Chapter Four

Duncan and Canadian Nationalism

Nationalism and imperialism are major concerns in Duncan's writings dealing with Canada and India. She was a staunch nationalist with regard to Canada's cause of independence, but adopted the role of an imperialist in contemplating the question of India's independence. It is in this context that her "Double Vision" comes into focus. This chapter highlights Duncan's nationalism and her passion for Canada.

A major thrust of Duncan's journalistic writings as well as her fiction related to Canada is to redefine the Canadian scene in the context of colonial influence on the socio-cultural milieu of Canada. She emerges on the Canadian literary scene as a major novelist who wrote about what Frye termed as the "mercantilist sense" Canada suffered from. M. Dean, in her essay "The Struggle for the Ideal: Political change in Sara Jeannette Duncan's Novels"(1984) suggests that Duncan also analysed "the shift in political power from aristocracy to majority... by depicting their growth from aristocratic British rule to democratic self-government"(93).

Duncan's provincial Canadian background fails to provide a stable literary and cultural tradition upon which she can draw. Frank Birbalsingh, in his essay "Sara Jeannette Duncan's Indian Fiction"(1977), says that at the start of Duncan's writing career, Canada was still a colonial nation which felt it could retain political independence while maintaining existing (colonial) cultural
relations with Great Britain. This need for a divided loyalty between Canada and England created an ambivalent outlook which is evident in Canadian politics, culture and literature at the end of the nineteenth century (77). This ambivalence is reflected in Duncan's writings as well. Taking a cue from this basic premise related to Duncan's art of fiction, we find that this ambivalence comes to the fore more vigorously when she looks, from a nationalistic stance, at the Canadian society on the one hand and the Indian society on the other, during the colonial period of both the countries.

India and Canada were two societies on the brink of nationhood. Duncan dramatizes the process of social change as the two struggle to define their present and future identity. This is best illustrated through her treatment of imperialism and nationalism in two sets of novels: *The Imperialist* and *Cousin Cinderella*, Duncan's two most Canadian novels; and *The Burnt offering, His Honor and a Lady* and *Set in Authority*, which form the major part of her Indian fiction.

Sara Jeannette Duncan grew up when Canada was a nascent nation - it had achieved confederation status only in 1867. It was struggling to get its moorings and was attempting to establish a separate, viable entity as well as a unique identity. While her contemporaries were still 'romantically' inclined, Duncan forayed into the 'realistic' realm as she focussed her writings on the socio-political changes in the post-colonial nation.

The themes Duncan stressed upon are Anglo-Indian (dealing with Britishers living in colonial India) and international (dealing with Canada,
England and America). Though a Canadian, Duncan wrote only one novel set in Canada (*The Imperialist*) and one having a specific Canadian theme (*Cousin Cinderella*). The majority of her writings deal with Anglo-India (eight novels and a collection of short fiction). Her novels dealing with the international theme are set in America, England or Europe. This lack of Canadian concern in the bulk of her work is surprising. The reason perhaps could be that Canadian themes were not popular in her time and the one novel she had so lovingly set in Canada was not well received even in Canada; so Duncan concentrated on saleable themes. As the popular themes were America and England, Duncan concerned herself with these two countries. Most of the time the Americans went to England and Europe; a couple of times the English came over to America. Her two Canadian novels deal with the question of Canadian identity, as well as the need and importance of a distinct Canadian nationality.

The question/theme of Canadian identity has been a major concern of English-Canadian fiction. Whether it is Duncan at the turn of the century or contemporary writers like Rudy Wiebe, Margaret Laurence or Margaret Atwood writing in the later half of the twentieth century, they all deal with this question in their own different ways. Salat in *The Canadian Novel: A Search For Identity* (1993) notes that writers and critics since Confederation have "addressed themselves to practically the same issues and concerns in their discourse on identity indicating thereby the persistence of the forces and factors that have subverted the efforts to resolve the dilemma of identity" (2). Chandra Mohan in his essay "The Canadian identity in Modern English-Canadian Fiction" (1990) writes: "The question of identity in modern English-Canadian fiction has
broadly been approached at three levels, involving the dimension of material identity, regional identity and personal identity" (104). Rudy Wiebe in *The Temptations of the Big Bear* (1973) deals with the Canadian national identity as the power struggle between the British imperialists and the native Indian inhabitants. Margaret Laurence's fiction deals with the protagonist's search for a "new sense of personal identity" whether it is Hagar in *The Stone Angel* (1964) or Rachel in *A Jest of God* (1966). Margaret Atwood shows a consciousness of the danger to Canadian identity lurking in the shape of the big neighbour, the U.S.A. In order to break away from the American strangle hold of economic and cultural domination over life and literature in Canada, Atwood in *Surfacing* (1972) attempts to create a distinct Canadian identity.

Duncan too was acutely conscious of the outside influences which created obstacles in the way of establishing a Canadian identity. In *The Imperialist* and *Cousin Cinderella* Duncan displays a consistent concern with the task of defining a unique Canadian nationality/identity. By reconciling and blending tradition and freedom, the fundamental principles of its most significant but opposing influences - Britain and the United States - she thinks that Canada approaches a balanced ideal. Duncan, in these two novels, finds the two other cultures wanting. She projects a Canadian national identity which is not an extension of these two, but is something different, independent and real.

Duncan's love for Canada and her attempt to seek an ideal Canadian identity is laudable and understandable. M. Dean (1982) claims that in novels dealing with British or American characters, Duncan is profiling Canada. Even
where no or some minor Canadian characters appear, to claim that the basic impulse in such novels is Canadian, verges on the romantic rather than the real. Dean writes "For Duncan, the Canadian ideal and mission are - reconciling material prosperity with Christian social and spiritual values in order to achieve a spiritual unity of mankind by promoting peaceful co-operation among nations through the mechanism of the Empire"(13). She maintains that Duncan uses Canadian viewpoint as a touchstone. She contends that all Duncan's novels in which she deals with the international theme of the new world encountering the old reveal her continuing concern with Canada and Canadians as models of behaviour. Dean makes very tall claims on behalf of Duncan. Textual evidence disproves these contentions. One is unable to discover "spiritual unity of mankind" as claimed by Dean in any of Duncan's novels. Even her Canadian novels, which establish Canadian superiority over Great Britain, fail to show such 'unity', as will be evidenced from their discussion in this Chapter. Her international novels which deal with the theme of the Atlantic triangle are also unable to sustain Dean's claim that Duncan uses Canadian viewpoint as a touchstone. Her Anglo-Indian works, which are analysed in the next chapter, go absolutely against the concept of any unity; rather they expose Duncan as just a white woman who looked down upon the non-whites. In the process, she loses even her Canadian identity and emerges as a mere Anglo-Indian.

*An American Girl in London*(1891) is the story of a rich American girl Mamie Wick's visit to London. By placing the typical American girl in the middle of London's social tableau, Duncan gets an opportunity to truly judge England. "The events themselves and Mamie's wry commentary upon them,
combine to provide a complex and subtle picture of English life. Much of the 'attention' Mamie receives is in the form of crude attempts to grab her fortune" 
(Tausky1980:95). Mamie reacts against British snobbery, inflexibility and their blind faith in conventions. British institutions seem to be crumbling behind the facade of a rich history and culture. Mamie's adventure provides Duncan with an opportunity to analyse the two cultures. On balance, the English culture is found wanting on several counts. True, even Mamie is at times described ironically, especially when she succumbs to the British customs when she is to be presented to the Queen. But on the whole, Mamie is shown as a true and typically American girl and is sympathetically delineated. There are no Canadian characters, concerns or motifs in this novel. To claim that by criticizing the U.S. and British societies, Duncan, by inference, is presenting the Canadian case is unacceptable.

As a sequel to this novel, The Voyage of Consolation(1898) takes Mamie Wick on a tour of Europe, but the focus shifts from Mamie to her father, Senator Wick. Once again the novel reiterates the discrepancy in the attitude and behaviour of people of different nationalities rather than any peculiarly Canadian concern or trait. The European in the novel are "slickly polite and well versed in all the arts necessary for recovering money from American pockets" (Dean1982:35). The senator's superior airs and loud comments are balanced by his shrewdness and matter of fact approach. Duncan seeks to portray the strengths and weaknesses in the three Anglo-Saxon nations, though Canadian tourists play an insignificant role in the novel. Dean admits that the novel adds
very little in the way of developing Duncan's theory about nationalists. She, however, insists that it underlines her consistency and agreement with contemporary Canadian ideal(36). To Dean, every criticism of either of the two cultures automatically reinforces the Canadian ideal. She forgets that these novels were written with the British and the American public in mind, among whom the sale of books was commercially viable. A Canadian ideal would have been unacceptable in these countries, a fact Duncan, the shrewd businesswoman that she was, knew fairly well.

