Chapter Two

Early Writings - Duncan as a Journalist

Sara Jeanette Duncan was the eldest child in a large family governed by a strict father and a fun loving mother. She was a spirited child; more of a tom-boy, adventuresome and daring. In the absence of any guidance from her parents regarding social etiquette, she, very early in her life, decided to branch out on her own and learned the importance of independence.

At school she was a voracious reader, deeply interested in letters, and tried her hand at writing verses and essays. Rae E. Goodwin in "The early Journalism of Sara Jeanette Duncan" (1964) informs that when at school, Duncan won an essay competition carrying a prize of $10; she spent all of it on dime novels (17). Goodwin adds that this period was considered as the golden age of school prize essay as writing of composition was very seriously cultivated in the schools. Perhaps here lies the genesis of Duncan's journalistic essay (19-20).

When Duncan was just eighteen years of age (Sept. 1880), she got her first poem published. Two more poems followed. Melancholy and failure are the predominant themes of all the three poems. She also wrote about nature and seasons. "There seems to be no genuine emotional response to nature", suggests Isobel McKenna in "Sara Jeannette Duncan : The New Woman" (1980) and adds: "To Duncan herself, her poetry seems to have
demonstrated that her forte was prose, for with its success she seems to have given up all attempts in verse" (33).

She scribbled a lot and sent her writings regularly to newspapers and magazines, but did not succeed in getting any editor's nod. She could not understand this failure, still did not lose heart. Her attempts to get published, her disappointments and then the sudden change in luck are all faithfully recorded in an essay titled "How an American Girl became a Journalist". The essay deals with the literary fortunes of Margery Blunt. Thomas Tausky in his Introduction to the autobiography section of *Sara Jeannette Duncan : Selected Journalism* (1978) notes the parallels that exist between Margery Blunt and Sara Jeannette Duncan herself. Without a doubt, states Tausky, this essay presents accurate information as well as sincere self-evaluation of Duncan by Duncan. For example, Margery Blunt is shown to have visited Quebec city and New Orleans, so did Duncan as her other writings provide the proof (5).

It is essential to deal with this essay in detail in order to understand the workings of Duncan's mind and the struggle she had to make for achieving success. Duncan begins the essay by showing her awareness of the opportunities and openings available to women of her time. She writes: "In this golden age for girls, full of new interests and new opportunities, we all - you, the musical girl; you the literary girl; you the artistic girl; you the practical girl; and I, whose appropriate adjective is of no consequence - want to do something more difficult than embroidered sachets, and more important than hand-painted tambourines" (unknown origin, found in Stirling Library, Yale University; rpt. Tausky 1978:6).
Duncan talks of an American girl Margery Blunt - who in fact is Duncan herself - and her attempt at becoming a journalist. In the confines of the attic in her home, Margery nurtured a "secret purpose", which was "to distinguish herself in literature"(S.J.:6). Though she was not a genius, yet she wasn't without some talent, as "she absorbed the spirit of every artistic thing she read.... She has a keen appreciation, too, of literary lives with the hardship of many rejections in them"(6). In a witty and lively style, Duncan writes about the fate of her poems, stories and articles which she used to send regularly for publication. "Fortunately she kept a copy, since the original was probably drowned in the tears of the editorial staff. It met with a violent fate of some sort, for she never heard of it again.... [Her articles] usually came back to her with a polite little printed form which read "The editor regrets", etc. Sometimes the editor did not even regret, he embezzled the stamp and took no notice"(7).

Then, suddenly, a turning point came in Margery's career. On a visit to Lorette, Quebec, Margery was so impressed by the novelty of the experience that she decided to write down her impressions straightaway. As a matter of habit, she sent it to an illustrated magazine and then forgot about it. The article was accepted for publication by the American monthly 'Outing'. A delighted Margery carefully analysed the reasons for the success. She found the answer, which she wrote on the attic wall so that she should always be reminded of it; and the success formula was: "Before I say something I must have something to say". Duncan explains:
Her ride to Lorette, unpretending little event though it was, had been something to say, something quaint, novel, interesting of its sort. It had been a thing within her power to write about, and she had written about it gaily, with the spur of fresh impressions....

`Lorette' had taught her that she must have some unknown incident, some fibre of novelty or current interest to give value to her work, or be content to be her own public(S.J.:9).

It was with this 'mantra' - that she should have something novel to say - that Duncan began her career as a journalist.

To gain experience, she barged into the office of the Brantford local evening paper The Sentinel, and forced the editor to give her some work; any work, which she was willing to do free of charge. She did work in the The Sentinel for two months and gained valuable journalistic experience. It was here that she came across an advertisement about New Orleans Cotton Centennial which was to open on Dec. 16, 1884. As she explains: "The lithographs came just as Margery was absorbed in Cable, the American novelist whom you know in England for the wonderful tenderness with which he has revealed the old-world life of Louisiana, and found her mind very receptive of the idea which they brought. "'I will go', said Margery to herself, 'to New Orleans Cotton Centennial as special correspondent'" (S.J.:11). She approached the Toronto Globe editor, who agreed to pay $5 for each article he would accept describing the Centennial. Duncan thus was launched on her career as a journalist.

The visit to New Orleans became a turning point. Her despatches proved highly successful. Not only were her write-ups appreciated, she met and made
acquaintance with many celebrities. She seems to have hit paydirt. As a journalist, she flitted from one paper to another, from one place to another, in quick succession. Her despatches from New Orleans were published by Toronto Globe and London Advertiser in late 1884 and early 1885.

