CHAPTER III

SECTION 1: INDO-BRITISH MARRIAGE: A NEW PARADIGM

During the heyday of the British empire, social interaction between the British and the Indians was generally limited to formal occasions. At the personal level, friendship or even marriages between the two races were relatively rare during this period, both in real life and in its fictional representation. Earlier, when the British presence in India had not consolidated into a pattern, there were instances of English men marrying Indian women, particularly in the 18th century.

Giving a detailed account of Indo-British social encounter Philip Mason writes:

"Relations between the British in India and Indians varied very markedly over the period of nearly two centuries in which the British were a dominant group. They were much more free in the eighteenth century than later. Job Charnock, the founder of Calcutta ... married the widow of a Brahman whom he rescued from her husband's funeral pyre, and until about the time of Lord Cornwallis, such marriages were fairly frequent. They were perhaps excused rather than accepted... Nor was a mixture of genes regarded as a disqualification for a man of courage, who might command a regiment of irregular cavalry."

But as the nineteenth century advanced, social distance grew, first in the three Presidency towns.
and later in remoter parts... the strong victorian emphasis on the value of sexual restraint was reinforced and emphasized by the need to maintain aloofness, to display no weakness, to have nothing in common with the alien race. ¹

After 1857 when the British became officially the rulers of the country, such marriages began to be discouraged. Moreover, because of improved means of travel and a more comfortable lifestyle of the British in India, more and more women from England were able to come over, and thus a replication of British domestic life was possible for the rulers.

Despite social segregation, if occasional instances of interracial marriages could be seen, seldom did these marriages actually take place in India. Men from elite Indian families who went to England for higher studies sometimes came back with British wives acquired abroad, [as in Rich Like Us (1985) or Bye Bye Blackbird (1971)] and eventually their lives tended to become part of the amorphous chaos of an Indian family. Very few British writers have represented this aspect of Indo-British relationships in fiction, presumably because they had no access to such families. English women who came to India as wives of Indians were not taken cognizance of by the official British establishment.
In *Mirror on the Wall: Images of India and the Englishman in Anglo-Indian Function* (1991) M K Naik points out that in her two novels *My Indian Family* (1943) and *My Indian Son-in-law* (1949), Hilda Wernher is struck by the close proximity between man and universe in India and by the stoicism of ordinary peasants in a hostile oppressive society. She is also moved by the way traditional Indians express their gratitude to Nature for her generosity. Naik remarks that Wernher is so overwhelmed that she decides to write about life in India, so that her readers in the west can be conscious of a different order of reality.

While she admired Indians she must have also realised that children born of her daughter and her Indian son-in-law would evoke mixed response in white society. Kipling's creation of the myth that the white children are superior even to adult Indians had already been reinforced by other writers like Sarah Jeanette Duncan (Mrs. Everard Cotes). Hilda Wernher must have been aware of this prevailing attitude.

Analysing Mrs. Cotes' novel *The Story of Sonny Sahib* (1894) M K Naik remarks on Sonny's courage, cunning and sense of loyalty. When the British army lays siege to the Lalpore fort, "Sonny falls into the hands of the British, but refuses to betray the Maharaja by the supplying the information the British want, in spite of repeated dire threats." 3

After less than a century we see in the novels studied here very few children of mixed parentage growing up in an atmosphere free from racial complex.
Political freedom in 1947 made it possible, at least theoretically, for Indians and British to meet socially as equals. This did not necessarily mean more personal friendships or marriages between the two people in real life than before, possibly because the number of Englishmen and women residing in India became much smaller now. But in English fiction about India such marriages enter as a distinct theme, a theme that was conspicuous by its absence earlier. Literary antecedent of Indo-British marriages in nineteenth century are rare. Augustus Prinsep is among the earliest of 19th century Anglo-Indian writers to deal with this theme in his The Baboo and Other Tales (1834). Captain Forster's marriage with a Muslim Begum is not approved by his countrymen but they do not view it as an abnormal happening. Philip Meadows Taylor's novel Seeta (1873) is one such example, in which marriage between an Indian woman and an Englishman acquires a fairy-tale like quality and the domestic harmony they achieve is almost unreal in its perfection. Seeta dies in an encounter during the Mutiny. Her husband Cyril Brandon returns to England and marries an Englishwoman there. Taylor ends his novel on a realistic note, unable to sustain his bold experiment. The theme of
interacial marriage is a new paradigm in fiction explored noticeably by writers after Independence. The major British writers in the colonial age looked at the problem of Indo-British co-existence more in political terms than in terms of human relationships. This theme of inter racial marriage had to almost bide its time before it could make its appearance in Anglo-Indian fiction. Kipling in his short stories such as "Yoked to an Unbeliever" and "Without Benefit of Clergy" did not seem to view such mixed marriages as aberrations fit to be condemned. Kipling's novelette *The Man Who Would Be King* (1910) is built around the metaphor of imperial power and the danger of intimacy with the natives, especially in terms of marriage. Forster and Thompson both skirted around the idea of a marital alliance between the British and the Indians, stressing more on a liberal humanistic philosophy for providing a conducive atmosphere for developing interracial friendship. John Masters in *Bhowani Junction* (1954) takes a clear stand on the incompatibility of the two races in the framework of marriage. This novel comes towards the end in the sequence of Masters' fictional portrayal of Indo-British history through the saga of the Savage family in colonial India (the others are *Coromondel* (1955), *The Lotus and the Wind* (1953),
The Deceivers (1952), Far, Far the Mountain Peak (1957), The Night-runners of Bengal (1957). Since Bhowani Junction is the most well known in the series, the attitude about interracial marriage emerging in it is regarded as Masters' unequivocal statement on the subject.