In *A Daughter of Today*(1894), Duncan for the first time attempts a serious work. Florence Donaldson, who had interviewed Duncan, makes the following comment: "It is a study of a temperament warped by the intensity of modern feminine egotism, and placed among what must be considered mainly as the unattractive Bohemian surroundings of struggling artistic and journalistic aspirants to fame"(qtd. in Mckenna1980:155). The debate centres around the relationship between Art and Society. The question the novel raises is: can a novel be an artistic success, or even good entertainment, if it treats a "disagreeable" subject? Elfrida Bell, the egotist, the new woman, the daughter of today is bohemian, frank, devastatingly different and totally confused. Duncan presents two extremes of opinion - one essentially conventional represented by Janet Cardiff and John Kendel, the British duo; and the other in the shape of Elfrida, the iconoclastic new world crusader.

The debate about art and society necessarily boils down to the debate regarding representation of society in fiction. Elfrida defends the naturalists, whereas the conventional Janet believes in form rather than phenomena. The
question raised in the novel is - can filth be shaped into art? After seeing her own portrait, Elfrida ultimately rejects the naturalist position and confesses that an egotist doesn't make an agreeable picture, however charmingly one may apologize for her. This realization leads to an excessive sense of shame that drives Elfrida to commit suicide. If one assumes that by criticizing the excessive freedom granted to individuals in the United States, Duncan is raising the Canadian flag of reconciliation, then this belief itself amounts to stretching things to an extreme.

_Those Delightful Americans_(1902) is different from the earlier novels in the sense that it is the British this time who go over to America, and pass judgment on the proximity or divergence of the two cultures. It focuses on decay of American democracy where the concept of egalitarianism is dying. Both the British and the American characters in Duncan's fiction consider their own standards as universal. They see the difference but don't learn from it. The British characters return with their British conventions intact and with little understanding of America. Both countries continue their blunder downwards from their ideal (Dean 1982:46).

Dean argues that these four novels create the context for Canada. The theme of reconciliation becomes the controlling idea in Duncan's three Canadian novels - _The Imperialist_ (1904), _Cousin Cinderella_ (1908) and _His Royal Happiness_ (1914). The first two novels do have Canadian themes and characters (the only two thus associated with Canada) but it is an error to claim the third as having Canada as its controlling interest.
*His Royal Happiness* marks a shift in Duncan's attitude towards America. America is no more considered as a pariah. The fear of war with Germany makes the imperialists rush into the American lap. The novel suggests a strategy for the unification of the Anglo-saxon race through an alliance between Britain and America. This is a need based alliance; it does not involve any principle. Getting the two nations together due to the exigencies of war makes the alliance morally suspect. Dean's claim that such unification would ultimately "become the first step toward the reformation of the world along lines of idealist philosophy"(1982:89) is not only not tenable, but also smacks of racial superiority. Alfred, the King of England, marries the daughter of the President of the United States. This is a basic premise which can at best be termed as naive. However, in Duncan’s view, the aristocratic and democratic ideals are thus reconciled and balanced.

This is the biggest advertisement for "balance" which according to many critics is the Canadian ideal that Duncan was trying to project through her novels. But, unfortunately, this ideal, this concept of balance is totally brushed aside in Duncan's Anglo-Indian novels where she becomes biased, stereotypical and prejudiced. A lot is to be expected from a writer, who as it has been claimed, stuck steadfastly to the Canadian ideal of reconciliation and balance with visions of a "spiritual union" almost materializing.

Her books in India, however, simply fail to provide the same ideal. Was the ideal then, relevant only in the Canadian context? Did Duncan feel that reconciliation was necessary only among the Anglo - Saxons; the ideal could be rejected in the case of colonial India? Was Duncan, then, a racist? When
Duncan's Canadian writings are juxtaposed with her Indian fiction, one finds a 'Double Vision' operating. Duncan emerges as an imperial-nationalist in her journalistic writings and Canadian novels, but she is a mere Anglo-Indian and a British imperialist when she writes about India.

Duncan's Anglo-Indian and Canadian writings are a pole apart. Once in India, she very quickly adapts to the genre of Anglo-Indian writing - praising imperialism, defending Britain and attacking India. It is interesting to note that whenever Duncan compares England with Canada, England comes second best; whenever she writes about England and India, England is a winner on all counts. One definitely encounters a 'Double Vision' in Duncan's writings, (as detailed in the next chapter), as she applies one standard of judgment for Canada and another for India.

Sara Jeannette Duncan came from a country which was a British Colony. She was therefore aware of the cramping effect colonization had generally on the country and especially on the psyche of writers like Duncan herself. One would expect understanding and empathy in the heart of one colonized for the other. Surprisingly, however, we do not come across any of these feelings in Duncan's Anglo-Indian work. She turns out to be true colonizer and an ardent imperialist who is dead against Indian nationalism. The theme of nationalism and imperialism co-exist in Duncan's writings, though the application of this theme varies: nationalism is for Canada's cause and imperialism is to the benefit of India, she seems to assert. Her Canadian
nationalism interestingly, is contained in a peculiar kind of imperialism, a kind special to Canada, perhaps!

The term 'Imperialism' is generally associated with political domination and economic exploitation. But in the context of Canadian history after the Confederation, imperialism had a totally different Connotation. The confederation of Canada in 1867 did not settle the question of Canadian independence. Rather it fuelled a debate on the question of Canada's future. Three options were being debated: whether Canada would attain total independence, or it would be annexed by the U.S., or some kind of imperial federation with England would be forged. As Canada had a very small population, total independence did not appear feasible. The future lay either with the U.S. or with Britain.

Carl Berger in Introduction to The sense of Power(1970) comments: "Imperialism appeared in Canada at a time when economic depression and antagonism between French and English Canada revealed deep fissures in the foundation of Confederation....Twenty years after the Confederation, it was predicted that Canada will collapse"(4). The very survival of the country was at stake. The fear of domination, even annexation by the U.S. seemed quite real at that time. For those who were opposed to the U.S. hegemony, the only way out seemed to be to lean on the mother country for support. They were forced to use imperialism as a shield to defend Canada; their desire to link the country's future with England emerged purely out of their concern for Canada. It is true that this fear turned out to be exaggerated, "but it galvanized the defenders of Canada and the British connection into action"(Berger1970:4).
These imperialists were often misunderstood. Due to their enthusiasm for England, they were branded anti-national. This was unfair criticism. Carl Berger explains, "There have been many varieties of Canadian nationalism, Canadian imperialism was one of such varieties"(9). Those criticizing the imperialists simply meant that "they believed it incompatible with that kind of nationalism which they endorsed"(9). In fact, Canadian imperialists were nationalists first, as in their conception, imperialism was a means by which Canada would emerge as a strong power.

The three men who were the moving force behind the emergence of Canadian imperialism in the late 1880s and 1890s were George Taylor Denison, George Munro Grant, and George Robert Parkin. They thought that a link with Britain and Canada being part of a strong empire would automatically insure Canada's defense against their geographically powerful neighbour.

The anti-imperialists called the imperialists anti-national, in order to discredit them. Defending the imperialists, Berger states:

Canadian imperialism rested upon intense awareness of Canadian nationality combined with a desire to unify and transform the British Empire, so that this nationality could attain a position of equality within it. These two ideas have customarily been viewed as separate and mutually incompatible; for imperialists the sense of nationality and the ideal for imperial unity were interlocked and identical(1970:52).
Their obsession was to be with the dominant race. Imperial unity, they thought, would remove their colonial status and grant them an equal if not dominant status. It is therefore wrong to doubt the nationalism of the imperialists. Their imperialism actually grew out of nationalism and their love and concern for Canada. Imperialism, thus, was a vehicle of their nationalism. Carl Berger concludes that imperialism failed in Canada because it succumbed to Canadian nationalism.

Sara Jeannette Duncan was acutely aware of these developments; she very adroitly deals with this problem in *The Imperialist*, her only Canadian novel in the sense that is set in Canada, has Canadian characters and deals with the peculiar political problems that Canada faced at the turn of the century.

Claude Bissell, in her introduction to the New Canadian Library edition of *The Imperialist* (1971) writes: "Miss Duncan was venturing into particularly dangerous territory in this novel, for her ostensible subject was 'Imperial Federation' a highly topical and controversial question at the end of the nineteenth century, and one on which she held strong views" (vii). The focus of the novel is how a prosperous small Canadian town faces the issue of imperial federation.