After coming back from New Orleans in April 1885, she became a Globe columnist, her first column appeared on May 23, 1885 under the pseudonym "Garth Grafton". Thus began a weekly series. Her Globe articles were also printed by the Washington Post, whose editor was so impressed by her writings that he offered her a post as an editorial writer. This was a real feather in young Duncan's cap and she joined the Post in October 1885. She didn't stay long in Washington. In July 1886, she came back to Toronto and got a regular job in The Globe. Thus, she became the very first woman to work in the editorial department of a leading Canadian newspaper. During this time, September 1886 to be precise, she had also started contributing regularly to another Toronto weekly The Week. Duncan didn't stay long with The Globe. In November 1887, she joined the Montreal Star, but within four months, moved on to Ottawa as Star's Parliamentary correspondent. In the summer of 1888 she returned to Brantford, and in September of the same year left for a world trip which lasted almost two years. Her despatches from the world tour were published in book-form in 1890, her first published book entitled A Social Departure: How Orthodocia and I went around the World by Ourselves.
Duncan returned to Canada in the summer of 1890, only to pack her bags and go back to India later that year to get married in Calcutta. She had left Canada for good to settle down in India.

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Duncan dealt with a vast variety of subjects as a journalist; these include woman's rights, literature, society and culture. She entertained, charmed and educated as she informed (Goodwin 1964:36), but was always consciously modern in the opinions she expressed and the point of view she projected. Tausky points out in the *Novelist of Empire* (1980):

[D]espite the variety of subjects, a consistent habit of mind manifests itself in Sara Jeannette Duncan's work, whatever the issue at hand. She was always conscious of being a modern woman, of being a pioneer in the struggle to evolve a new type of self-definition. Yet at the same time she had conservative instincts of loyalty to and faith in her country, and the social order. So, in discussing almost any issue, she seeks to discover what seems to her to be a sensible middle course rejecting both the advanced position which she finds too radical, and the traditional position which she regarded as outmoded (20-21).
Tausky suggests that Duncan tried to observe a carefully cultivated position. An analysis of some of her journalistic writings is essential to bring out these salient features of her early writings.

Goodwin, analyzing Duncan's journalism comments that a conscious aristocratic feeling is expressed in her journalism. Referring perhaps to this very aspect, Tausky notes that Duncan adopts a tone of amused, superior detachment. This attitude was to characterize much of her work, including, for better of for worse, her fiction(1980:19).

Duncan viewed the society's doings from a higher perch. Her stress on manners, etiquette, appropriateness, which McKenna calls a 'defense of taste' appear as an attempt to educate the 'philistines', a term Duncan was very fond of using. Her concern for good manners and taste help her emerge as a woman of high breeding. This is the feeling Goodwin refers to as a "conscious aristocratic feeling" and the feeling never leaves the reader of her journalism. This feeling has also been sensed by Tausky, who makes a very telling comment when he says that the real subject of both Duncan's journalism and fiction is "I"(1980:2). These statements open up a window to Duncan's psyche, her mentality and her attitude. The importance of "I" suggests an egotistical, self-centered person who is very sure of herself; has a superior but detached attitude towards others; consequently can be satiric at other's expense while maintaining a self consciously superior attitude. This sense of superiority may also indicate an incapacity to understand and appreciate the other person's point of view; which can be a limiting factor too. This incapacity and limitation is clearly discernible in her Anglo-Indian works. Thus we get an early glimpse of her
imperial attitude, as obsession with 'self', a sense of superiority and condemnation of the 'other' are well-known imperial traits.

We have referred above to the fact that most of her critics believe she was striving to achieve a sensible middle course, to strike a balance between the opposing pulls of the past traditions and the demands of the liberal present. Goodwin comments that although she had a strong relish for the freedoms North American democracy gave the individual, she took pleasure in the decorum and order of an hierarchical official society, as she had grown up an aristocrat in disposition and values (1964:43). This very balancing act could well be the beginning of Duncan's ambivalence, as she often got mixed up in her values. An examination of her early attitude is essential for the purpose of comparison with the positions she took later on in her writings, in order to establish the "Double Vision" which crept in her later writings.

Duncan gives a great deal of attention to the position, activities and qualities of women. She was for the emancipation of and equality for women, and proved to be quite a feminist of her times. Tausky (1980) feels that Duncan was fiercely independent rather than radical in her views. She was unconventional and adventurous.

Duncan wrote very often about modern woman and her role in the society. Though being a feminist, she doesn't hesitate to criticize women. She does not defend them blindly but tries to maintain a balanced attitude. She finds fault with women wherever necessary, and does not condemn men arbitrarily. In an article in *The Globe* dated 8th July, 1886, Duncan takes women to task for
their non-serious attitude. She opines that if men are frivolous with women, it is because women stick to being coquettish instead of being intellectual in their disposition. If men don't take women seriously, the blame lies with women. Duncan adds:

If women desire the homage of intellect as well as of heart, if they resent eternal flippancy, and prefer to take life conversationally, as they are compelled to take it otherwise, au sérieux, there is only one thing for it, and there is nothing startlingly original about it that - they must deepen and broaden their sympathies, brighten their intellectual activities, energize themselves by occasionally bathing in the great tide of human affairs that flows resistlessly past every door step of every home. It is useless to protest against ignominy and neglect to remove the cause. And above all things, girls, don't tell anybody you find a clever man stupid" (Rpt. S.J.: 19).

Thus it becomes clear that to earn men's respect, women must respect themselves (S.J.: 17).