Rumour Godden grew up in India, thus gaining almost an insider's perspective about the country and the people. Her novels on India reveal her understanding of the intricate tensions involved in the meeting of the two races in a politically subjugated country. Her novel Black Narcissus (1939) [to be discussed in detail in Chapter Six] and Kingfishers Catch Fire (1953) present European characters whose misplaced sympathies towards India can not only be harmful for themselves but also for the Indians around them. Breakfast With the Nikolides (1942) is a poignant study of a young British girl's initiation into the adult world after encountering her parents' deceitful attitudes. The River (1946) is a short novel about a childhood tragedy in India which was made into a film by Jean Renoir with assistance from the author. Rumour Godden's other two novels on India, The Dark Horse (1981) and The Peacock Spring (1975) acquire significance in the context of our discussion in this chapter because they focus on the theme of interracial
marriage. *The Peacock Spring* explores the elation and the sad disillusionment of a British diplomat married to an Eurasian woman in modern India. *The Dark Horse*, set in Calcutta in the late 20's portrays the happy union of an Eurasian woman and an Englishman who incidentally, is dismissed from the Army because of this misalliance. In order to highlight this couple's happiness and triumph over racial barriers, Godden constantly uses images of light and darkness to contrast humaneness with animality and racism.

Several Indian writers in English have also explored this theme of a mixed marriage. Anita Desai, in *Bye-bye, Blackbird* (1971), depicts an otherwise happy marriage between an Indian and Englishwoman set in London in the early sixties undergoing the strains caused by racial prejudice - real or imaginary of British society around them. Her treatment is realistic; she dwells on the inner conflict of the partners who do not reveal to each other their anxieties and pressures, preferring to work out their problems individually. Desai succeeds in creating very convincingly the character of a hypersensitive British woman who tends to magnify in her mind, the traces of racial discrimination against herself by her colleagues and
students who know about her marriage to an Asian. She tries to keep her private life and professional life separate so that she can avoid this stigma. Her husband's decision to return to India makes Sarah feel relieved, because she hopes that India might offer a solution to her identity crisis. The novel ends at that point. If it extended beyond that to encompass India, in its narrative we know the couple would have confronted a new set of problems there.

Kamala Markandaya, in *Some Inner Fury* (1956), explores another kind of interracial relationship against the background of the 1942 upheaval in India. Mira and Richard in the novel get symbolically separated by a crowd of protesters during the Quit India Movement. Their marriage remains a dream because historical forces teach them that an individual pitted against the currents of history is bound to lose.

In the following pages I shall analyse the theme of interracial marriages as represented in a few novels set in independent India, *The Alien Sky* (1958), by Paul Scott; *Esmond in India* (1958) and *A Backward Place* (1965) by Ruth P. Jhabvala; *The Peacock Spring* (1975) by Rumer Godden and *To A Native Shore* (1984) by Valerie Anand. These post-
colonic novels depict marriages between the British and the Indian as a new paradigm of racial relation outside the power hierarchy that existed during the Raj.

Almost all the novels focus on the conjugal relationship from the woman's viewpoint, who is white (with the sole exception of Esmond in India). This implies that being an outsider in her husband's country, her problems of cultural adjustment are more acute though her sensitivity may not necessarily be more heightened than her husband's. Since the writers wished to concentrate on the difficulties that are generated within the marriage, the stability of the relationship in those novels is rarely threatened from outside. The arena of action is the domestic terrain. The white woman in these novels has no professional identity, (except for Judy in A Backward Place who holds a low-grade secretarial job). Thus the women are projected primarily as wives whose life centres around their husbands, whereas their male counterparts find fulfillment and sustenance from varied sources like the extended family, professional challenges and colleagues at the place of work. Attributing both physical and emotional dependency to women is of course a very common feature of fiction generally, and popular fiction particularly. In these novels about mixed marriages
where the crosscurrents of cultural and historical forces could have played an important role, the subjugated role of woman in marriage remains the basic unstated assumption. Barbara Brothers, while discussing the novels of Barbara Pym - a contemporary British novelist - foregrounds this assumption that fiction only reflects what is true in real life - woman's life is redeemed by love more than the man's who has other serious occupations.

As it has been in art, so it has been in life; for a woman so much depends upon love. It is for love, according to the conventions of our culture as well as the values of our fictions, that woman was created... Whether in life or literature, a woman's only hope has been to catch the eye of a man. How else can she expect a part in the play.3

By denying the fictional woman a professional identity all the novels project her personality as "feminine". None of these novels dwell on the initial pre-marriage period where two individuals from different races were drawn to each other. The novels focus on their marriage as a given fact. The texts also remain silent about the Indian male's adoption of the western culture and focus exclusively on the white woman's predicament in India.
SECTION 2: THE CRISIS

Crisis within a marriage is often used in these texts as a narrative strategy providing the plot dynamics. The tangle that is created would by the end be resolved positively or end in a parting of ways. The desire to create a home sometimes clashes so violently with one's personal integrity that dissolution of the marriage seems a more viable option. But the fictional characters are made to undergo severe frustrations without allowing them to revise their personal convictions.