There were different perceptions of the imperial question, depending upon one's political beliefs or economic involvement. Duncan makes her own intentions clear in two of her letters. In a letter (Sept. 18, 1902) to John Willison, the then editor of Toronto *Globe*, she wrote: "I have taken upon myself to write a Canadian novel with a political motif" (qtd. in Fowler 1985:257). In the other letter (Jan. 8th, 1905), written to Lord
Landsdowne whom Duncan had met when he was Governor General of Canada and later Viceroy of India, she explained her point of view as presented in the novel:

> It seemed to me that among the assumptions and disputes over here [in England] as to what the 'colonial view' really is, it might be worth while to present the situation as it appears to the average Canadian of the average small town, inarticulate except at election time, but whose view in the end counts more than that of those pictorial people whose speeches at Toronto banquets go so far to over-colour the British imagination about Canadian sentiment. I thought it might be useful to bring this practical person forward and let him be seen. I hope I have not made him too prominent, but he is there. My book offers only a picture of life and opinion, and attempts no arguments (qtd. in Fowler1985:269).

Duncan's own views are important parameters for evaluating *The Imperialist*. "We are here at the making of a nation" (*Imp.*:47). Duncan's main concern in this novel is the making of Canada - a nascent nation trying to find its moorings, and taking hesitant steps toward independence and self reliance.

She explores the nature of Canadian society through an authentic, objective and sympathetic delineation of the town of Elgin which symbolizes English speaking Canada. The novel is basically a study of Canadian nationalism.
Duncan informs that the town of Elgin knew two controlling interests - the interest of politics and the interest of religion. "Both are terms we must nevertheless circumscribe. Politics wore a complexion strictly local, provincial or Dominion"(58). Religious fervour in Elgin was not dramatic, just reasonable. The Elgin community appears quite matter of fact and pragmatic in its approach. England was a distant horizon, so the community was "Indifferent, apathetic, self-centered"(59) in its concern for England. "Arts conspired to be absent, .... There was nothing, indeed, to interfere with Elgin's attention to the immediate, the vital, the municipal"(60). Duncan repeatedly points out Elgin's' limitations, its boundaries, its immediate concerns as "the human interest is still thin and sparse"(60) in such communities. Dr. Drummond was well revered and had a special status among his congregation. Duncan explains: "Knox church, Elgin, was his dominion, its moral and material affairs his jealous interest and its legitimate expansion his chief pride"(62). Whenever Dr. Drummond chided the people for neglecting church affairs or being indifferent to the church, they appeared appropriately chastened and apologetic. Although Dr. Drummond looks at the congregation as a "beneficent despot"(62), the community is alert and willing to assert itself. This is what Dr. Drummond has to learn when he opposes the diversion of congregational funds for the salary of a new Minister. He is very politely but firmly overruled: "Dr. Drummond, for the first time in his ministry, was defeated by his people. It was less a defeat than a defence, an unexpected rally round the corporate right to direct corporate activities' (64). In this act, Elgin retains the right to direct its own activities. This is a small battle that Elgin wins. In fact, as the novel progresses, one finds that Elgin wins all its
battles, although they are all small ones. Shouldn't a young community start with
small issues, small battles and small victories? Can it afford to dabble into
larger issues when it is not sure of its moorings? Elgin may be young, but it is
mature enough to know what it wants; whether it is right or wrong is a matter of
a different plane.

Marian Fowler comments: "The novel is a long, lyrical love letter,
addressed to Redney's [Duncan's] family, to her home town, to her
country"(1985:251). Archie, the youngest Duncan, said there was clearly a
parallel between Duncan's family and the Murchisons (qtd. in
Goodwin1964:78]. With great care and affection Duncan draws the full length
portraits of her brothers and sisters in Stella, Abby and Lorne Murchison; of her
home town Brantford in Elgin, and of herself in Advena. Having lived away
from her family and country for thirteen years, the passionate outpouring of her
pent up feelings for her family, her home town and country, imbue The
Imperialist with a rare degree of intensity, not often found in her other novels.
The urge to become totally involved in the process of growth of Canada as a
nation makes her take up the job of the narrator to explain and comment on
every issue and character. Most critics, while praising Duncan's sense of
balance and realistic treatment of issues in the novel, have also pointed out the
narrative uncertainty and the ambiguous ending. This perhaps explains why the
novel, when it was first published, failed to enthuse even the Canadian critics
and the reading public. Peter Allen, in his article "Narrative uncertainty in
Duncan's The Imperialist"(1984), points out the problem areas in the novel thus:
Duncan's narrative voice is the chief puzzle. Although her subject is a provincial way of life she herself as narrator is notably cosmopolitan, sophisticated, witty, complex, altogether hard to catch and hold. The problem is partly a matter of tone: She alternates between an ironic and an objective mode of reporting, and we cannot always be sure how to take her. It is partly a matter of style: she has a penchant for clever obliquity that makes her a consistently demanding writer and occasionally a very obscure one. It is partly a matter of narrative method: she moves unpredictably and abruptly from one topic to another, sometimes with the explicit suggestion that her novel-writing is a spontaneous affair, a little uncertain and not entirely under her control.... [There is a] curious mixture of artistic control and the apparent lack of it that we find in this novel(42-43).

Clara Thomas, in "Canadian social mythologies in Sara Jeannette Duncan's The Imperialist(1977), points out the "double focus vision" with which Duncan paints Elgin:

sometimes pointing out areas of positive value and potential that its people are not aware of, at other times, deflating individual or corporate areas of pretension or meagreness of spirit. The narrator's voice, all wise and insistently instructive, is sometimes condescending to her reader and sometimes, also, to the town and the people of Elgin(39).
She further comments that Duncan's straight focus shows us Elgin as the townspeople believed it to be; "her ironic focus is a corrective to the idealized, or sentimentalized vision of the small town, but the two views together do not subtract from the quality of the picture. They add detail, depth, movement and the possibilities of laughter to it"(39).

This double focus, the presentation of negative and positive side, credits her portrait of Elgin with objectivity and realism. In his article, "Humour and Balance in The Imperialist: Sara Jeannette Duncan's "Instinct of Presentation"(1976), Michael Peterman too praises Duncan's balanced presentation. He writes: "Balance in fact, is the ordering principle of the novel: it extended beyond the political question to the presentation of the town itself and, in the degree that Elgin (Brantford, Ontario) is a microcosm of the country, to the presentation of Canada as a whole"(56). John Moss(1974) states that documentary and literary significance in a novel may be quite independent of each other; but in The Imperialist, Duncan has been able to integrate the two in a most engaging balance of authenticity and aesthetic division(53). However, the novel is structurally not as balanced as has been made out to be. This aspect is discussed later in this chapter.

The political question referred to above is the question of imperialism. Lorne Murchison, the protagonist of the novel, is the chief crusader of imperialism. Although she was herself an ardent imperialist, Duncan is able to give a dispassionate or balanced, realistic and un-biased picture of Lorne as well as of imperialism.
The main plot of the novel deals with Lome, the idealist protagonist, his tryst with imperialism and his ultimate failure in selling his dream of imperial federation to the people of Elgin. Lome, having become a lawyer, comes into limelight after winning a difficult court case which earns him tremendous good will. His brilliance is duly acknowledged when he is invited to join a trade delegation going to England. After his return, he is offered the Liberal candidacy for Fox-county by-election. This gives him a chance to project his dream as the visit to England had filled him with a religious fervour about England's greatness and the possibility of Canada's link with it. England had history and traditions, Canada means and resources, and a link could prove beneficial to both. His vision fails to enthuse the voters. Although he wins the by election by a slim margin the election is declared void because of certain irregularities, and he is not renominated.

The sub plot deals with another idealist Hugh Finlay's romance with Advena Murchison. Hugh carries with him a sense of old-world honour which complicates his love affair as he is willing to sacrifice his as well as Advena's happiness for the sake of upholding his erstwhile engagement to Christie Cameron, a woman he doesn't love. Only by a quirk of fate is he saved from making the unnecessary sacrifice. The alienation of both Lome and Finlay from the world of reality creates the tensions in the novel.

The novel opens with the description of Mother Beggarlegs who sells gingerbread in the market place, and is generally taunted by the children. Lome notes this unfairness and talks to her politely. Duncan Comments: "his kind attempt at colloquy is the first indication I can find of the active sympathy with
the disabilities of his fellow-beings which stamped him later so intelligent a meliorist"(12). This distinct behaviour sets Lorne apart from others. "The children's insulting behaviour to Mother Beggarlegs", according to Joseph M. Zezulka in *The Imperialist: Imperialism, Provincialism and Point of view* (1980), "serves to point out Elgin's parochialism, its suspicion of whatever appears odd or different from the norm. By his feelings of shame at the way in which she is treated, and by his desire to communicate with her, Lorne displays that larger cast of mind which will distinguish him later on(151-2).

But 'difference' is a dangerous label and from those going against the norm, society extracts a high price. The Murchisons in general, Lorne and Advena in particular, are marked by a difference. This difference from the established social norms develops into a battle between the individual and the society. The battle is presented not only through the characters of Lorne and Advena but also through the Murchisons and the Milburn families, which symbolize the two opposite poles of Elgin society.

