration, in her desire to break out of her cocoon. We see how one text gets superimposed on the other and the later novel can play with the motives introduced by the earlier. Christine is a feminist more by declaration than by conviction and is desirous of experimenting with lifestyles. Despite the use of similar thematic motifs, Hot Water Man is obviously not a novel of the same quality as A Passage to India, or The Raj Quartet.

Like Olivia and Douglas's marriage in Heat and Dust, Christine and Donald's marriage also suffers from lack of proper communication. Their childlessness further accentuates this gulf. She expects him to be an individual and grant her individuality but he goads her into conformity to boost his public image. According to Donald the wife may be allowed a rebel's role in England, but not in Pakistan.
Even though the novel is set in a post-colonial period we find that the British self-image of superior aloofness still persists. For Donald the only way to survive the onslaught of an alien culture is to be rigid in one's own cultural attitudes. Rebelling against this attitude and the club, both relics of a colonial past, Christine decides to turn to modelling, claiming that it is a respectable profession. After an unsuccessful stint at modelling and a sudden act of adultery Christine returns, subjugated and silent, to her husband and home. This seems to be a fairly common reversal not only among expatriate women living in the subcontinent, but among women in general. The frequency of this pattern elicits a comment from the feminist theorist Rosalind Coward:

Occasionally the heroines 'protest' their right to gainful employment, or rebel against the tyranny of the loved men. But in the end they succumb to that form of power. And what attracted them in the first place were precisely all the attributes of the unreconstructed patriarch. The qualities which make these men so desirable are, actually, the qualities which feminists have chosen to ridicule: power (the desire to dominate others); privilege (the exploitation of others); emotional distance (the inability to communicate); and singular love for the heroine (the inability to relate to anyone other than the sexual partner). 8

In Hot Water Man, having gone through this process of reversal Christine's image of herself shifts from that of a
feminist to that of a conventional woman and wife. In the other novels analysed in this chapter death and separation were the chief agents that wrought essential changes in the inter-racial web of relationships. In this novel it is a quiet taming of the spirited wife who abandons her Pakistani lover at the first sign of fatigue. Sultan Rahim had taken Christine to Ginntho Pir - a fertility shrine some distance from Karachi. At a deeper level Moggach is bent upon demystifying the impenetrable aspect of the culture of the land. "Ginntho Pir" - the name of the fertility shrine named after a Muslim saint (patterned very obviously on a similar motif in Heat and Dust) is meant to evoke for the western mind images of rituals and fulfilment prompted by powerful, invisible forces. After succumbing to its spell of magic, there is a reverse pull towards a 'rational' appraisal of the situation. By unscrambling the letters Ginntho (Pir) can be read as - NOTHING. A simple anagram liberates Christine from the tyranny of the East. Moggach analyses the deep-set craving of an adventurer like Christine to explore the mysteries of another culture. The author implies that the shrine can symbolize the subconscious passions of Christine, which, if allowed to surface, will disrupt the smooth order of her life.
Thus, when the female protagonist stumbles across the consequences of such cultural discoveries her disillusionment with India sets in.

As in the case of Olivia and the nameless narrator in Heat and Dust, a single sexual encounter at the fertility shrine results in Christine's pregnancy. Christine makes love to Sultan Rahim aggressively as though for once she is fulfilling her feminist aspiration and reducing the man to a subordinate passive role. This fateful secluded place of encounter makes the woman discover her sexual identity anew. All through these novels this spot of encounter plays a pivotal role in changing the white female characters' worldview.

Christine's rebellion stumbles against another unexpected hurdle. Unwittingly she gets photographed for an advertisement for a sanitary tampon. Seething with impotent rage, she realises that she cannot avenge herself of this humiliation on her Pakistani acquaintance. It is not clear whether this advertisement outrages her middle class respectability or offends her feminist ideology for having commoditized the female body.
As Christine recovers from this trauma she realises that she must face another - the consequences of her pregnancy. Like Olivia her uncertainty about the baby's paternity torments her but she cannot take the extreme step of abortion. Fear of social ostracism keeps Christine rooted to her home, which now symbolizes security. She accepts meekly Donald's power, admires his cold detachment from others and is ashamed of her infidelity. As in Rosalind Coward's analysis quoted above Christine comes back full circle to a submissive wifehood after several attempts at forging a new identity. The novel ends abruptly after describing the delivery scene and Christine's tears. The author's cryptic conclusion -

"Tucked in a towel, her baby was given to her. Enough was showing to know. Tears ran down Christine's cheeks", deliberately withholds the crucial information about the baby's skin colour, and the readers remain free to interpret the tears whichever way they like.