As a Polish Jew educated in England, married to an Indian architect, Jhabvala's stay in India has exposed her to a wealth of details about cross-cultural relationships. Describing her position as an insider-outsider to the Indian experience in her celebrated essay "Myself in India" Jhabvala subjects her theme to an incisive scrutiny. Apart from her novels, a number of her short stories have dealt with variations on the same theme. It may be worthwhile to take a look at some of them to further understand her concern with mixed marriages.
Peggy is a tenacious British woman married to Dev in a short story entitled "The Aliens" included in Jhabvala's anthology *Like Birds, Like Fishes* (1964). Peggy's marriage does not generate the warm vitality that we find in *A Backward Place* (1965). Their fragile marriage often threatens to break down under the pressure of her in-laws. The title indicates Peggy's perception of Indians as aliens but with the unfolding of the narrative one realises that it is Peggy who is alienated.

Another of Jhabvala's short stories, "The Young Couple" from *A Stronger Climate* depicts a newly-married Indo-British couple who seeks to be totally independent of family interferences and lead their kind of life. Like Peggy, Cathy is also from an underprivileged class in Britain and feels repulsed by her in-laws' conspicuous consumption and exhibition of extravagance. Imbued with a need for privacy, Cathy feels oppressed by her in-laws' habits of intrusion. In both the short stories the Indian husbands discard their radical image which they had adopted in England and turn into docile conformists back in India.

The thought of living in cultural exile forever is frightening for Cathy. The metaphor of the gilded cage
introduced in the short story elaborates the bondage accepted by this young woman.

The crisis in Peggy's marriage, likewise, rises from external factors like heat, lack of privacy, her in-laws' boisterousness, etc. A series of contrasts are worked out in the short story. Her in-laws' quarrels, overt sexuality, their vulgar display of wealth are contrasted against the sobriety of Peggy's family, her sexual reticence, decorous middle-class British values. Through Peggy's moderation and isolation Jhabvala highlights the Indian way of life. Cathy's failure to assimilate the new culture manifests itself in her resignation to her in-laws' pressures, her indifference to her husband's vacillations. Peggy's self-congratulating attitude attributes not a single positive point to any Indian character and projects herself as a repository of all virtues.

In the case of Cathy and Peggy there is no attempt to break out of the mould of thinking imposed upon them. Circumstances harness their energy and slowly crush out their reactions. Yet both women tend to term their compromises as heroism. Unlike Judy in A Backward Place
Peggy cannot work out the idea of culture except in terms of bipolar contrasts of good against bad. Peggy and Cathy finally emerge as weak characters because they publicly accept exactly what they condemn privately.

Both *The Alien Sky* by Scott and *The Peacock Spring* by Godden deal with the theme of British men marrying Eurasian women. Scott, writing towards the end of the empire, reflects the strong prejudices prevalent among the British and the Indians towards Eurasians. The stereotypical Eurasian was seen as a repository of deceit and chicanery. Rumer Godden, in dealing with a similar situation in the mid-seventies, shows that the attitudes towards the Eurasians and their humiliation have hardly changed.

A by-product of colonial occupation, the Eurasians came to constitute a distinct ethnic category in India. Their presence was a constant reminder to both the British and the Indians about their occasional, unsanctioned encounters. The Eurasians chose to pattern themselves on their British masters' lives, hoping to be assimilated into the fold. Compounded with their hybrid status was the difference in class and upbringing which hampered their absorption into the white community. But even those Eurasians, who by
virtue of their economic prominence had access to British society, faced an unstated prejudice when it came to the question of marriage. Victoria Jones, in Bhowani Junction has to suffer the trauma of her Eurasian identity until she is reconciled to marrying within her group. In Manohar Malg onkar's Combat of Shadows (1962) another Anglo-Indian girl Ruby Miranda, who aspires to marry the British tea planter, learns through bitter humiliation that an Anglo-Indian girl can be the mistress but not the wife of a true blue Englishman.

Scott's second novel The Alien Sky is set in 1945 when the British are slowly habituating themselves to the dismantling of the empire. Fearful of what the future holds for them, the Eurasians attempt to find their psychological security through close association with the British.

The psychological neurosis of Dorothy, a fair-skinned Eurasian married to Tom Gower, an Indophile Englishman, stems from a frustrating effort to conceal her racial origin. Dorothy's prolonged hypocrisy leads to an unprecedented level of sado-masochism in her. Although Scott portrays Dorothy's habitual deceit to be as torturous as the other characters' struggle for survival in a
turbulent world yet her tragedy seems to be more profound because of the fatal silence enforced by her mixed origin.

The crisis in their marriage issues from Dorothy's refusal and Tom's failure to communicate with anybody. Tom identifies India as the source of her psychological problems and suggests England as an alternative. Convinced that the chances of being exposed in England are much higher than in India, Dorothy adamantly refuses to settle in England. Her hatred is directed both towards England and India because their attitudes and norms have forced these subterfuges on her, destabilizing her to the point of insanity.