In another article in \textit{The Globe}, 8th September, 1886, Duncan satirizes women for the undue importance they give to things like embroidery. Describing ladies' work at an exhibition, Duncan feels women should show more sense than quibbling about who will win the prizes, and rise above these petty concerns. She comments: "One is moved to compassion when one considers how completely this mass of coloured stitching represents the hope and ambitions, the culture and pleasure of some women's lives, and reflects
upon how vast a proportion of it must go unrewarded" (S.J.:25). When Duncan learns from a participant that she completed the astonishing array of table scarves and mantle drapes, toilet seats and knitted things in a matter of six weeks, she comments sarcastically:

"What", thought I, "is higher education to this! What are all the achievements of the sex in literature, science, art or political economy compared with this marvellous manipulation of plush and satin, and embroidery and 'arrasene', all in six weeks! 'Vanity of vanities! all is vanity! saith the preacher, and I am convinced that when the last woman professor vacates her chair, there will yet be found vast multitudes of her sisters engaged in the construction of fantasies in Berlin wool (S.J.:25-26).

This criticism of women doesn't make Duncan anti-feminine. She still firmly believed that most of the ills that women suffer from were due to the superior attitudes of males. The male prejudice against women is brought out very forcefully in 1st September, 1886 piece in The Globe, in which Duncan finds herself in a strange predicament, when she went to get an accident insurance policy for herself. It was an all male world she had entered. "Not a petticoat was to be seen in all the length and breadth of the street. The elevator boy looked curiously at me as we ascended, the clerks stared" (S.J.:22). She was informed of the ridiculous restrictions under which policies were issued to women.
"Well, you see, our policies, when held by a woman are only paid in the event of - of decease".

"Then I've got to die first?"

"That unfortunately is our rule" (23).

And in a satiric vein, Duncan asks: "Am I to understand that you grant policies to men payable in the event of death and partially available in the event of accident, but to women payable only in the event of death? and why?"

The prejudice is an old one, and has its roots in the absolute control that husbands formerly had over their own wives. A man might insure his wife's life against accident and then take pains to bring the accident about, you see. He might as an illustration - he might throw her into the well!

Whereupon it occurred to me that we should be thankful for pumps as well as higher education:

"Further", said his Insuranceship, "it is much more difficult to define the precise extent of injury to a woman, or to know what constitutes an accident in her case. A man might inflict a blow upon his wife with a domestic utensil - ... - and she would doubtless look upon it as accident, whereas we might look upon it in the nature of legitimate warfare" (23-4).

Beneath the irony and humour, male injustice is clearly pinpointed and exposed. Duncan seems to imply that the clear victory of woman's reason over man's stupidity will be but a matter of time (S.J.: 17).
Duncan believed that women could be professional as well as womanly. There was no contradiction in terms here, as was generally believed. "Can't we be professional and dress for dinner", and "loss of the least womanly grace means loss of power" (S.J.: 17). These two comments aptly describe Duncan's attitude, her preference for a middle course. She firmly believed that a woman can achieve a lot without losing out on femininity. And she shouldn't compromise on womanliness at all because it is not the least impediment in any profession.

In the article in *The Globe* dated 23rd August, 1886, Duncan talks of women achievers who play their roles in the house and the workplace to perfection. She describes a married woman who is a professor: "Today the married girl occupies with credit a professor's chair in the Kingston Women's Medical College. She occupies another chair in different quarters with equal credit, I believe - rocking chair. There is one baby in Canada that will receive scientific attention from its earliest youth" (S.J.: 20).

In the same article, Duncan describes a meeting with a woman doctor, who was both feminine and a professional. Duncan "carefully observed her for evidences of that loss of womanly attributes which is so necessary a result of a medical course, but [Duncan] was disappointed. She didn't stride, she wasn't a guy, she didn't use slang, her manners weren't aggressive. *Tout au contraire*, she walked well, she was dressed with taste, she talked excellently and her manners were admirable" (20-21). The female doctor points out to the prejudice that people have towards her; they hesitate to address her as 'Doctor'. Still, it is
a mistake to think that a woman has to sacrifice her womanliness to become a professional. A woman doctor could combine professional care with motherly instincts - which is a distinct advantage over a male doctor. Duncan easily establishes the fact that females are equal to men in intelligence and as professionals.

Duncan's job through her columns was to educate and enlighten her sisters; to make them aware of the new opportunities and fresher fields opening up for them. She also encouraged them by giving examples of how women were spreading their wings all around. In *The Globe*, 24th February, 1887, she talks of women in universities and informs, especially her female readers, that the strain of education did not tell on the female students she met at the University. And - a point Duncan reiterated time and again - the students were as feminine as any female could be. University education certainly did not ruffle any of their graces: "And it is hereby recorded for the benefit of all who fear, like Theophilus, that natural feminine inclinations are being diverted out of their true channels for the futile irrigation of dreary wastes of erudition, that Psyche and Phyllis both deliberately prinked at the aforesaid mirror before the next lecture, to which they permitted me to accompany them"(S.J.:44). The university girls were proud of their culinary skills too, which they hadn't neglected. And their appearance: "The amount of health and brightness and activity those girls had to spare would make existence agreeable for dozens of their sisters who refrain from taking a university course because of the strain upon the constitution"(44).
University education doesn't make women less feminine; it doesn't affect their health adversely; rather it enriches their existence. For long, women had been deprived of equality of opportunity on the premise that they were delicate and fit only for the domestic sphere. Duncan conveys that given the opportunity, women are second to none, rather better, because they become more rounded personalities. In a way, women are better than men, as they can work profitably both inside as well as outside their homes. In the field of journalism, women had made their mark in the U.S.; they were still to do so in Canada. New York affords the maximum opportunity to women journalists. In an article in Montreal Star, 25th January, 1888, Duncan wrote about women's, special capability to cater to public taste: "Special articles of a light sort are also in great demand, for the vast newspaper-devouring public that does not care one jot to be edified, but requires increasingly to be amused. These can be written and are written readily by women" (S.J.:50).

