Introduction and Outline of the Study

The term ‘empire’ refers to a group of nations or states brought under a single sovereign authority. In an earlier period it also stood for a state that was characterized by the dominion of a conquering nation over the conquered people. Thus the empires of ancient Egypt, Mesopotamia, Assyria and Persia were established. But in the ancient times, imperialism meant a state or states under a universal law, based on a principle of peace, order, discipline. But, nowadays the term is too loaded to be contained within the narrow confines of a simple definition. In this connection, Edward Said views that imperialism is

...a word and an idea today so controversial, so fraught with all sorts of questions, doubts, polemics and ideological premises as nearly to resist us altogether (Said, Culture and Imperialism 3).

In its narrowest sense, imperialism refers to a policy of territorial aggrandizement while, at a deeper level, it can be anything – from an unscrupulous exercise of political and moral license on an alien people to a horrible regime of exploitation, slavery and brutality. In the former sense, imperialism is more akin to ‘colonialism’ which, though “almost always a consequence of imperialism, is the implanting of settlements on distant territory” (Said, Culture and Imperialism 3).

Needless to say, the motive force behind the policy of imperialism is the building up of an empire. In this connection, Michael Doyle in his Empires, Ithaca (1986) succinctly writes:

Empire is a relationship, formal or informal, in which one state controls the effective political sovereignty of another political society. It can be achieved by force, by political collaboration, by
economic, social, or cultural dependence. Imperialism is simply the process or policy of establishing or maintaining an empire (45).

In the Marxian sense, imperialism is an ideology. As Edward Said in his *Culture and Imperialism* views:

Neither imperialism nor colonialism is a simple act of accumulation and acquisition. Both are supported and perhaps, even impelled by impressive ideological formations (8).

In other words, imperialism is a form of false consciousness in that it presents a view which is false primarily because it violently conflicts with the interests of the majority who contour to it. And a conscious attempt at the dissemination of false consciousness was central to the concept of imperialism. The publication of Darwin’s *On the Origin of Species* (1859)

…boosted the Englishman’s imperial confidence and the Darwinian notion of the survival of the fittest engendered the myth of racial superiority (Halliday, *Social Darwinism* 389).

Darwin,

…a half-understood household sage, demonstrated that some races, like some animals were more efficiently evolved than others and had a right to leadership and possession (Morris, *Farewell the Trumpets* 32).

This theory was found to provide a very sound basis for the justification of Britain’s greed for imperial power and glory.
The activity of empire building was also carried out by the Mongols, Mohammedans, Turks and Tartars in medieval Europe. The term ‘imperial’ means belonging to an empire or emperor. It could also mean belonging or pertaining to a state, that is, supreme over colonies, dependencies or protectorates. According to historians, imperialism emerged as a concept in the 1880s when Europe scrambled for Africa and molded modern empires. Distinguished from territorial expansion and colonialism, imperialism was seen as a separate phenomenon with specific 19th Century political, economic and social underpinnings.

The explorations carried out in the Elizabethan period gradually concentrated into colonial settlements in the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries. The initial discoveries of the new territories were not all carried out with the colonial agenda in mind, but then the situation in most of these places afforded the opportunity and in many cases settlement became a political necessity. Initially, the trade interest constituted the primary objective of the English people who came to these territories and the involvement of merchants in such enterprises was the normal condition.

The nineteenth century constituted the age of imperialism. While the earlier stages of exploration, discovery and colonization were not unified into a particular format, but governed by individual conditions, the nineteenth century saw the consolidation of British power and authority in many of the colonies. Not only did territorial expansion occur in this early period of ‘disinterest in the Empire’ but the ideological basis for New Imperialism was formed as well. Throughout the 19th Century, the British continually possessed a desire to increase their empire due to ideas of superiority and the need to spread civilization. British colonial rule depended on seeing the native populations of the colonized areas as inferior, as therefore needing the ‘advanced civilization’ offered by
Western culture. In fact, as Edward Said argues, the West produced the non-white, non-Western cultures and peoples as inferior through a variety of discourses which stated the terms of their existence as inferior.

The world of imperialism emerged through the ramparts of the 19th century English novel. Old boundaries were destroyed and a new world of fiction was set down in their place. A revolution in the English novel was set. Every major modern writer has been preoccupied by the conflict between the colonizers and the colonized. The Victorian novelists breathed the world of class and they have brought the colonial world into the heart of fiction. The Victorian writers were conscious of their Empire and most of them thought solely in terms of Britain because they were born-British and spent their entire lives in England. But the modern novelists presented imperialism with much contradictions and extreme situations, which are missing from most Empire novelists. The imperial experience and theme altered the sense of time and space in the modern English novel. It brought a sense of urgency and crisis into European society and shattered the familiar patterns in English fiction with its anti-imperial approach.

**Research proposal**

The present research work focuses on the imperialistic perspectives reflected in the selected novels of Edward J. Thompson and J. G. Farrell providing new insights on the question of national and individualistic identities and lightening even the most recent circumstances to refigure and redefine imperialism in the present scenario. And it is for the same reason that the present study on imperialism would make the scholars introspect deeply, which is what all great literary works must do. In this research work the researcher intends to investigate the following novels of Thompson and Farrell.
Edward Thompson’s Indian novels are about ‘ideas’ rather than novels of ideas and their discursive form allows scope for debates on conflicting viewpoints amongst the Anglo-Indians. His *The Other Side of the Medal*, a Mutinous work, brought the Indian case into focus, suggesting the causes of their grievances and pointing to the inroads which British rule was making into their lives, presenting a perspective which at that time had received barely enough attention from Englishmen. *An Indian Day*, the first novel of Thompson’s trilogy of Indian novels, succinctly expresses his exasperation with both – the Anglo-Indian and the Indian communities. In the novel Thompson introduced the theme of India rising up against the masterdom of the British rulers. *A Farewell to India* is an unpremeditated sequel to *An Indian Day* with the continuation of the scenes and characters. It is Thompson’s political inspection of India and a picture of extreme political confusion and polarization that continued during the 1920-30 in India. In the last novel *An End of the Hours*, Thompson is acutely aware of the wrongs done by his people to Indians, especially in ill-treating them as inferiors. The novel deals with British feeling of loss, of decay
and false dreams. Here, the British admit that their ruling system is dying out. They are conducting as if they had already withdrawn their rule.