Into this pattern of silent tension and potential madness Scott introduces another character, Joe Kendrick, who turns up in India to probe into the secret of his dead brother Dwight's discarded mistress. Dwight, as the novel reveals, had a clandestine affair with Dorothy when he was posted as an army officer in India during the Second World War. Ignorant of his perverted sadism, Dorothy places her trust in Dwight during their adulterous relationship. Intending to confess his real intentions, he writes her a letter but fails to post it. Joe accidentally discovers this letter, senses Dorothy to be a victim of his brother's
viciousness. In his childhood, Joe suffered at the hands of this bully who tortured him unchecked by their parents. This shared experience with Dorothy makes him curious about her. He thinks of her subconsciously as an ally who can help him discover more about his brother's perversion.

Joe's stunted psychological growth and Dorothy's tragedy can be seen as the author's attempt to study alienation from two angles. Structurally the novel can be divided in two halves: the secret and the revelation of the secret. The first half builds up a tempo till the point of discovery but the second half, due to too many characters involved in a variety of events, is unable to reach a crescendo.

Joe has a set of motives regarding Dorothy before he learns of her secret. Scott does not develop these motives to their logical conclusion. By forming a relationship with his dead brother's mistress does he want to achieve something? Will this alleviate his sense of inferiority towards his sadistic and deceitful brother Dwight? Does he want to love her so that it would be a humane approach in comparison to Dwight's vicious and callous response? These questions arise but meet with no satisfactory answer.
After Dorothy's confession about her Eurasian identity, Joe and Dorothy get involved in a different predicament. Joe feels that he can strengthen his personality by vindicating the powerful Dwight and consequently gain a hold over his inner life. Dorothy reveals her dark secret with a hope that she can then live at peace with herself. There is a tacit assumption on their part that by loving each other they can exorcise themselves of Dwight's evil spirit.

By juxtaposing the theme of a rootless, half-caste woman and a complex sibling relationship, Scott fails to create a successfully coherent narrative and overburdens the text beyond its capacity. In A Male Child (1956) Scott handles this theme of sibling relationship deftly and shows how the mother's partiality and predilection ruin the younger son who starts drifting in order to avoid responsibilities.

We see a surprising recurrence of this particular theme in Iris Murdoch's novel Henry & Cato (1976). Cato, the elder son, is a converted Catholic priest who behaves in an ugly and cowardly fashion and kills someone he loves and so ends as a yearning atheist. Henry, the second son, confronts his ruthless mother by affiancing his late...
brother's supposed mistress. Henry's act of defiance against his mother to regain the privileged position of his brother is in a way parallel to Joe's assertion against his past.

In Scott's novel, hemmed in by the pressures of two men and the phantom of another, Dorothy always seems to be on the point of madness. Had Scott focused only on Dorothy, as the representative not only of a community, but of a hybrid culture, of a parenthesis in history documenting the Eurasians' sense of defeat and alienation, then the novel would have been more meaningfully structured.

Tom's attempt at suicide seems to balance the mounting tensions between Dorothy and Joe. The motif of suicide seems more of a dénouement than the outcome of Joe and Dorothy's decision. In the end Joe realises that he cannot hold onto Dorothy since she begins to see Tom's neurosis as a greater source of sadistic pleasure than Joe's emotions for her.

Due to Scott's constant focus on Dorothy's vitiated inner life one hardly get to see the wider range of Dorothy's experience in the world outside. The nature of reality for Dorothy neither expands nor alters, since she
contracts it into narrow patterns. Dorothy's obsessional guilt about wronging a husband who is innocent about her predicament does not receive a full treatment by the author. Her characterization rests on two or three images created by the author - her arrogance, terror about being discovered, and a guilt that prevents her from breaking out of the shell. Scott attributes to her a limited role, subordinated to that of Gower. His ideals make him appear in the novel as a positive character. Scott remains silent about Tom's incapability to generate confidence in his wife so as to draw out her morbid secret and provide her security.

While Scott portrays in *The Alien Sky* an individual trapped both by her ethnicity and her warped personality, Jhabvala in *Esmond in India* focuses on an Indo-British couple, who has no ambivalence about their racial origin, but is nevertheless degenerating into alienated beings. Jhabvala's intimacy with India helps her to project the disparity between cultural issues, psychological moorings and moral choices. Scott brings in different strands in the narrative: Joe, his dead brother Dwight and Tom Gower's suicide attempt to prop up his fictional rendering of an unhappy interracial marriage. Jhabvala, in comparison,
holds up to view a threadbare conjugal relationship, supported by her irony and sense of humour, - highlighting the contradictions inherent in people and situations.

The narrative of *Esmond in India* revolves around the implied comparison of Gulab and Esmond's interracial marriage with other marriages arranged in the traditional Indian style. In some of the other novels that we propose to discuss in this chapter, this comparison of marriages within the same race with Indo-British marriages become an important narrative strategy. The conventional marriages are most often seen as placid and tension-free, when compared to the tempestuousness, turmoil and doubts caused by interracial marriages. There is an implication that traditional marriages do not have the same complex dimensions as the marriages performed across the race line. In this novel, *Esmond in India*, Gulab's former fiance' Amrit's marriage with a woman chosen by his parents is projected as sedate and graceful without any ripples of personality conflicts. Esmond admires Amrit's wife and secretly compares her with Gulab, little realizing that Gulab had rejected this doll-like role for a bold adventure with him. Ironically Amrit's sister Shakuntala in her
romantic euphoria also plans to emulate Gulab's example rather than settle for a quiet, predictable life. Probably Jhabvala is illustrating that the seeds of cynicism were already sown deep in Esmond, and would have blown to full shape by any other disillusionment.