Duncan continues to champion the women's cause in another article that appeared in The Globe, 17th November, 1886, where she eulogizes the advantages that knowledge has conferred on modern woman. The biggest advantage that a modern woman has reaped is in getting education, which has made parents conscious as to how to bring up children properly. Turning back to her own childhood, Duncan says she was given full opportunity and freedom, which made her quite a tomboy. She felt a sense of equality with her brothers at home and with boys at school.

Duncan appreciated that more and more women were entering into different professions. She felt it her duty to highlight any problems that these
women faced. Talking about the nurse's profession, in an article which appeared in the *The Globe* on 8th October, 1886, Duncan informs her readers of the plight of the nurses. She praises their devotion and the spirit of sacrifice. They, with their missionary zeal had saved a number of lives in Toronto. But she laments their miserable living conditions and exhorts the philanthropic people of Toronto to help better the lot of the nurses, who sleep in the attic of the hospital. They fail to get proper rest and sleep, in-spite of the arduous nature of their work. It is not just a women's cause, but a social cause too, and Duncan takes up this cause as a crusader for improving the lot of the nurses. These women, who have shown enough enterprise to leave their cozy homes and take up a difficult profession like nursing deserve all the backing and help that can be justifiably offered.

There is another side to Duncan's attitude towards women - which is conservative, contradictory and ambivalent. On the one hand, Duncan welcomes the spirit and enterprise of women who decide to come out of their domestic sphere to broaden their intellectual horizons and enrich their lives; on the other, she exhorts women workers to stick to domestic work rather than to factories. In an article in *The Globe*, 4th November, 1886, Duncan prefers domestic service for women instead of work in the factories. She asks women to work as domestic servants as the work is comfortable and offers a healthy environment. But the modern woman, Duncan laments, prefers the ill-paid factory work. "Nor is it easy to understand how girls can prefer the hard routine, the long hours, and scanty remuneration of factory work to the duties of housemaid or cook. Over
and over again they have been shown that household work, with its various and comparatively light character, is infinitely better for them from a health standpoint" (S.J.: 30). Duncan blames the young women who, strangely, are not 'modern' enough to appreciate the charms of domestic work. She says:

The average young woman who engages in manual labor had not advanced very far along the lines of modern thought. To her, her mistress sits in the drawing room while she occupies the kitchen, simply by virtue of opportunity; and her wrath at the invidious distinction of location takes a more or less comprehensible shape in mutinous mutterings, and reckless smashings, and violent efforts to assert a somewhat exaggerated and top-loftical dignity" (S.J.: 30-31).

This criticism is uncalled for. Duncan, unexpectedly, defends the mistresses; trying to explain their position, with hardly a rebuke for their dictatorial attitude. "A woman is the most conservative being that breathes. For centuries she has exercised authority over her servants, and she cannot or will not see that the changed conditions of to-day demand that she should contract the scope of her authority and alter its form" (31).

Duncan suggests that if only the mistresses allow a little more freedom to their servants, everybody would be happy. But, on the whole, she seems to consider servants more at fault than their mistresses. One would expect from a writer of Duncan's calibre and standing, to take the factory and shop owners to task, castigate them for the exploitation of women workers and fight for improving their working standards, as she

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had done in the nurse's case. Perhaps, Duncan, who came from an upper
class family, had sympathies for the women of only her class; she was
speaking on behalf of those who lament the shortage of servants, and not
for the underprivileged. This leads to a startling discovery that Duncan was
all for women's liberation and emancipation - upto a point. Where,
perhaps, her self interest was involved, she could afford to be uncharitable.
One can already see double standards operating. This was later to evolve
the "Double Vision".

Tausky comments: "Domestic servants... are urged to remain loyal
to their `safe comfortable life'. In this context, Sara Jeannette Duncan
acknowledges the desire for equality (rebelliousness in the kitchen is a
`growth of the times') but her awareness of the exploitation of women by
commerce and industry makes her willing to accept an inevitable social
change"(1978:18).

It is difficult to agree with Tausky's laboured defence. Duncan
foresees no future for women in factories and stores in-spite of being aware of
the limitations of domestic work. In an era of developing democracy, "In this
golden age for girls, full of new interests and new opportunities", the suggestion
for becoming a domestic sounds odd and unnecessary. True, she advises the
women of the house to be more sympathetic and considerate towards the
domestic servants; but she fails to criticise the factory and shopowners for their
indifference towards the plight of the working women. She is aware of the
exploitation, but she prefers to keep quiet on this point. This uncharitable and
ambivalent attitude makes one realize the force of Tausky's statement: "the real subject of both her journalism and her fiction was often `I'". It was her point of view, her interest, that shaped her attitude. So long as her interests remained unaffected, she could afford to be balanced, following a middle course, a crusader and a fighter for women's rights. The moment her interests were threatened, she abandoned this person and defended her interests even at the risk of being uncharitable.

Duncan's ambivalence can be gauged from another article that appeared in The Globe, 12th November, 1886. Comparing the modern ambitious woman with grandmothers, Duncan writes: "There is one thing which women of today, with all their new accomplishments, high aims, and wide opportunities, are utterly and irretrievably losing. That is the repose of manner that our grandmothers possessed in so marked and pleasing a degree" (S.J.:32). Maybe, Duncan is striving to find a middle course between the calm and restful manner of the ladies of the older generation and the modern women's hurry and hustle. Duncan humourously points out what the grandmothers think of the career minded women. When Duncan, at the age of nine, expressed her desire to write a novel, she was advised: "Put it out of your mind, my dear, nodded a placid old lady of the last century over her knitting, `Novel making women always come to some bad end!'" (33).