The house the Murchisons live in is at the edge of the town. "It was felt to be outside the general need, misjudged, adventitious; and it wore its superiority in the popular view like a folly. It was in Elgin but not of it: it represented a different tradition"(*Imp.*:29). In another reference, the narrator once again speaks of the superiority of the Murchisons which sets them apart. "It is highly unlikely to have occurred to them that they were too good for their environment. Yet in a manner they were. It was a matter of quality, of spiritual and mental fabric; they were hardly aware that they had it, but it marked them
with a difference" (44). Like the house, the Murchisons are in Elgin, but essentially not of it.

Lorne the imperialist is an idealist, a man with a vision and a mission. He is both an imperialist as well as an imperial person. Peter Allen (1984) finds the title of the novel literal as well as ironic as Lorne, the bearer of the imperial ideal, is presented as a kind of Canadian prince, who, ironically, is ultimately governed by the people he would lead.

The Elgin market place is described very realistically. Both Mother Beggarlegs and the marketplace are juxtaposed symbolically. Mother Beggarlegs signifies difference and oddity, whereas the market place represents the norm, the average, the commercial. Just as lome treats Beggarlegs differently, so also he looks at the market place in a different spirit, without realizing its true character. He finds affectionate links with his people:

The sense of kinship surged in his heart; these were his people, this his lot as well as theirs.... A tenderness seized him for the farmers of Fox county, a throb of enthusiasm for the idea they represented, which had become for him suddenly moving and pictorial. At that moment his country came subjectively into his possession; great and helpless it came into his inheritance as it comes into the inheritance of every man who can take it, by deed of imagination and energy and love (Imp.: 74).

According to Misao Dean in A Different Point of view (1991), the realistic description is tied specifically to an abstract idea that serves to unite Lorne with his countrymen. The idea is "opportunity": "Lorne realizes that like
the farmers who sit in the market in Elgin he too can find the opportunity to make his mark in the comparative emptiness and newness of the new land" (47).

But Lorne overlooks the essentials which exist behind the scene. Elgin's treatment of Beggarlegs indicates its hostility towards people who do not belong to the norm. In his misplaced enthusiasm, Lorne does not understand the harsh reality that the market place represents Elgin's conservatism, its suspicion of imaginative people, its practical commercialism. Immediately after Duncan presents the above sentiments, Lorne's meeting with Elmore Crow's mother gives ample evidence of what shape events are going to take. Crow's mother ignores Lorne and is totally unimpressed by his status, manner or talk. There is a lesson in this for Lorne, who unfortunately fails to grasp it. Mrs. Crow represents the static cautious society which is both unable and unwilling to accept people who are different, be they superior or imaginative. Duncan is fascinated by the mixture of idealistic and self-serving motives, as she explores the struggles of imaginative protagonists trapped in a social world which seeks to suppress their individuality (Tausky1988:Introduction:XIV).

Lorne's weakness is his inability to understand this reality. His father, Mr. Murchison, very rightly comments that Lorne takes too much for granted, like other folks being like himself (Imp.:150). It is this lack of practical insight which ultimately leads to his failure.

Imperialism, at that time, was a movement proposing closer economic, political and military ties within the empire. Lorne is a staunch imperialist who believes that only through a link with England would Canada be able to shed her
colonial status. He believes that Canada had a larger role to play in the affairs of the world, provided a fresh look was cast on imperial ties. Lome reflects "twentieth century belongs to Canada" kind of an attitude when he states that the centre of the empire was bound to shift—where else if not to Canada? He also perceives a moral advantage in Canada's links with England: "They've developed the finest human product there is, the cleanest, the most disinterested, and we want to keep up the relationship—it's important" (Imp.:98).

Duncan allows her sympathies for imperial ties to be reflected in the novel, but very scrupulously avoids taking sides. "Lorne Murchison is the imperialist of the title," observes Tausky, "but his brand of imperialism is not the only version of that very complex political doctrine to be stated in the novel" (1988:XV). Tausky further observes that imperialism meant different things to different people, and several of these divergent conceptions are faithfully reflected in The Imperialist (1980:154). A case in point is Mr. Murchison, who is sympathetic to the cause of imperialism, but differs with his son on its manifestation. When Lorne advocates common interest, common representation and common taxation for the two countries, John Murchison disagrees: "Common interest, yes," said his father "common taxation, no, for defence or any other purpose. The colonies will never send money to be squandered by the London war office" (Imp.:129).

Although Duncan has been praised for her balanced treatment of issues and characters in the novel, yet she couldn't blend the qualities of idealism and pragmatism in the figure of her hero, Lorne. Her failure to project the ideal hero reminds one of Arthur Miller's success in such an enterprise. Miller, in his
play *All My Sons* (1947), successfully bridges this gap between the idealist son and the practical father; both have to shed some of their pre-conceived notions in order to reach a balance - pure idealism has to be chastened at the hands of practical considerations in order to survive in this world.

Chris Keller, the son, fresh from his war experiences, comes home with the vision of an ideal society based on brotherhood and selfless considerations. He is shocked to see the society back home completely subservient to commercialism and selfish interests. This frustration is related to the post II World War disillusionment of the survivors who, after seeing the horrors of war as well as some of the splendid human qualities it brought out, expected a better social order to emerge after extreme human suffering during the war. Chris wants to run away from his father Joe, who is a professional businessman, whose God is money and profit. The play shows the confrontation between these two characters symbolizing pure idealism on the one hand and total commercialization on the other. The play is a process, an education, where both father and son come down from their extreme positions to realize that idealism should be blended with pragmatism, as one is incomplete without the other. Chris at the end of the play emerges as a wiser man who has a better understanding of the demands of the human situation.

Lorne, the idealist hero fails to realize, and Duncan the novelist fails to project this essential balance in him. The election campaign provides Duncan with an opportunity to show how the town of Elgin reacts to Lorne's zeal to commit Canada to closer imperial ties. Elgin's cool reaction suggests its
cautious approach. Francis Zichy, in his essay "Sara Jeannette Duncan"(1980) comments: "Elgin's reaction to Lome's 'new idea' reflects the actual outlook of English speaking Canada in the 1890s.... In fact, this policy was never clearly in the interests of all Canadians"(35). Duncan's description of Fox county farmers who had gathered to hear Lome's election speech very aptly sums up their pragmatic attitude: "They had the air of being prosperous, but not prosperous enough for theories and doctrines"(Imp. :191). People find the imperialist policy impractical as it was against the interests of Canadian manufacturers. Octavious Milburn puts is succinctly: "The Empire looks nice on the map, but when it comes to practical politics their bread and butter's in the home industries"(166).

For Lome, imperialism is not an economic question alone, but a question of moral values, of cultural advantage, a link with revered traditions and customs. It also points towards the emergence of a new Canadian ethos. Further, it was a guarantee against American expansionism. Elgin's resistance to Lome's ideas perhaps suggests its independence, its self-assurance, and above all, its self-interest.

Tausky observes that the election speech delivered by Lome at the final election rally is the turning point of his political fortune. According to Alfred G. Bailey, in his essay "The Historical Setting of Sara Duncan's The Imperialist"(1980), the passionate idealism of Lome's oration was perhaps based on the speeches of Parkin and Grant(140). Lome throws caution to the winds, goes for an all out attack on America and tries to convince his audience of the advantages of remaining loyal to England. As England had outlived its glory,
the mantle was bound to fall on Canada. Referring to Lorne's idealistic appeal
to a pragmatic audience, Tausky remarks, "As a philosopher king he deserves
coronation, as a politician, he deserves to be dumped" (1988:xvii). And dumped
he is, rather unceremoniously.

In Lorne, Duncan had all the ingredients that go into the making of a
tragic hero. He is a fanatic for the cause of imperialism. His tragic flaw is his
inability to see that he may be wrong in his conception of himself as well as of
the people of his town. As an idealist, he is streets ahead of all imperialists in
the novel, but way behind in pragmatism. His obsession blinds him to the reality
of his community's essentially practical character. His failure doesn't come
unexpectedly; Duncan keeps throwing hints about Lorne eventually coming to
grief. Duncan was not writing a tragedy. But leaving the hero thus frustrated in
a work which can be termed as a social comedy does not show Duncan to be as
balanced in her approach as several critics would have us believe. Marion B.
Smith, in her review of The Imperialist (1961), points out two kinds of
ambivalences. She says that the novel is most successful in capturing the great
Canadian ambivalence of sentimental attachment to Britain and touchy
defensiveness of the national identity. The second is Duncan's own ambivalence
towards her characters, as even the main characters are at times, not taken
seriously by the author (Can Lit. 10(73).