Gulab's portrayal as slovenly, obese and a compulsive eater rouses in the reader some amount of surprise at Esmond's choice of a wife. Jhabvala suggests craftily that this is Esmond's view of Gulab. In the company of her mother and Indian servants we see a Gulab more natural, expansive and dignified. The desire of Gulab and Esmond to escape their marriage drives them to desperate choices, leaving them more frustrated than before. Both of them had decided about marriage under delusions: Esmond had hoped to find in Gulab the fabled oriental charm and docility, whereas Gulab was fascinated by Esmond's view of India as an unfamiliar and mysterious land. Once married she rejects his authority, refusing to accept British culture and values. Esmond's romance with India ends when he finds that the price is too high: he refuses to mould his personality afresh.
Both in *The Alien Sky* and *Esmond in India* there is an absence of human communication both within and outside home. If Esmond can attract women, Dorothy has power over men, and both of them plan to use this power for escaping from their marriage. Both Esmond and Dorothy willingly take up the mantle of another culture only to find out, too late, its destructive nature.

Scott ends the narrative on a note of moral defeat and cynicism by showing Tom Gower's attempt at suicide. Jhabvala ends hers with Gulab's humiliation and outraged sensibility due to her servant's attempt at molesting her. These endings show up as flaws, as the author's incapacity to handle successfully the complex resolution that a crisis born of interracial marriage generates. Esmond probably sees his disillusionment with India more as a self-deception, for he begins to admit that it is his judgement about India rather than the country itself which has betrayed him. He feels that his prolonged stay in India has destroyed his vision about the country.

In retaliation against the oppression of her husband's values Gulab clings desperately to her Indian identity. Her moronic addiction to food and sleep is a form of escapism
rather than signs of a retarded personality. Unlike Esmond, she does not want to escape to a new kind of life although she is prodded by her family members to leave Esmond and settle in her mother's house.

Her mother's house has been seen by Yasmine Gooneratne as a metaphor for India. Gulab's family members were among the freedom-fighters and dreamt of an India of which Gulab and Esmond are not aware:-

It is Uma's house, in its flaking beauty and decayed grandeur, its memories of past heroism, its vestiges of feudal social relationships and religious fervour, and its atmosphere of a spacious but neglected and unregulated Paradise, that furnishes the novel's metaphor for India.4

If Gooneratne argues that Uma's house is a metaphor of India because it symbolizes both the past beauty and the present state of neglect that has set in, then another point can be added here. The decay of the house is on the surface since its inhabitants possess tremendous vitality. Similarly India might appear decadent to observers like Esmond who miss the nation's powers of resilience and self-regeneration underneath. Probably this is the reason why Esmond prefers to enter Shakuntals's western-style drawing-room, elegantly furnished but empty of any memory or
passion. By contrasting Ravi's (Gulab's and Esmond's son) vision of his grandmother's house in terms of space, sunshine and laughter and Esmond's view of it as a crumbling, moss-grown bungalow, Jhabvala points out Esmond's superficial relationship with India. It is Esmond's disillusionment with Gulab that brought out the cynic in him, rather than his alienation from India and its culture. This could imply that to begin with, his attachment with India was not profound enough to survive on broken human relationships.

The two major images of domestic space in _Esmond in India_, Uma's house and Shakuntala's house, convey the basic personality of the owners. Similarly in _A Backward Place_ Jhabvala uses enclosure and habitation as signifiers of human personality. Judy's Indian home like Uma's evokes an atmosphere of light and carefree gaiety and security whereas her office 'Culture Dais' sports not only a western-style décor but her boss tries to flourish on borrowed ideas of culture.

Flanking Judy's pivotal position in the novel are Etta and Clarissa, two characters, who struggle in their different ways for a home in India. Etta, a middle-aged
Hungarian divorcee, knows in the depths of her mind that she will be a misfit in Europe, but India exasperates her. She is entertained in a hotel by her present Indian admirer. The hotel, a transitory accommodation, emphasises her homeless status. Clarissa, a British spinster in her mid-forties, whose idealism was once inspired by Gandhi and Romain Rolland, has got involved in a struggle for survival in India. Against the rootlessness of Clarissa and Etta Judy is portrayed as an individual who has truly succeeded in making a home in India. Yet Judy is not an idealized figure; she too is presented with Jhabvala's usual irony. It is not her sweet, docile nature that has brought her happiness but her British tenacity, her mother's trait of perseverance that see her through her several crises. She cannot challenge her fate, but she does not suffer either from an identity crisis like Etta or from pretensions like Clarissa. Judy finds it possible to adapt because she can define the different cultures she has experienced. With a proper definition of her cultural situation Judy learns not only to control her reactions but also influence circumstances for her benefit.

Judy's husband Bal is immature (his name suggest this) but their marital relationship is not reduced to a mere
power game with Judy dominating over him. Judy's control over their life is much more pervasive and meaningful. In contrast to the broad issues of culture and control as exemplified in Judy's case, Jhabvala draws an Indian character, Mrs. Kaul, the chairperson of the 'Culture Dais' where Judy works. Mrs. Kaul's cultural and intellectual pretensions are treated as genuine by some members of the city's elite. Jhabvala implies that the elite crowd is not only as ignorant as Mrs. Kaul but like her they are too uncaring to educate themselves in the arts.