Duncan states the advantages of both the old world repose and the attractions and activities of the new world women. Careers, independence, information and freedom are the demands of the modern woman. True, the modern woman is more knowledgeable of and conscious of the world around
her; more self-assured and confident. But one finds more spinsters among the younger generation. Still, there is more pleasure and profit in her activities. What she misses out is a sense of satisfaction, and perhaps happiness:

So her whole existence, including its hopes, and aims, and occupations, is changed from that of her grandmother. Of course she has gained immeasurably in knowledge and sympathy. Her life touches universal life at far more points than her grandmother's did, and pleasure and profit may be gained from all such contact. Her accomplishment is far greater, of course, though I doubt if her sense of it is. The satisfaction afforded by one of those flowered chintz patchwork quilts, all made by hand, must have been as great as anything in the realm of feminine accomplishment to-day. She is not much happier either, though she fancies she must be; for happiness is altogether relative, and can proceed from the parchment that covered jam jars, inscribed 'apricot', as well as from the piece that contain the Latin words of your diploma. After all, girls, there are worse places in the world that woman's domestic sphere, contracted though it seems to be, and while necessity and the laws of progress have driven us out of it to some extent, we can still look and sometimes go back to it with love and gratitude for so safe a haven (S.J.:34).
The concern for home and its comforts sends contradictory signals. Duncan left her home at the earliest opportunity, was herself a modern woman and a careerist. If she feels nostalgic about the repose of older generations it is understandable. But, surely, she would not have given up her career for a comfortable life at home. "The pursuit of happiness is ultimately of less concern than pursuit of self-fulfilment" (S.J.:18) states Tausky. So the advise to other women to heed the call of a safe haven points out the gap between practice and preaching. Her opinion that pleasure and happiness are relative, and can be had from a jar of homemade jam or chintz patchwork quilts goes contrary to her criticism of women in an exhibition, discussed earlier, where she satirizes those women who waste their time in embroidery.

Duncan turns out to be against women's unions. Usually women's causes are very close to her heart, but here, she advises women to be cautious and pragmatic in their approach. In an article appearing in The Globe, 31st January, 1887, she exhorts women workers not to form unions and not to follow men blindly. Men's unions can succeed as men do skilled work and can harm their employers by going on strike. But women do only elementary work, so they can hardly cause any inconvenience to their employers, who would easily find replacements. So she counsels: "And as a rule, we cannot blame the employers. If business and philanthropy attempt to walk hand in hand in the jostling thoroughfare of this world of ours, business will surely trip and both will be trampled upon" (S.J.:42).

Duncan speaks not as a friend of the women; she speaks unequivocally for the employers' cause, as it was this class that she belonged to. She appears
very naive in her flimsy defence of the employers. Referring to this as well as the article quoted earlier on domestic servants, Tausky(1980) aptly comments that "there is never any moral outrage at the meanness of the employers and, to be frank, little sympathy with the distress of the exploited women"(37).

Related to this lack of sympathy is Duncan's uncharitable disposition which is reflected in her visit to certain institutions, and commented upon again by Tausky. Discussing Duncan's article on Public institutions like Sick Children's Hospital, Women's Medical College, the House of Industry, Tausky writes:

These articles are interesting documents in social history, and are also revealing, through implication, about Miss Duncan's social philosophy.... The various charitable institutions `do good work' (this very phrase is frequently used) and the obvious inadequacy of their efforts prompts no further reflections. Those in need of charity had better be grateful since they brought their misfortune on themselves. This uncharitable view is particularly evident in a visit to a `House of Industry', apparently a primitive version of a home for the aged(1978:28).

Mr. North, the `worthy superintendent' is pleasantly shrewd. Asked about the "standard of admission as regards character", Mr. North replies; "Some of these creatures have seen better days, and are respectable enough, but
after all, simple ill-luck seldom brings them to this pass. For the next part, we can only say that we're sheltering here wretched remnants of misspent lives. A good many of them have seen the inside of the gaol, and would see it again if they were where temptation could find them"(S.J.:91).

Duncan, unfortunately, accepts this version unquestioningly. She shows no sympathy for the weak and the downtrodden. The questions this lack of sympathy raises are perhaps answered by Tausky when he says: "In the context of the barrier of ignorance separating middle and lower classes in the Victorian world, there is nothing surprising about the moralism of her reactions when she encounters the underworld"(1980:29).

Duncan was, after all, as conventional as the run of the mill Victorian upper classes. It is only on two occasions that Duncan showed a more humane understanding. One is the interview with a Montreal seamstress, and the other is a visit to the Notre Dame Hospital. Tausky finally comments: "Sara Jeannette Duncan visited no more charitable institutions after this one. If, as it is unfair even to guess, she could not bear such reality, one can hardly blame her, but her novels might have benefitted if she had retained this insight into the condition of suffering humanity"(S.J.:31).

The class conscious Duncan, when she visits the Toronto Sick Children's Hospital, can't resist asking the sort of question she had addressed to Mr. North in the article mentioned above: "No doubt you find great differences in the character of the children according to the class from which they come,"(S.J.:89). The wordings of the question expose Duncan's
obsession with class superiority. She expresses no feelings for the suffering children, and the answer she gets is on expected lines: "Great differences," she answered. "Some of the little ones are the children of parents in reduced circumstances, but the majority come from an undeserving class. Still, same lovely children come from the veriest slums; it is marvellous that such parents could have such children."(89) Consent ing, Duncan thought of the slime out of which the water lily grows.

These concerns expressed in the middle of sick children when not a thought is spared for the suffering kids, only goes to show that Duncan's class consciousness had reached sickening proportions. But, the beginning of this article doesn't prepare one for what is to come; She advises people whose hearts have grown harder because of comfort and happiness to visit the sick children's hospital: "The good you may do the hospital will really be insignificant beside the good the hospital may do you"(88). This concern is proved hollow and hypocritical when she expresses no words of sympathy for the poor children; her own heart seems to have grown the hardest of all. This is another example of Duncan's social philosophy. This class consciousness also reflects her early imperialism.