Leon Slonim, in his article "Character, Action, and Theme in The
Imperialist" (1975), comments on the juxtaposition between positive and negative
themes. The themes of idealism, altruism, passion, imagination, energy and the
future are contrasted with the themes of egoism, selfishness, cold blooded calculation, indolence and the past respectively. The positive and the negative themes are symbolized by two households, the Murchisons representing the former and the Milburns the latter. Lorne, who symbolizes all the positive qualities loves Dora who represents negative qualities. So, his failure in his love affair is understandable and natural. The two represent opposite traits and in Duncan's scheme of things, the idealist has to suffer. The idealist as an imperialist also suffers. There is a dividing line between the imaginative and the unimaginative characters. The imaginative Lorne and Advena are in perpetual conflict with the townspeople. Finlay, another imaginative character also falls in this category. On the opposite pole are the Milburns and Hesketh. The imaginative characters represent Canadian values of idealism, whereas the unimaginative ones suggest the practical and commercial aspects.

In the main plot, Lorne falls in love with the idea of imperialism; in the sub-plot, he falls in love with Dora. He fails in both. His imperialism is rejected not only by the Elgin society, but also by his own Party. His love is rejected by Dora, who prefers the practical Hesketh to the idealist Lorne. And the reason for his failure on both the fronts is his inability to temper his passion and vision with reality. "The 'emigre' Englishman becomes the successful Canadian of the moment, and the conscientious, lovable nationalist is left 'stranded', undone by his very virtues" (Zichy1984:340).

Advena too is different. Like her brother, she is a misfit in the society. Both she and Finlay live in a world of romantic ideals, and are willing to sacrifice their love at the altar of an old-world ideal of propriety and morality.
Clara Thomas (1977) suggests that in the context of the structure of the novel, Advena parallels Lome in idealism and intelligence, but being a woman, her opportunities and future are, by comparison, circumscribed (45). This is a strange comment because Advena ultimately succeeds in her love affair, whereas Lome fails. Peter Allen (1984) too notices the disparity between the main and the sub plots in this regard. Allen feels that in keeping with her generally ironic and realistic tone, Duncan's delineation of Lome is sufficiently dispassionate and objective, but her portrayal of Hugh Finaly is less consistently objective (52). Duncan seems to have accepted Advena's passionate point of view in describing Hugh Finlay: "A passionate romantic", "deep dreams in his eyes", "he had the brow of a covenanter and the mouth of Adonais, the flame of religious ardour in his eyes and the composure of perceived philosophy on his lips," "fettered by an impenetrable shyness" (68). These don't seem to be the sentiments of an objective writer; these appear to be the expressions of a lover. If the description had been tinged with irony, it could have been of a piece with Duncan's general attitude; but when Duncan intends no irony, such syrupy language can not be termed as anything but melodramatic.

Although the romantic sub plot of Advena-Finlay relationship parallels the political theme, yet its resolution doesn't conform to the parallel. Carole Gerson, in her essay "Duncan's web" (1975) opines that "the story of Lorne's political career has nothing to do with the story of Finlay's romantic involvement, the parallel plots complement one another as the new world idealist finds his moral inspiration in the old world, and the old world idealist
finds inspiration in the new world"(76). Finlay has two alternatives - either to marry his old betrothed Christine Cameron even though it would be an unhappy alliance, or marry his present lady love Advena and compromise his idealism. Eventually, with Dr. Drummond’s almost divine intervention, (he marries Christie Cameron), the moral dilemma is resolved most unrealistically and melodramatically. Although this resolution enables Duncan to provide a happy ending to the love affair, it constitutes an aesthetic flaw: the moral dilemma is resolved through contrived means rather than through any intrinsic action taken by the concerned characters. Why is it that parallel characters meet different fates in the novel? Why does Lorne fail whereas Advena succeeds? Allen provides an answer:

Duncan’s intense sympathy for Advena’s dilemma has subverted her narrative technique and created an unnecessary gap between the main and sub-plots. Though her deviations from the general tone of sophisticated social comedy are infrequent they constitute a serious flaw, for they all concern Advena and serve to isolate her story from the main concerns of the novel(1984:53).

Lorne is a romantic whose dreams both about Canada and his beloved are shattered. This is an example of Duncan’s realism. But the romance of Advena, another dreamer, is not shattered - it succeeds. Why is her case not dealt with realistically? The Advena-Finlay love affair, if dealt with realistically, has tragic potential, which is clumsily transformed into a happy ending.
Obviously, double standards operate in the treatment of Lorne and Advena, otherwise how can one justify two parallel romances with contrasting resolutions? The reason of Duncan's excessive sympathy for Advena could well be the fact that Advena was modelled on Duncan herself, and Duncan falters before her self-image. This love affair proves a nemesis for Duncan, as her personal emotions get the better of the writer in her. Although Advena herself is described realistically, her love-affair is treated according to the traditions of romance. Duncan becomes subjective and succumbs to provide Advena a romantic escape out of her dilemma, perhaps against her better sense and judgment. This curious mix-up of realism and romance operates in many of her works and several instances of such genre switching can be found in Duncan's writings, especially in her Anglo-Indian novels. Although Misao Dean (1991) asserts that the mix of realism and romance in Duncan's works is a conscious decision of the writer, it does constitute a weakness. Similarly, examples of double standards also abound in her Anglo-Indian works. Such double standards have already been indicated in her journalism. Consistency was not one of Duncan's virtues.

Even if one ignores the flaw in the narrative as discussed above, Allen contends that the conclusion of the novel is also problematic and perplexing. The problem relates to the portrayal of the Milburn family. The Milburns represent the negative parallel in the novel: "It is the ascendancy of the Milburn mentality in Elgin which is ultimately responsible for Lorne's downfall" (Tausky 1980:163). It is this very ascendancy which makes one wonder as to
Duncan's purpose in making the negative characters successful. Duncan dislikes the Milburns as can be judged by her attitude and her use of irony. They are portrayed as selfish, shallow, money-minded. But they are practical and that is why successful. Allen feels that Duncan has dramatized her fears for the future of Canadian society in the figures of the Milburns, her hopes in the Murchisons (1984:55). And her fears seem to come true. Duncan decides to negotiate this reality by camouflaging her true feelings about the advent of pragmatism; she presents the situation without attempting any argument. But the argument is inherent in the way the story develops; hence the uncertainty. Both Allen and Thomas mention Duncan's strong racial sympathies with the Scotch and antipathy for the British colonialists like the Milburns. Why are Milburns then shown as successful? There seems to be another mix-up here. On the one hand, the imaginative protagonist fails on both the fronts in which he is involved; on the other, characters like Hesketh and Dora succeed. And if Advena is the heroine of the future, as pointed out by Ross, then why is Dora Milburn on the ascendant in Elgin at the end of the novel, asks Allen.

In the end, to put it simply, it seems that the bad guys win and the good guys lose. Whatever good happens to the good guys comes through the melodramatic channel. When Duncan rejects her hero, who does she select? Is she suggesting that Canada is going the wrong way? Does she think that a pragmatic approach sans the frills of idealism and imagination is the need of the hour?

This uncertainty and ambiguity has been noted by several critics. Some clue to this ambiguity can be found in her letter to Lord Lansdowne (quoted
earlier), wherein she specifies that the book offers only a picture of life and attempts no arguments, and that she is projecting the point of view of an average Canadian who is a practical person, whom she doesn't want to make very prominent.

From an average Canadian and practical person's point of view, imaginative vision and ideals may not be as useful as they otherwise appear. As Duncan's basic concern in the novel is Canada, the real hero of the novel should be the person who represents its cautious optimism and spirit of industry, its sense of balance and pragmatism.

The one character who embodies all these qualities is Mr. Murchison. John Murchison, Lome's father, has not been given the importance he deserves. A correct and proper appraisal of his role and value can lessen some confusion about Duncan's attitude towards imperialism and her rejection of Lome.

In fact, John Murchison's views are close to those of Duncan herself. Darlene Kelly, in "Rewriting The Imperialist - Duncan's Revisions"(1989), states that in the four versions of the novel, Duncan's revisions enhance the role of Mr. Murchison as a political commentator: "Originally a man of few words, he becomes almost voluble in the revised editions where Duncan makes him express several new reservations about imperial policy"(34). When Lome advocates common interest and common taxation, in both the periodical versions and the American version, his father remains silent. In the final edition, however, he fully exercises his critical function and opposes these measures. The fact that the novel is dedicated to her father (Mr. Murchison was modelled
on Duncan's father) and Marian Fowler's observation that there is no satire in Duncan's portrait of her father, only admiration and love, based on the realization of how her father's literary ideal and quiet encouragement had contributed to her growth (ibidem:52), leave no doubt in one's mind that Duncan's real spokesman on the question of imperialism is the cautious Mr. Murchison, not the radical Lorne. Lorne is far too emotional to have a sense of balance. A balanced approach being the hallmark of Canada, he can't represent Canada. This gives credence to another opinion that in Duncan's view, imperialism was an elitist movement with a limited popular appeal. Lorne, in his zeal, fails to grasp this fundamental reality, and thus does not succeed. Clara Thomas goes to the extent of suggesting that "Lorne Murchison and his father John, for together they make the complete hero, are unique in Duncan's dozen odd novels" (1977:48). Lorne is the eligible young man, but his father has all the maturity and the required perspective for a correct appraisal of imperialism.