But it is not Christine alone who has to bear the stigma of an ephemeral illicit relationship. Donald, in his attempt to trace the course of his grandfather's history in Karachi, comes up against the fact that he too had left
behind an illegitimate child. This is an assault on his racial arrogance and complacent superiority. He decides to bolster his tottering self-esteem by being magnanimous to this half-uncle, born of a Muslim maid servant. But his discovery that this illegitimate offspring of his grandfather is too prosperous to need his generosity deflates him completely. Donald's discomfiture conflates race and class. This confusion added to his wife's sexual misadventure, turns this novel into a multipronged exploration of the encounter between two cultures who no longer have a clearly hierarchic relationship, but whose contact is nevertheless problematized by traces of historical memory.

SECTION 4: CONCLUSION

The sexual metaphor of colonialism is generally extended further as "rape of the land" to condemn the violence and brutality of colonial conquest. A corollary of the possessive individualism of the coloniser was that he suppressed in him qualities and values associated with women - compassion, spontaneity, etc. He suffered from a deep-
rooted complex that feminine qualities are debilitating ones and could undermine, if allowed to surface, the might of the empire. Thus, both for justifying and denouncing colonialism the gender analogy is used.

In *A Passage to India* Forster reverses this paradigm of imperial conquest on a servile race—so that we see the colonised breaking into the hitherto inviolable world of the white elite. This act of penetration into the forbidden zone, confers, however briefly it may be, upon the colonised the identity of an aggressive, defiant male. The white man turns perplexed about his capacity to suppress the white woman and the feminine aspect of his nature.

Forster shrouds the interracial gender relations in such ambiguity that no distinct image of sexual encounter emerges. Probably he intended the cave scene as a narrative strategy rather than as a definite statement on race relations. The novels studied in this chapter create, however, a concrete picture of a man-woman relationship traversing racial barriers. This difference between *A Passage to India* and other novels could be traced to the fact that the former was written in colonial India and at a period which demanded a different code of literary
expression. The effect of this difference is that in Forster's novel the interracial relationship has an elusive, intangible quality about it that is unmatched in the subsequent novels.

In these later novels discussed in this chapter the centrality of interracial sexual relationship serves a fictional purpose that goes beyond its literal meaning. But the metaphoric significance is not the same in all these novels.

In *The Jewel in the Crown* Merrick detects in himself a response to the irresistible eroticism of the land and is terrified to see this replicated in Daphne. Probably he tried to destroy Hari Kumar for he had not only drawn Daphne by his magic charm but also aroused Merrick's primal instincts. Merrick's fear of the exposure of his homosexuality is very crucial because he feels that it will undermine the image of aggressive masculinity that he projected to maintain authority.

In *Heat and Dust* the situation is less complex because Olivia turns out to be a conformist who gets unwittingly involved in a drama of passion too demanding for her. This novel acknowledges Forster's influence in a significant way
because it is constructed skillfully on Forster's vision of Anglo-India.

In *A Division of the Spoils* it is again Merrick who tries to subjugate the white woman but fails because Sarah's cerebral life turns out to be as powerful as her instincts. This signifier - of a woman complete in her emotional and rational life who defies male authority - is only partially present in the characterization of Adela and Daphne. Placing Sarah at a safe distance from any public drama (e.g., trial scene or birth of an illegitimate child) Scott concentrates on Sarah's inner world. Sarah's fulfillment in marriage later on (we get to know of this in *Staying On* [1978]) also adds to this image of an integrated personality. Her character emerges as a powerful statement of the author about a white woman who can witness and participate simultaneously in the dismantling of the British empire.

Christine in *Hot Water Man* resembles Olivia in her attempt to conceal her murky little adventure and return to the fold of an elitist circle. Her experiment is superficial for it does not alter her basic outlook. This
novel attempts in a very minor key what the other novels achieve at a deeper level.

Another paradigm from Forster's novel is recreated and modified in these novels - the meeting of a man and woman in secluded spot outside the moral range of society. Like Forster, these writers also demonstrate that these fateful and instinctive relationships begun outside societal space never receive legitimacy in the community.

Thus the potential sexual power of the Indian men over white women in these novels is seen as the reverse process of the colonial rape the British men performed on India. These novels, by applying an intercultural dimension fuse the issues of sexuality, race and power in a single complex signifier. This chapter has attempted to analyse the diverse narrative uses of this basic thematic motif where the members of the two races briefly come together but cannot form sustained relationships. The next chapter will examine the more permanent relationships: interracial marriages in post-colonial Anglo-Indian novels.