Canada had become a confederation in 1867. During Duncan's time, it was being pulled by two opposing forces - the U.S. and Britain. Politically for Canada - with a huge land mass and sparse population - total independence did not seem feasible. Britain had a strong and long hold on Canada's culture and politics. But the U.S. being the immediate and very powerful neighbour couldn't
be wished away. Canada wanted to have strong links with the U.S. but without jeopardising its association with England. This dilemma had resulted in Canada developing an ambivalent attitude towards the U.S. and Britain. Duncan too was a victim of this ambivalence. She was influenced both by America and England. She admired the freedom, the opportunity and possibilities that the U.S. offered, especially to women, but she was suspicious of American democracy. She preferred the aristocratic, imperial and hierarchical pattern of society as prevalent in England, but didn't like their "autocratic code of insular dictation." She revered the rich traditions of England, but faulted it on its inflexibility of social customs. Obviously, she prefers a Canada which is able to maintain a balance between the U.S. freedom and the English traditions.

In a piece entitled "Our Latent Loyalty", The Week, May 26, 1887, she maintains that Canadians are a complex people. They are practically independent in all senses. Canada has close links with the U.S.: similar conditions, same economic principles, same laws and opportunities; "hereditary monarchy and a privileged aristocracy have... the limited function... in being landmarks of history and picturesque accessories to the national life" (S.I.:57). The impression in the U.S. that Canadians are very close to the "English social fabric" is wrong.

Yet at heart, Canadians are still emotionally attached to Britain. Canada is independent, yet is linked with Britain, but not bonded to it. Canada thus is more complex and practical than the U.S. As long as the practical side is safe, some homage paid to the mother country is quite in
order, rather desirable. But when the British link starts impinging on the practical side, when it might become an economic hurdle, the sentimentality is set aside, and Canada's own interests guide its approach. [The Imperialist brings home this point with considerable force.] Canadians have, thus, very judiciously chosen a middle path between U.S. enterprise and British tradition. It is having best of both the worlds-consequently is better than both. This is how Canadians turn out to be practical as well as emotional - that is what makes them complex. Still love and gratitude for Britain is significant. Duncan writes:

We owe more to Britain than we are ever likely to pay; gratitude may be detected in it. We love our queen: for the span of a long life she has been to us the embodiment of all the tender virtues of a woman, all the noble graces of a queen. Thousands of her subjects in Canada were born in her kingdom.... We are glad to know that Her Majesty's representative is comfortable at Ottawa, and can be made so in his own way; and for esteeming his presence there or here an honour, with the history he bids us share, the traditions he commits to our keeping, and the flag he points our love and loyalty to, we cannot think of apologizing(S.J.:58-59).

These sentiments show glimpses of a budding imperialist. What better eulogy can be offered to England, the mother country. Duncan comments on the fact that Americans do not find such emotional
attachment with their elected Presidents. Monarchy creates a link with tradition and heritage which evokes emotional gratitude and traditional pride which the elected U.S. Presidents fail to evoke. Duncan, here, makes her preference for monarchy over democracy apparent, in line with her imperial thinking and superior attitude. This article also indicates that she was more inclined towards England as compared to the U.S. In this connection Goodwin (1964) asserts: "Though in none of her journalism have I found any support for H.R. Macallum's assertion that she 'held to 'the idea' [of imperialism] with an emotional fervour which elevated it into a quasi-religious dogma'. At least in journalism published before Duncan left Canada, she never fell into an idolaterous attitude to England or the English. Her critical faculty, in particular her keen perception of the ridiculous in human behaviour was too strong for that" (53). After going through "Our latent loyalty", it becomes difficult to agree with Goodwin. Duncan may not appear obsequious, but her obeisance to England is unmistakably imperialistic.

Talking of Ottawa's social system, Duncan not only provides further evidence of England worship, but also shows typical ambivalence of the Canadians of her time. In an article appearing in Montreal Star, 12th March, 1888, Duncan Comments:

Ottawa's social system is not very well understood in the other cities of the Dominion. Strangers who come here are invariably puzzled in its apparent inconsistencies... Their ideas of the Ottawa institution are conflicting. Some people
come to the capital expecting to find society clustering about a court; others believing they will see the official usages of a dignified democracy prevailing. What they do discover, and perhaps experience, is a mixture, in no small degree an anomalous mixture, of both. The noble pair who represent our Sovereign for us find no native aristocracy with which to form a social circle in which they could mingle freely(S.J.:77).

Duncan clearly states that the sovereign's representatives are more important than the elected government. Social intercourse is dictated by the requirement of Vice-regal hospitality, as Rideau Hall is the omnipotent force in the society.

Taken together with the sentiments expressed in "Our Latent Loyalty," Canadians come out not just as complex, but perhaps as mixed, unsure and ambivalent. This doesn't suggest that Duncan runs down Canada. Rather, she foresees a better future for Canada in liaison with England. Even when she was in India, Duncan keenly followed the political developments at home. In an article that appeared in The Indian Daily News, 7th October, 1896, she welcomed the liberals coming around to accepting a federation with Britain, because they saw Canadian interests best served in it. Prior to this, it was the conservatives who were supposedly favourable to Britain. Sir John Macdonald, their leader was considered as "the personification of impassioned devotion to England for many years"(S.J.:60). But when it came to national interest, the British link became secondary. "Sir John Macdonald's notable
"National Policy" was conceived and carried out in plain opposition to British interest as a whole, and many of its tariff provisions were directly aimed at British manufacturers"(60). If the liberals are willing to become a part of the Imperial Federation, it is because they see Canadian interests being served in such a federation. This turn around has been made possible as the policies of last eighteen years have not succeeded in getting Canada its due.