There is no other character in Duncan's works who is conceived without any trace of irony and has the author’s total sympathy. Thus, it becomes clear that it is not Lorne's brand of imperialism that Duncan propagates, it is Mr. Murchison's kind that she advocates since it carried no risks for Canada.

One mistake that several critics have made is to link Lorne's destiny with that of Canada and to project Lorne's loss as Canada's loss. Canada's destiny is not necessarily linked with Lorne's destiny. His destiny is linked with imperialism. His defeat is the defeat of his vision of imperialism in relation to Canada; it does not constitute the defeat of Canada. Canada, at least for the time being, can not afford dreamers. Dooley (1979) feels that Canada has been
virtually forced to concentrate on the immediate and the practical. It has not yet been able to afford the luxury of forward looking thoughts(26).

The imperialists worked on a different plane altogether. They were aristocratic and elitist in their approach and attitude. They had vision and imagination which a man in the street or a farmer couldn't afford to have. To a poor man the question of immediate profit is much more important and makes more sense than high flowing ideas and ideals. Anything affecting him adversely (materialistically) would be rejected outright. Ideals are playthings of the haves, the have-nots can't appreciate them. This is a compulsion of their situation, it is not their fault.

Canada needs practical, business-like people to push it ahead economically. Culturally, it can afford to wait; ideologically, it still has time to grow. When Duncan writes "Arts conspire to be absent"(Imp.:60), it may not necessarily be a drawback. For an average Canadian, it was important that the infant nation should first solidify its foundation; let it first establish and nurse its economy and industry before it can afford to think of great ideals, grandiose schemes and wider horizons. At that stage of its development, Canada could not afford dreamers, or could not afford to dream about a leap into a grand future. Duncan saw that it was a stage of consolidation, and with down to earth attitudes, practical people could take the country forward. Canada, as yet, was not fit to lead, consequently, could not fulfil Lorne's dream. Inherent in the imperialist's loss is the victory of Canada. Lorne's imperialism loses at the hands of Canadian nationalism.
One may accept or reject this explanation of the hero's defeat; still the flawed handling of the plot poses a problem. In her decision not to comment but present the issue, without attempting any argument, Duncan gets confused. Canada was her obsession, so she wanted to paint a rosy picture. In all honesty she could not project an idealistic picture of Canadian society. Elgin's hallmark is a no-nonsense approach - nothing that is ambiguous is accepted. Duncan's handling of her theme may be uncertain, but she projects Elgin as a society which is sure of what it wants. One can't agree with Allen and others when they contend that the ending is ambiguous because the theme of this novel is the ambiguity of Canadian identity. Elgin may be a young community, but it is mature enough to know its mind. If it is suspicious of Mother Beggarlegs because "it is a sound enough social principle to distrust that which is not understood"(*Imp.*:44), it is also skeptical of Lome and his brand of imperialism. Imperialism was the concern only of the elite, and if they were ambiguous in their approach, it doesn't reflect on the mainstream. Elgin rejects the 'Outsiders' without any ambiguity, whether it is Mother Beggarlegs, Lome, or Advena. According to Susan Minsos(1989), the town of Elgin acts as an antagonist against people having 'heart' and 'imagination', who dare to differ from the standard or norm in the community. Elgin surely asserts its authority when it overrules Dr. Drummond regarding the appointment of a new Minister. Elgin understands what it wants and acts accordingly. Duncan's Canada was a balanced ideal between the two extremes represented by America and Great Britain, it could not afford the tilt as suggested by Lome. Nobody can accuse Lome of being anti-Canada, but his extreme obsession with the ideal of
imperialism in relation to Canada needed correction. Birbalsingh, in his article "Novelists and the Nation" (1974), states: Such fawning admiration for England seems to throw suspicion on Lorne's love of his own country" (126). He is excessively emotional in his two love affairs - one with Canada and the other with Dora; unfortunately, he loses in both. The novel appears to be lopsided because the emphasis shifts from the person who is ostensibly the hero; whereas the practical person Duncan talked about is not very prominent. This factor disturbs the balance in the novel. Hence, structurally, the novel is imbalanced, and as a work of art it can be faulted on this count. It is only as a social document that The Imperialist is balanced in evaluation. All other balances, parallels and contrasts are just mechanical, not attitudinal.

Even though Duncan's handling of the narrative is uncertain, her sincerity is never in doubt. While discussing this aspect, Allen observes that Duncan was not only uncertain about the imperial question, she was uncertain about Canada itself:

The result is not simply a flawed novel. Much of the work's complexity and richness derives from her not having been able to decide. She has dramatized her hopes and fears and at the same time has been seemingly compelled to tell the truth. The unevenness and difficulty of the novel are part of its interest and ultimately reveal an imaginative mind grappling with the most perplexing and compelling of all questions to Canadians, that of their own uncertain nature (1984:59).
Ambiguity as a device is not a fault. Duncan is aware that Canada perhaps is not moving in the right direction, but her desire to portray Canada as an idealist society creates a dilemma. The resultant ambiguity is not a device, it is not a matter of choice. It reflects an uncertainty on the part of the author in resolving this dilemma. The average Canadian is concerned with the present, and feels if the present is handled properly, the future will automatically be taken care of. As her attitude is sympathetic, she tries to justify the Canadian approach. However, she herself is not convinced. Hence the uncertainty, the confusion. Whichever way one may interpret the novel, there is no uncertainty about one fact - that the novel presents an affectionate outpouring of Duncan's love for Canada and shows a passionate concern for its well-being.

The ambiguity and the confusion of *The Imperialist* is overcome by Duncan in her next Canadian novel. *Cousin Cinderella*, Duncan's second Canadian novel, is truly Canadian in spirit. More than *The Imperialist*, which is marked by uncertainty and ambiguity, this novel is a celebration of Canada, its freedom and independence, its prosperity and prospects. *Cousin Cinderella* is an attempt by Duncan to project a definite Canadian identity, which is different from the British and the American. The novel falls in the genre of international novels, in which nation and nationalities, their special features and idiosyncrasies come to the forefront. These cross-cultural encounters establish nationalities and reinforce their characteristics. The overall design of the plot follows the Howells formula, which Duncan had already followed in *An American Girl in London* (1891): an unsophisticated but shrewd and warm-hearted North American girl encounters and is repelled by snobbish worldliness.
Thusky finds parallels between Duncan and Howells, Dean (1986) points out parallels between the plots and characters of *Cousin Cinderella* and Henry James's *Roderick Hudson*. Whatever be the influences on Duncan, she uses these designs to further her cause of establishing a distinct and unique Canadian identity.

The novel deals with the education of the heroine Mary Trent as to her personality, identity and nationality. Mary Trent and her brother Graham are sent by their father to England as 'Canadian samples'. Their expectations of England, and the gap between this expectation and the reality form the core of the novel. It becomes a voyage of discovery for them, and the most important thing they discover is their own selves; their identity - personal and national.

Mary and Graham Trent are another instance of innocents abroad. Their experiences in England bring them wisdom and insights which they had earlier been unaware of. Mary undergoes a transformation in England. She gains in self-confidence as well as self-knowledge. She sheds her earlier diffidence and emerges as a more confident person, surer of herself than she was when she embarked on the journey. She establishes herself as a woman of substance and also as a Canadian.

The novel opens with Mary describing her father Senator Trent. Intense national feelings come to the fore immediately. While describing her father as a Senator, Mary says: "I hope that nobody will suppose our home to be in the
United States. We have a Senate in Canada, which corresponds, I believe, much more with the House of Lords"(3). Right on the first page, a distinction is made between America and Canada. The obliteration of this distinction in Europe posed a big problem for Canadians. When Graham and Mary go to rent a flat in London, the landlady mistakes them to be Americans. Graham corrects her by telling her that they are Canadians. He feels the need to emphasize: "I should have been proud to be an American if it had happened that way; but as it didn't happen to happen I am prouder to be what I am"(19). The intensely patriotic feelings come to the fore immediately. In The Imperialist, Lorne faces a similar situation. In London, he has to keep his irritation in check when he is mistaken for an American. In his encounter with the bus drivers of London, he felt a little surly when they asked him, as they nearly always did, if he wasn't an American: "'Yes', he would say in the end, 'but not the United States Kind"", resenting the necessity of explaining to the Briton beside him that there were other kinds"(Imp.:118). Graham, however, is more emphatic and insistent in establishing his distinctive identity.