J. G. Farrell’s novels are never earnest or pompous. On the contrary, they are often extremely funny, combining vivid historical backdrops with an ironic, absurd sense of humour. Farrell’s novels do not represent direct attacks against the British Empire; they are artistically perfect laughing reflections on the follies and foibles, cruelty and indignity of the imperial encounter. In this work the researcher tries to explore this comprehensive and masterful handling of the theme of imperial decay in the novels of J. G. Farrell.

Farrell’s first novel of his empire trilogy, Troubles is a picture of confused interpersonal relationships, the painful and agonizing complex politics and an imperial decline into anarchy. It is a rich, imaginative and funny work, even as its atmosphere is morbid and gothic. In The Siege of Krishnapur the focus of the story is the siege of the British civil service enclave at Krishnapur (historically this was the ‘Siege of Lucknow’). Here, Farrell’s focus is less on Krishnapur and the siege than on the attitudes and the beliefs of the colonizers who made that siege inevitable. The Singapore Grip is Farrell’s most obviously accessible and cinematic novel, offering an exotic location, romance and dramatic wartime events. What is striking about the novel is the way in which Farrell used the form of the popular ‘blockbuster’ to convey what is at hearts a bitterly ironic and politically highly-charged vision of empire. Farrell has a supernatural ability to root out and reduce pretentions and hypocrisy wherever it exists, and that is what he does here to incredible comic effect. Farrell’s last unfinished novel The Hill Station, forms a kind of modest sequel to The Siege of Krishnapur, set largely in Simla of 1871. The inclusion of The Hill Station in the empire fiction strengthens the argument that
Farrell, in spite of his interest in the other colonies, takes India as the key-figure destination.

**Objective and Significance of the Study**

The present research work is going to be analytical and evaluative and intends to explore the imperialistic perspectives in the fictional work of Edward J. Thompson and J. G. Farrell with special reference to Indian novels of Edward Thompson and Empire fiction of J. G. Farrell. The objective of the present study is to focus and compare the theme of imperialistic consciousness and protest reflected in the novels of Thompson and Farrell. The study also seeks to explore and study the matrix of interpersonal and political relationship among the British rulers and the ruled. Moreover, it seeks to explore as well as analyse the imperialistic system in which the rulers devise political machination and intrigues to subjugate the natives and ways of controlling the colonized countries with hostile, oligarchic and hegemonic atmosphere.

As stated earlier, at the backdrop of the present situation, this research work helps to redefine the ruler-ruled encounters and imperialistic perspectives against the backdrop of the bilateral and cultural relationships with the British imperialists. The researcher’s endeavour of comparing the authors’ writing about the colonial and imperialistic modes of the contemporary life creates hospitable environment for the development of literature.

**Methodology and Criteria for the Comparative Study**

The researcher proposes to adopt analytic, interpretative and evaluative methods to study the selected works of Edward Thompson and J. G. Farrell. The methodology used for the study mainly comprises analysis, assessment and comparisons. The researcher also proposes to
follow seventh edition of *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* for citation and documentation. While studying the imperialistic perspectives, it may be helpful to devise certain parameters for the analysis and comparison of the selected works of fiction of both the writers. Therefore, the researcher intends to study the following aspects of imperialism in the selected works of fiction.

A) Social, political, economic, historical and cultural dimensions of imperialism

B) Portrayal of major characters.

**Chapter scheme**

In order to study the imperialistic perspectives, it is necessary to define and find out the meaning of imperialism. It is also essential to understand social, political, historical and cultural dimensions of the term imperialism. Therefore, chapter one of this research work defines imperialism and states the factors responsible for the rise of imperialism and consequences of imperialism. This chapter also focuses on the British imperialism in India in brief. At the end the chapter concludes with brief explanation of Colonial and Postcolonial theory of literature and major theorists. Chapter two of this study records the life and literary works of the authors of the texts selected for the present study. This chapter also encloses a brief review of relevant literature. The succeeding two chapters of this research work endeavour to explore ‘imperialistic perspectives’ from select works of the authors selected and adapt Analytic, Interpretative and Evaluative methods to study the selected works. Chapter five of this research study compares the selected works focusing on the imperialistic perspectives implied in them on the platform of criteria selected for comparison. The last chapter concludes the study in the restricted scope of the thesis.
The following is the scheme of the chapters devised by the researcher.

**Introduction and outline of the study**

**Chapter-I:** The Concept of Imperialism

**Chapter-II:** Brief Biographical sketch of Edward J. Thompson and J. G. Farrell

**Chapter-III:** Imperialistic perspectives in the novels of Edward J. Thompson

**Chapter-IV:** Imperialistic perspectives in the novels of J. G. Farrell

**Chapter-V:** Imperialistic perspectives: A comparative overview

**Chapter-VI:** Conclusion

**Works Cited**

**Bibliography**