Duncan is equally conscious of the positive side of America and appreciates its culture. In an article "Society at the American Capital", which appeared in *The Week*. 21st August, 1886, Duncan writes: "If you come to Washington expecting to find a people of high average culture, of independent opinions, of wide hospitality, of a strong literacy and scientific bent, of quick appreciation, and of that charming but indescribable character that is the result of the friction of widely differing personabilities with the common basis of a high order of intelligence... your expectation will be abundantly realised" (S.J.:69). This is unequivocal praise. Still, the democratic system of Government falls short of her expectations and she likes the Canadian version of democracy with its dependence on the Sovereign.

In a piece appearing in *The Week*, 1st March, 1888, while describing the grandeur of the opening of the parliament in Ottawa, Duncan is concerned about the prospects Canada faces. Canada's future as a nation was a topic of national debate at that time. Duncan writes:

"Our present Governor General has performed for the last time the duty of representing his Sovereign and ours in her
relation to her colonists of half a continent.... It is doubtful indeed whether national circumstances ever before combined to bring the significance of the speech from the throne so strongly and sharply to the minds of those who heard it.

Commercial union, Imperial Federation, Annexation, Independence, however we would ballot for Canada's future, we cannot be deaf to the voices in the East and the voices in the West crying aloud in the hearing of ever-increasing multitudes that a change must come(S.J.:75).

Duncan took her ambivalent attitude to India. Tausky comments:

The two articles on Calcutta show the ambivalent view Miss Duncan took of her adopted home. The British resident in India, she contended, was doomed to be narrow in his interests by reason of his limited stake in the country. Yet (and here she provides an effective statement of the conventional view Anglo-Indians had of themselves), the Briton in exile is to be admired and pitied for the courage of his self sacrifice(1978:64).

In "Public spirit in Calcutta", The Indian Daily News, 11th December, 1896 Duncan is "struck by one essential difference between the Briton in India and the Briton at home - the almost total absence of anything like a vital interest in the local public affairs of this country"(S.J.:85). Further on, Duncan explains this indifference: "It is a common saying that Anglo-India is indifferent, so long
as nothing is done that threatens immediate personal interests or rouses race antagonisms."(85).

In a piece which appeared a fortnight later, on Christmas day, Duncan proves Tausky's point: "Once again, Christmas Day has come to remind us how permanent are the institutions of the Briton even while in exile and under conditions as far as possible removed from those of his native land"(S.J.:86). The native offerings are insignificant. The spirit is missing. In the absence of the 'frosty chime' and the 'accustomed flavour in the plum-pudding', one must "nevertheless, rejoice, in all that it means and if it has meant more in other years, in the anticipation that it may mean more again"(86).

Literature was Duncan's first love, her forte as well as her vocation. So 'social and aesthetic criticism' was a necessary part of her journalistic range. She held literature in high esteem, "literature is the noblest product of civilization", she wrote in an article "International Copyright," which appeared in the Washington Post, 29th January, 1886. She further added: "The state of a nation's literature is the surest test of its advancement, but literature is not only the measure of a people's progress, it is also the means of their further advancement"(S.J.:102). Without doubt, literature is a valuable asset a nation can boast of. Duncan continues:

But national literature cannot be wholly evolved from within... A literature should have its roots in national character.... But to give it growth, variety and comprehensive character, it has to be fed from without. The general current of human thought, as precipitated in literary forms, must be
welcomed from all sources to preserve its vitality and promote its maturity. A national literature, shut off from all other literatures, would weaken and die of starvation. It follows, therefore, that the contact of other literature with our own is beneficial (102-3).

In this respect, Duncan was conscious of the shortcomings of Canadian literature and culture. According to Tausky, Duncan was aware of "three perils to which the struggling, incipient Canadian culture was exposed: excessive colonial humility, the cultural dominance of the United States and (in reaction to the first two factors), aggressive parochialism" (S.J.:107). Duncan deals with these shortcomings in several of her pieces. One such piece appeared in The Week, 30th September, 1886 Tausky has given it the title, "Colonialism and Literature", and calls it "such a masterly piece of cultural analysis that commentary on it is superfluous. Apart from the validity of its conclusions it is a brilliantly argued essay" (S.J.:101). The piece begins with Duncan's lament, "We are still an eminently unliterary people". Duncan is relentless in her attack on Canadian literature. The question she poses is why Canada has been unable to produce a literary genius. Americans commenting on this lack of literary talent, blame "Our arctic temperature." Blaming the climate is absurd, feels Duncan. One could not find fault with the Canadian educational system either. "We are a well-developed and well-educated people; but we do not write books" (106-7). To say that we are not rich enough to afford to cultivate letters is not tenable. Divine gifts cannot be commanded by money. "The literary work
produced solely by hope of gain is not much of an honour to any country. While authorship is a profession with pecuniary rewards like any other, those who are truly called to it obey a law far higher than that of demand and supply. Genius has always worked in poverty and obscurity"(107). These are noble thoughts indeed. But there is a wide gap between Duncan's precepts and practice, especially when she went away to stay in India. It is pertinent to point out that Duncan, when in India, wrote with the aim of making money. She may talk of literary ideas in Canada; once she was in India, literature for her also became a source of making money. Fowler comments on Duncan's single minded devotion to money when in India, as she had become quite a hard bargainer in counting the pennies.

In every other way, Canadians are second to none. "We are well fed, well clad, well read"(107). Inspite of all these attainments, unfortunately, gods have failed to provide Canada with a genius. "The Province of Ontario," Duncan says, "is one great camp of the Philistines"(108). Duncan also criticises the Canadian press for its failure do its duty, not fulfilling the role expected of it. "Politics and vituperation, temperance and vituperation, religion and vituperation; these three dietectic articles, the vituperative sauce invariably accompanying, form the exclusive journalistic pabulum of three-quarters of the people of Ontario"(108).