Bal fears that if Judy were to be included in this make-believe world of refinement, elitism and western rationalization prevalent in her office 'Culture Dais' then the crisis in their marital life would burst out of proportions. To resolve this crisis Bal decides to escape to the tinsel glamour of Bombay's film world, forcing Judy to surrender her job, and follow him there without any certainty.

That Hindi cinema is the undisputed arbiter of Indian mass culture is acknowledged by Judy and indirectly accepted by Jhabvala. Judy somehow does not categorize art and culture either as plebeian or patrician; she tries to savour
its quality as something unique. The Hochstadts, a German couple visiting India for a lecture tour, speculate that Indian theatre should borrow and transmute into their own traditions what has so far been evolved in western theatre, and vice-versa. Jhabvala tries to illustrate through all these views on culture and artistic representations that there is a danger in reducing these to a commodity for transaction.

Judy, tired of the labels and categories that the complex process of culture is subjected to decides to plunge into an uncertain future. Little does she realise that Bal's escapism can draw them into the same perverted atmosphere again. Vasant Shahane gives a very plausible explanation why Judy's difficult decision of giving up a steady job to experience uncertainties elsewhere becomes acceptable to the reader:

This passionate attachment to Bal combined with a peculiar awareness of his failings characterizes Judy's view of Bal. Judy is a realist and dreamer in one - as a realist she realizes all Bal's weak points but as a dreamer she is thrilled by his fantasies.\(^5\)

It is difficult to determine whether Judy is thrilled by Bal's fantasies or she gives in because this is the only way to avoid a permanent rift between them. She is
sometimes amused by his juvenile interpretations of life but is not entirely taken in by his irresponsible daydreaming. It is her fear of breaking relationships and the consequent loneliness (the motif of her mother's alienation and suicide is contrasted against her compromises and air of resignation) that prompt her to accept Bal's world-view. Judy is spurned by the other European characters in the novel who see her British personality engulfed by India.

Judy's children, like Gulab's son, are portrayed as gay and carefree who know India to be their home. Although they are too young to choose between Britain and India their spontaneity indicates their security and ease in the culture they are growing up.

Rumer Godden's novel The Peacock Spring explores the psyche of a teen-age British girl Una and her diplomat father awakening to the reality of India. They mistake their initial experience of romance in India for an unending, splendid spring. The image of the monkey-man, forcing his drugged, helpless monkeys to a sexual performance on the roadside is presented as one of the central metaphors of the novel highlighting the theme of the strong brutalising the weak. But the unprotesting
subjugated ones in the novel assert themselves and try to reverse the structure of authority. Una challenges her father when he destroys the young girl's dream of finding happiness with an equally young Indian. In Una's eyes her brief union with Ravi was as meaningful as her father's marriage with their governess Alix. Una condemns her father for having reduced her relationship with Ravi to a public sexual fantasy, just as the monkey-man prods his monkeys to their lewd act in open view. Alix, Una's stepmother, identifies herself in the end with Una's disillusionment and understands her own position as an oppressed woman.

Godden's novels about India are touched by melancholy. This may or may not be autobiographical, because she spent part of her childhood here. Her father was in trade in India, but she was educated in England. In 1934 she married an Englishman and settled in England but her marriage did not last long. She married a second time in 1949. Her vast range of literary works were published from 1936 onwards. Many of her novels draw upon her early experience of India.

The main characters in the novel, Una, Edward her father, Alix first a governess and then Edward's wife, Ravi, the aspiring poet masquerading as a gardener - all shift
from enchantment to disillusionment, from an adoration of spring to a summer of trauma, from a marvelling at nature's tropical splendour (symbolized by the peacock's grace and beauty) to an awareness of her sordid horrors (represented by the dark and ugly feet of this bird).

Una, fifteen and proud of her intelligence, crosses her first threshold when she meets Ravi working in her father's garden. Alix is an interesting variation on the Eurasian stereotype. She is an Indo-French from Pondicherry and in her interaction with the other characters we see the prejudices of the people around her who are not of mixed origin. Though the historical period depicted in the novel must be around the mid-seventies (a royal family in the novel laments the dissolution of their privy purse by Mrs. Indira Gandhi), yet Godden's attitudes towards Alix is strongly reminiscent of the colonial prejudice against the Eurasian when it was believed that all Anglo-Indian girls are forever aspiring to marry the British:

An unwritten rule was for the girls (Anglo-Indian) to try and marry the British soldier. Not to propagate the species but to improve the strain, so the aim was to marry British soldiers... This ambition was often realized... It was frowned upon by the British command, but despite all the efforts to quash it a vast number did manage to get married.
As though in conformity with this observation made by Charles Allen, Alix is shown to be surviving on her petty schemings, tales of woe, some talents and wily charm. Una and Edward are etched brightly as noble and upright both by birth and character.