The Trent children, brother Graham and sister Mary, have had the privilege of a superior upbringing. They had the best of everything, but were not allowed to play "with interesting children or in the street"(C.C:3). They want to best educational institutes. Mary recounts: "I wanted to be finished at New York, but father said no, I wasn't an American, and now I am just as glad. It is simpler to be a natural product and to finish where you begin, I think"(4). Such feelings for Canada continue to occupy the writer. After returning from the Boer War, hearing the sound of the saws devouring the timber, Graham
comments: "There is a lot of Canada in that', he said and Canada, Sis, is a pretty good alternative'"(6).

Senator Trent left England forty years ago, and is so satisfied with his life in Canada that he doesn't even want to go back on a visit, on it would be a waste of time. The old country generates feelings akin to a life in a prison, and no prisoner would like to go back, even if his life in the prison had been a pleasant one. But Senator Trent wanted his children to go to England. Mary remembers: "He wanted to send us as samples... his offspring should go and show forth his country for him"(10). The Senator gives them instructions: "If you come across anybody who seems curious, ... you can explain that this continent grows something besides Americans"(11). Thus the scene is set in the first chapter for the Canadian drama to unfold on the British stage, the purpose being to teach the British a thing or two about Canada.

When these two Canadian ambassadors arrive in London, they are all the time ready to take things as they come; all the time conscious of and a bit overawed by "greatness", the great mother country about which they had heard so much. Their first hand experience, their actions and reactions to the people and institutions of the country form the rest of the story. In Cousin Cinderella, Duncan's Canadians come to England to worship and stay to judge. It goes to prove that the colonial habit of mind is less a "cringe" than a habit of high expectations and stern judgement(Brydon1980:41).

The fascination for England is in the air. They want to act according to expectations and the established British customs. They are taken aback when
their awe is met with indifference. A case in point is Graham's discussion with Miss Game when they go to rent her flat. His attitude of curiosity and reverence for British history and tradition is revealed when he looks at a wood engraving in a frame which is supposed to be verses written by King Charles the First when he was in prison. While Miss Game goes on criticizing them, Graham tries to find extenuating circumstances to defend them. The two starkly opposite attitudes, one of reverence and the other of indifference, places the Trents in a perspective. Miss Game concludes the argument: "'I have been told by a Gentleman in the British Museum' said Miss Game uncompromisingly, 'that it's a forgery. It may be a plagiarism too, for all I know... [Graham] looked grieved, but he did not, of course, dispute the British Museum"'(18). Another example of this stark contrast is the attitude of Graham and Billy Milliken towards Oxford, where Billy studies. Mary asks him eagerly, "'Isn't it thrilling, being at Oxford?' I asked. 'My brother says it's the greatest temptation of England - Oxford'. 'I don't know what he means by greatest temptation. It's a damp hole"'(87), replies Billy. This kind of British attitude tantamount to sacrilege in the eyes of the Canadians, but the British are quite nonchalant about their heritage. It establishes that as Canadians and Americans run after the richness of English history and culture, something they lack; the English themselves are unimpressed by it. They are more concerned with money, something they don't possess.

After the Trents settle down in their flat and their interaction with the British begins, the novel becomes a description of a series of differences in behaviour, temperament and etiquette between the Canadians and the British.
Duncan uses irony and satire as well as plain humour not only to highlight these differences, but also to establish that the Canadian way is superior to that of the British. In most of the novel Mary, the narrator, is not part of the scene she is describing; she stands on the margin, on the periphery of London society; watching, observing and commenting. She doesn't only observe the British society; she also watches with concern her brother getting seriously involved in it.

A definite parallel can be found between Graham Trent and Lorne Murchison. In a letter to John Willison, in 1904, Duncan had written that she was "thinking of 'bringing Lorne Murchison' to London and giving 'the critical colonial view of London society, marrying him eventually'"(Fowler1985:277). Graham Trent bears the mantle of Lorne, though why Duncan did not marry him off is surprising.

Like Lorne, Graham is seriously in love with the idea of England. Mary notices and comments upon the difference in their approach: "I was always amused in London - Graham was always occupied; where I found spectacle he found drama and the matter of life. I was in love with England, too, but not seriously"(105).

Another problem with Graham was his belief that "everything fine and supreme was finished"(105) and no goals were left for others to reach, no achievements to make. Mary wanted to take things home whereas Graham wanted to contribute. Mary is deeply concerned about preserving her own national character, and even more emotionally caught up in safe-guarding
Graham, who, as a loyal subject of the crown, seems pathetically anxious to sacrifice his money and Canadian qualities in the interests of British nobility (Tausky 1980:134). Tausky adds that Graham is an ardent imperialist right from the beginning. He is not nearly as critical of England as that other imperialist Lorne Murchison; like Lorne, however, he thinks of imperialism primarily in terms of its benefits to Canada.

Both Graham and Lorne love England with passion and in the process make stupid mistakes. Lorne too is a transformed man after his visit to England. In fact, both love the idea of England’s "greatness", which blinds them to its reality. In both the novels, the narrators comment upon the unworthiness of the course taken by the two. The awe, the reverence they show towards the mother country signifies the child - father syndrome, which is typically a colonial trait. In a way, their behaviour suggests what Mordecai Richler points out in *A Choice of Enemies* (1957): "They [the Canadians] were the prodigal offspring of a stern father. Coming home again, however, they had not counted on the old man having grown feeble while they proposed overseas" (158). Both Lorne and Graham show their naivete when they convey their pre-conceived notion of England’s greatness. Their response is an offshoot of the colonial outlook that induces not only an admiration for the mother country, but also indicates a sense of insufficiency of the colonial mentality.

Mary becomes almost nervous by Graham's single minded devotion to things English. Mary's concern about Graham's new-found servility translates itself into a feeling of revulsion against England (Tausky 1980:136). Mary herself is the Cousin Cinderella of the title. Evelyn feels that Mary is like something...
out of a fairy tale. The name Cinderella is given to her because of her humble airs, and she is a cousin to the British women, not their sister. Tausky adds that the name is appropriate due to another factor, the low value placed on Mary by the London world. In the beginning of the novel Mary is as overawed by London as is Graham, but there is a basic difference between the two. She is consciously a Canadian, and is unwilling to compromise on this issue. When Lady Doleford suggests that nobody can feel at home out of England, Mary is quick to dispute this contention. She says: "Yes! one can. Father would never consent to leave Canada now and mother of course, was born there" (C.C: 122). To another comment about people coming home to England from all over the world, Mary replies: "But Canada is different.... Nobody prefers to leave Canada" (122). Mary is repulsed by and is acutely conscious of the sickening lust of money in the London society. She is also quick to notice that London is full of designing mammias, whose only concern is matchmaking. The designing mammias and the eligible bachelors help Mary to self-realization; it was like a thrill of a new idea. She caught the essence of London social life and the role she is expected to play fills her with self-confidence. She realizes that she is superior to and can look down upon London society. She says:

It is the kind of thing one is ashamed to write, but I must confess that I drew from Mrs. Jarvis at this moment the thrill of a new idea, something captivating and delicious. Suddenly... I felt myself realized-realized in London, not only by the person, who happened to be near me, but in a vague, delightful, potential
sense by London. Realized not a bit for what I was—that wouldn't, I am afraid, have carried me very far—nor exactly for what I represented, but for something else, for what I might, under favourable circumstances be made to represent. It was even more exciting to see that... I was only a possibility, a raw product to be melted or hammered or woven into London, *by my leave* (emphasis mine). That was delightful to experience, the solicitation, even tacit and involved, of London, the knowledge that one was taken as important enough—one was coloured by what one had, or what one's father had as being important enough—to make suggestions to. I suppose it was a practical lesson in the value of having; but what I drew from it was a point of view. It was a point of view from which one could feel, looking out at the endless luxurious whirl of it, a kind of joyful disdain of London, as if one had suddenly got behind the scenes with her, and no longer felt so prodigiously impressed. And that in itself was a sensation intensely worth having.

Suddenly Mary is able to see through the facade of London society, and what she views makes her feel more important than the British themselves. She has money, so she can dictate terms to the British. She suddenly becomes conscious of the power she can exercise over London society, the power of money. The aura, the awe, vanishes. Now Graham's servility puzzles her and she looks at his growing attachment with England with anxiety. Graham desperately seeks his right of identification with the English— with their ideas, their standards and
their history. Mary feels such an identification unnecessary because of the basic difference in the social structures of the two countries. In Canada you have to make your own place, whereas in England it is ready made. The tragedy of Peter Doleford is an example of "that curious authority by which the simple social structures and scheme of things in England can interfere with a person born in it, at all events if he happened to be born at all importantly" (C.C: 102). That's why Peter congratulates Mary for being born in Canada, where such impediments don't exist.