Edward, after two unhappy marriages and Una, after an emotion-starved childhood, decide that they need a change from the agonising experiences they have undergone in the west. They want to cross the threshold of a new terrain totally dissimilar to what they have already experienced. Their desire for a bold new adventure at the sub-conscious level imprints itself on their daily movements, guiding their steps to unforeseen destinations. Probably Godden implies that desires suppressed for too long due to social pressures surface dangerously once the individual is placed in a totally different environment. As we have seen in Chapter II, the encounter between a man and a woman of different races acquires a new significance only in secluded spots outside civilization and not in domestic enclosed space. Campbell explains the thrust of certain individuals to plunge into the unusual, hitherto uncharted areas.
The regions of the unknown (desert, jungle, deep sea, alien land, etc.) are free fields for the projection of unconscious intent. ↑

Una and Edward living in a world of fantasies respond to an unfamiliar land around them, which is far removed from their English society. Here in a tropical land they can project their 'unconscious intent' to live in an atmosphere of gossamer mystery.

If Una and Edward fancy themselves as mythic figures exploring a little-known area of human experience, then the author simultaneously points out that they lack the insight and resourcefulness of the mythological hero. The socio-economic reality of post-colonial India forces itself upon their senses till they gain a more comprehensive perspective on their encounter with India. Alix, apart from being a governess, assumes the duties of a housekeeper (in Edward's household), and becomes an intermediary between the servant class and her diplomat lover. This, in a sense, replicates the position of the Eurasian during the colonial era when they mediated between the two races, earning suspicion and distrust from both sides. Godden, probably unintentionally, recreates in present terms a past social pattern because we see Alix getting embroiled in petty controversies about
household expenses. Even after her marriage, her position is not really elevated in the eyes of either the domestic staff, the international diplomats' circle, or the local elite.

Edward's and Alix's marriage is subordinated to the romantic relationship between Ravi and Una. This teen-age couple's love has a freshness and truth which Alix cannot achieve. Una's pregnancy seemingly liberates her from her past but is dragged back home as a captive by her father. Ravi realises that love is a revolution in itself because it demands not just violence against the established order but a capacity for self-sacrifice. Una thinks of love as a natural phenomenon. Seeing a peacock's dance and subsequent mating with a pea-hen in the wilderness she compares it to her splendid emotions for Ravi.

... it was private of privates - like the 'womb house' in some of these temples she had seen with Edward, the innermost sanctuary where, meeting the God it enshrines, the worshipper is born again.

Una's apprehension of the occult, her ineffable experience of love are soon replaced by the vulgar, worldly cynicism of people and events around her. Edward is also soon disillusioned by his marriage. Ironically it is Alix and Ravi, endowed with irresistible charm who have the
supreme self-mastery to arrive at their destiny through compromise, scheming or sheer callousness. If Ravi wins the highest national-level award for young poets it is because he makes a final choice between his art and his love. Under Edward's threat of imprisonment for abducting a minor and the consequent loss of the coveted prize for young poets, Ravi severs his ties with Una. Ravi's choice wins him a public award but kills the sensitivity in him. Godden does not seem to be pointing out Ravi's lack of integrity, only the basic confusion in his young personality about the priorities of life. Alix and Ravi symbolize probably the demonic spirits of the mythologies who win because they have the necessary cunning to chart out their strategy.

The two idealistic figures of the novel are Ravi's grandmother and his friend Hem. He retains the fervour of his vision through adversities and the elderly lady's religion is to bestow love and care on all those around her. But they are not important enough to counterbalance the gloom of the novel.

In Una's case the motif of love as a spiritual revelation is intertwined with the morbid experience of abortion which she is forced to undergo. The motifs of the
monkey's public copulation and the peacock's mating in the wilderness have been used to illustrate human love at its most crude and base level and at its most natural and splendid form respectively. Una and Ravi felt exalted like the peacocks but Edward turned them into monkey's - helpless and public, their love a mere carnal act. When Edward discovers the general opinion regarding his marriage he realises that Alix has treated his love as a roadside bargain.

Alix's inner sores and scars repel Edward and he recoils from his wife's artfully contrived love. Godden redeems Alix when she makes this embittered Eurasian defend Una's love, inviting Edward's wrath in the process.

Godden ends the novel by stressing how everyone returns to his or her senses by the time the fierce tropical summer sets in. The chief characters take up life at a low level of expectations, relinquishing a world of fantasies. There is an assumption that India cannot be assimilated; it is too vast, intricate and unpredictable. Even when the author is using India as a backdrop for her characters' turmoil, she shows how this land impinges on the consciousness of the foreigners.
Valerie Anand's novel To A Native Shore depicts a British woman disillusioned with India and her marriage to a Sikh doctor. Anand is a little-known writer and this is probably her first novel. The author's intimate knowledge both of a Sikh household in Chandigarh and a home in Ambersford in the county of Somerset gives the novel a cultural solidity.

After three years of marriage Melanie begins suffering from what she terms as Occidentalis. At the syntagmatic level she suffers from clumsiness, from an inability to communicate normally with the members of her Indian household. At the paradigmatic level this is emblematic of her dissociation with India, recoiling upon her British heritage. As an artist she performs dissatisfactorily because she feels India is hampering her output as artist. Her aesthetic talent is burdened with a half-perceived design to which she cannot give a complete shape. At the metonymic level she recognises that her mental apathy to her surroundings, her fragmented approach to her work are responsible for this unaccomplished task. Melanie's life, the author points out, cannot shape itself according to any particular vision because of a lack of true inspiration.
Her grandfather's death accentuates her psychological vacuum, and England becomes the symbol of her possible deliverance. Her journey to England is seen by her as a passage from a half-known culture to a native one, from stunted talents to a possible fulfillment of creativity, from tradition to ratiocination. Melanie misses the important connection between assimilation of different influences and aesthetic creativity. This error bewilders her more and more desperately, restricting her capacity for a redefinition of her possibilities. Jhabvala had once described the classic cycle of phases that Europeans pass through with regard to their relationship with India.