It is at Christmas time that the Trents feel really isolated in England. They are joined by another North American, Evelyn, who has similar feelings. The festival of joy and intimacy really makes them feel as aliens in England: "It was Christmas out there, but it wasn't our Christmas. The occasion proved us aliens; we didn't melt into it" (156). Even during Christmas, the British customs and the supposed sense of duty are suffocating. The British remember the poor once a year and then forget them because charity has also become a duty; "'Christmas is an obsession in this country', said Evelyn; 'and the imposition of it makes one feel real ugly'" (153). Peter Doleford expresses the imperialistic notion of duty towards the less fortunate, a thoroughly christian notion; but when duty is performed from a consciously superior position, it is merely the White man's burden (Mckenna 1980:319).

After the choking experience of London, the country comes as a breath of fresh air for Mary. Mary who lives close to nature in Canada finds in the countryside the soul of England. She gets the feel of real England; London was
all artificial, but the soul and spirit of England lies in its countryside. England has two chapters; London and the country. "London stands for London, but the country stands for England" (156). Mary is charmed by the dignity and customs of the country. She is thrilled by the candle lights and small courtesies. For the first time her heart opens up for England. It is in the country that she realizes that the dignity of British history, its long past, traditions and customs is what makes England important to the Canadians as well as the Americans. Mary and Graham are highly impressed by Knowes, the country place of Lippingtons, but they are simply overwhelmed by Pavis Court. Mary fell in love with it immediately. It caught and seized and possessed her. Pavis Court—the majestic home of the poor Dolefords symbolizes the irony in the lives of British aristocracy. They are forced to carry the burden of tradition, even when they may not be in a position to do so. Mary has never been so gushing with compliments anywhere in the novel as she does here. When Peter asks her if she too likes England as Graham does, Mary replies: "I think its nearer heaven than any other country" (175).

However charming the country may be, people like Mrs. Jarvis remain their same crude selves, with marriage uppermost in their minds. With all their ancient heritage and culture, kings and queens, customs and traditions, the English appear basically insecure. Those who have money are busy building bridges and socializing, being ambitious in the usual way of the rich. Those who do not have money are a pathetic lot; they have to fight for survival— to be able to cling to the tradition and life styles of old by somehow arranging money—through marriage or otherwise. The big edifice of society must be maintained.
and the charade of dignity must continue. The essence of life is missing as the British have become only form and ceremony. Pavis Court, in one way, is an example, a symbol of this hollow British way of life. The British are still capable of producing people who want to live with honour and dignity, who consider principles more important than money. Two such characters are Peter Doleford and his sister Barbara Pavisay.

Graham has all along been fishing for the chance to use his money to help Britain in some way. When he discovers that Pavis Court is in danger of being sold off, as Peter blows off the last chance by refusing to marry the rich American, Evelyn, Graham decides to marry Barbara Pavisay which enables him to pump in money for the upkeep of the historical house. He is willing to restore it to its original majesty; he feels he has an obligation towards Britain which must be fulfilled. Peter is critical and suspicious of this proposed marriage. As a matter of principle, he is against 'useful' marriages, a fact he proves by declining to marry Evelyn. He feels that Graham and Barbara do not love each other but have entered into this arrangement in order to save Paris Court. It seems to be a marriage just not of 'convenience' but of 'obligations' on both sides.

After his engagement Graham has become more serious and less 'happy', less 'earty' as Towse describes him. He seems to be burdened and unsure. It is Barbara who comes to his rescue. She has also been uncomfortable after the engagement, she realizes the motive behind the alliance is not love. She solves Graham's dilemma by breaking the engagement. She estimates the
relationship correctly, and does what she thinks is proper, not what is practical or useful. One must admire her courage as well as her perception. She is an idealist like her brother Peter. Both Peter and Barbara uphold certain standards in their social life; this elevates them above the run-of-the-mill Britishers.

Peter's rejection of Evelyn fills Mary with admiration for him and when he meets her suddenly at the Duchess of Dulwich's party, they have an intimate evening. Peter differentiates between Evelyn and Mary. He advises her not to go in for a useful marriage and adds that if she was an American, he would not have advised her, because Americans "have their eyes open they know what's involved and what's understood. If they care for that kind of bargain by all means let them make it" (C.C:253). Referring to Mary, he continues: "But you belong to us... you are our own people. We can not marry you on that principle" (253). He throws a very oblique hint: "That in our dealing with the colonies the heart is supposed to have more of a chance" (254). The chance is taken with the engagement of Peter and Mary - a love match, though it has its utility too - but that is least of the considerations. The novel ends with the bargain Peter had referred to earlier; the news comes that Evelyn, the American, frustrated by Peter's refusal to marry her, decides to marry his uncle Christopher Scansby - a fair bargain for a title hunting American. According to Dean, the marriage between Peter and Mary, a union of love and equality seems to join the two characters with the best hopes of continuing imperial-colonial cross cultural communication symbolizing the necessary reorganization of the empire on the principles of equality and cultural sensitivity (1991:29).
The picture of Britain that emerges from the novel is highly unflattering. Industrial age and the attendant social chaos has distorted the genuine British heritage. Mary is disillusioned by Britain: it has become a decadent society, where aristocracy has been replaced by money power.

According to Mckenna, the sketches of the three women in the novel—Mary Trent, Evelyn Dicey and Barbara Pavisay—supply chief contrasts among Canada, America and England. All the three are aware of the importance of money, but in very different ways. Evelyn is open and honest about it. In the end she marries a titled man and is happy about the fair exchange. Barbara realizes she can not take advantage of Graham’s affection for the sake of money. Mary’s marriage is a love match, and though her money will help Pavis Court, yet love must triumph over politics(1980:321). The only disagreement one can have with this opinion is regarding Barbara symbolizing England. She does not represent the contemporary England and its values as Evelyn and Mary represents their countries and their inherent values. Barbara represents that vanishing breed that is rare to find in England, because England has succumbed to the power of money. In the contemporary British world of vanishing ideals, Barbara is just a reminder of the possibilities. The reality is what the Trents face at the hands of unscrupulous tradesmen who cheat them without any qualms.

Clara Thomas, in her essay "Cousin Cinderella and the Empire game"(1976), comments that in Cousin Cinderella, Duncan is sharply and amusingly observant of confrontations between cultures and individuals within cultures. But she works largely with social types as characters, mostly with
surfaces and very little in depth. This and her other novels are preeminently studies of society and social politics rather than studies of individual growth or self recognition, corruption or despair(184). In this juxtaposition of cultures, Canada duly emerges at the top. England does not come out in good colours; it is portrayed as a decaying giant, a withering civilization, with no scope for development. Peter thinks of going back to India and envies Graham's good luck in being a Canadian. What use are traditions if they become a burden! What use is history if it turns out to be a handicap! What use are privileges, if they have become hollow and meaningless - these are the questions Duncan seems to be asking. Compared to England, Canada emerges as a far superior society and country. It has broken the shackles of bondage and has successfully negotiated the transition from a colonial to a national consciousness.

Marian Fowler feels that as in *The Imperialist*, in *Cousin Cinderella* too Canadian characters and way of life are consistently praised whereas English and American characters are consistently and subtly condemned. The English are shown to be very insular, class conscious and hypocritical and the Americans too brash and rough around the edges(1985:278). It is the Canadians who bridge this gap and emerge as balanced and idealistic. It is naturally so because it is Duncan's mission in this novel to create a space for Canada on the international scene. She has proved beyond doubt that the decadent British society lags far behind the Canadian which is a freer, prosperous and generous society. It also has better prospects. As the novel is built on comparison and contrast between England and Canada, Hallvard Dahlie comments that throughout the narrative a number of English - Canadian oppositions emerge,
and generally in these situations the English look silly (1986:55). Duncan ultimately contends that England had a glorious past, but Canada has a better present, and Canadian prospects of a great future are much brighter as compared to those of England.

Duncan, undoubtedly, emerges as a passionate nationalist who thinks highly of her country. Nothing can be permitted to obstruct Canada's march towards security and prosperity. However, her spirit of nationalism remains confined to Canada. In India, Duncan not only ignores the fact that independence and freedom are universal pre-requisites for the progress of all countries, but also appears to give up the distinct Canadian identity she had so assiduously built up in these two novels. Her journey from being a Canadian nationalist to becoming a British imperialist is detailed in the following chapter, which also attempts to highlight this transformation when Duncan's Canadian novels are juxtaposed with her Anglo-Indian works.