There is a cycle that Europeans - by Europeans I mean all Westerners, including Americans - tend to pass through. It goes like this: first stage, tremendous enthusiasm - everything Indian is marvelous; second stage, everything Indian not so marvelous; third stage, everything Indian abominable. For some people it ends there, for others the cycle renews itself and goes on.

Melanie passes through all the three stages in the course of the novel and finally gets poised for another experience of this cycle. She is totally mesmerised by her grandfather's intellectual achievements beside whom she thinks her husband Avtar dulls in comparison. The author makes a predictable use of two images of fertility and
barrenness to bring out the essential quality of Melanie, Avtar and her grandfather's personality. Melanie is biologically barren but emotionally and aesthetically creative. Her husband is professionally successful but is not capable of generating love in his wife any more. Her grandfather combines cerebral fecundity with powerful emotions.

Melanie discovers that the ancestral house Gavin's Cliff in Ambersford has been left to her not as a legacy but as future security. Her grandfather believed that one day Melanie would outgrow her error and return to her true home in England. This revelation forces upon her the truth about her grandfather's racist mentality and his cynicism towards the destiny she has chosen for herself. The author reveals her gradual awareness about the superficial security she thought England would provide her. Her husband is aware of this undercurrent of animosity in the grandfather's attitude and puts his love and future at stake to retain Melanie in India. Melanie revises her impressions about her grandfather and Avtar and herself. Grandfather, instead of the warm and ideal specimen of humanity becomes a shrewd intellectual despot in her eyes who manipulated her opinions
about him. In contrast being free from racial complex, her husband seems a better person with whom she can have a rich emotional life.

Her realisation about her grandfather's secret estimation of her forces her to revise her opinion of Avtar whose relationship with her seems now more open and vital. This is reinforced by Melanie's sudden discovery of her pregnancy.

The author sets Melanie's marriage against other marriages among her in-laws and her English relatives within the same race. The crisis in these marriages leads Melanie to discover that the intricacies of a conjugal relationship even within the conventional pattern have to weather rough storms, just like interracial marriages. This strategy of making the chief protagonist draw a moral lesson from similar situations around her seems flawed. In consequence Melanie's return to India with Avtar seems manipulated by the author, especially since her pregnancy becomes the pivotal point in her decision. Warnings from family members weaken her resolve to face England's racial prejudice towards half-caste children. She herself has ceased to be British in their eyes because of her Indian marriage. She
knows she will suffer from isolation in England and India will not solve her identity crisis. Trapped between two sorts of alienation - one in England and the other in India, she decides to belong to both the cultures at the same time. She decides to divide her time between the two countries and experience simultaneously what both cultures can offer her. This decision, taken in haste and under pressure from circumstances, reveals Melanie's ambivalence towards her problem. By trying to spell out Melanie's contradictions and confusion the author has weakened the structure of the narrative, giving the impression of an amateur novelist who struggles to limit her theme within manageable proportions in order to present a neat resolution.

SECTION 3: CONCLUSION

Love and mutual admiration appear to be the major factors behind the fictional representations of marriages in the novels. Once the initial passion settles down to a routine of domesticity various sociological determinants accentuate the cultural gap.

Besides, the cultural conditioning of the partners and the allegiance to certain traditions result in a difference
of basic attitudes often giving rise to conflicts. The notion of individualism, generally attributed to the British and the concept of destiny said to be upheld by Indians could be illustrations of such differences within a marriage, although the polarities within actual marriages may not have been always so pronounced.

A female consciousness forms the centre of the novels (probably since their writers are women and write about women, except for The Alien Sky). Questions about the woman's social and psychological position are explored within the framework of her marriage and not within that of her individuality. Judy, Melanie, Alix seem to be enclosed within their fears of engagement with a demanding, difficult reality. They almost seem to be on the point of giving up the struggle to live in an adult, masculine world. It is only Gulab who is exhorted by her family to redefine her position as an individual, but Jhabvala presents before us a mind silenced by apathy.

The challenge of a white woman's journey from an advanced, technology-oriented society to a traditional, economically backward nation is combined in these novels with the issue of women's oppression within patriarchy. She
retreats into a familiar 'female' enclosure of defeatism. In none of the novels here, whether it be the white woman, the Eurasian or the Indian woman, does she challenge her fate or break away from marriage. She seems to bear humbly the yoke of the writers' convictions about the curtailed dimensions of her personality. The pattern that emerges clearly from these novels is one of India as a powerful determinant in personal relationships either as a splendid snare or as a paralyzing factor but rarely as a place for growth and self-discovery.

In the previous chapter, as in this one inter-racial relationships between men and women whether in wedlock or outside it convey a gloomy atmosphere, sad choices. It is as though the individual's meeting across racial barriers are defeated by a force greater than them. It may be that Forster's influence is still persistent on those writers writing about themes far removed from A Passage to India for they could be unconsciously echoing his last words 'No, not here. No, not yet.'