In England, if any comment is offered, "it is only a semi-contemptuous opinion that is all that might be expected of "colonials"(106). Absence of literary activity is due mainly because of Canada's status as a colony. And this is the root cause of all shortcomings in the field of literature. Duncan quotes
a writer in *New York Critic*," In the political life of the colonized, there is nothing to fire the imagination, nothing to arouse enthusiasm, nothing to appeal to national pride”(108-9). "Our enforced political humility is the distinguishing characteristic of every phase of our national life. We are ignored, and we ignore ourselves”(109). The fact that Canadians have no political identity leads to a lack of nationalistic feelings. In the absence of nationalistic feeling there appears no ideal which can nurture literature and culture. Colonialism leads to parochialism, hence a lack of pride in national activity. Duncan feels so exasperated by this state of affairs as to be forced to say: "Even civil bloodshed in Canada has no dignity, but takes the form of inter-provincial squabbling. A national literature cannot be looked for as an outcome of anything less than a complete national existence”(109).

The blame for the absence of high literary effort is put squarely on the colonial status of Canada. Colonialism has reduced Canadian thinking to a parochial level. These views afford valuable insight into Duncan's thinking. She wants Canadians to get out of the rut of colonial thinking, and strive for a national consciousness. But is her concern about national literature confined to Canada, or does she project it as a solution applicable to any people. After seeing the negative influence of colonialism, one would expect Duncan to fight against it almost everywhere. In this connection, one can recall Rae Goodwin's assessment of Duncan's journalism. Goodwin observes:
Even when she is most subjectively engaged in evaluating or creating an impression or setting forth an attitude in argument, she is concerned with objective precision, "intellectual integrity"... Miss Duncan is a journalist of the realistic school, with the same close alliance to the impressionists as Henry James has. With this kind of vision and a clever perception of its philosophy and value she holds an Arnoldian concept of the value of culture in the community, and an Arnoldian hope for the efficacy of analytical social criticism(1964:91).

Goodwin quotes two passages from Duncan, where she expounds her theory of the value of real and ideal in literature: "We take the liberty of thinking that literature should at its best be there not only to the objects upon and about which it constructs itself, but faithful also to all the delicate attractions and repulsions which enter so intimately into the highest art"(Montreal Star, December 5, 1887 qtd. in Goodwin:92). In another context, she writes: "In literature, as elsewhere certain fundamental principles do not change. We must have truth of one sort or another - truth to certain value in the ideal, truth to certain actualities in the real"(The Week, November 4, 1886, qtd. in Goodwin:92).

These are admirable sentiments indeed. It is instructive to note how these thoughts and values underwent a drastic change when she went to India. She laments above that even 'civil bloodshed in Canada has no dignity, but takes the form of inter-provincial, squabbling.' In India she encountered bloodshed, which was not provincial, it was for a national
cause, it was for the independence of the country; it was for a cause that Duncan had wished for and should, in all honesty, have supported. But Duncan, as her later writings prove, was dead against Indians getting freedom. The cause that the Indians espoused could be Duncan's own: a struggle to overthrow colonial status, to achieve nationhood, thereby achieve national pride and attain greater glory; and to unite the provinces in a common cause of nation building. Duncan makes an impassioned appeal to the Canadians to do something for the cause of the nation. However, when Indians desire nationhood, instead of supporting or even appreciating the sentiment, Duncan unequivocally condemns it, *The Burnt Offering* offers the best example of this attitude) just like the other Anglo-Indians whose pastime was to criticize and oppose anything that might remotely suggest any danger to the existence of the empire, despite the fact that Duncan was not English but a Canadian and India was not part of the Canadian empire. Why, then, does she oppose Indian effort to achieve freedom? Duncan, who had seen the debilitating effect of colonization, and who had passionately taken a stand against it whenever it impinged on Canadian interests should succumb before the British interests to such an extent that she forfeited all that she stood for is puzzling. Why and how this kind of 'double vision' develops, one for Canada and England and the other for India is the thesis which will be developed in the succeeding chapters.

This phenomenon of "Double Vision" perhaps can also be examined with reference to her views on literary realism and popular romance. Her
commitment for truth to certain values and ideals, the objective precision and intellectual integrity, were a short lived phenomena, with an application limited to Canada alone. Even while writing about Canada and Canadians, she is at times ambivalent and inconsistent. Not only does Duncan lament the absence of literary activity in Canada, whatever little that does take place is of a very poor quality. She feels that any literary effort by a Canadian should not be praised because of the nationality of the writer. Referring to an article in The Week entitled, "Nationalism and the Literary spirit" written by G.Mercer Adam, Duncan writes in Montreal Star, 31st January, 1888: "For the benefit of those who do not know them, [Mr. Adam's views] it may be said that Mr. Adam considers it the duty of the national spirit to nourish the literary spirit. He believes that the Canadian author should be encouraged by Canadians"(S.J.:116-17). Duncan opposes this point of view. She feels that Canadians should not seek charitable standards for their literature. If one praises a work just because it is Canadian, it is doing great disservice both to the specific work and literature in general. Let Canadian writing measure upto established standards, and no pleas of nationalism should be entertained on this account. Duncan adds: "Gold is gold all over the world, and the literary standard should be equally unalterable. If not, the inferior metal we pretend to appraise at the same value because it was mined in or own country will be certain one day to be tried as by fire, with disastrous results"(117). She further adds: "Our colonial status, our comparative poverty, our youth, are allowed to plead for us when they all should be silent. We hear too often 'It is very well, considering'"(118). Duncan asserts, very rightly and conscientiously that, easy and meaningless
overappreciation will tend to do more harm to national literature than it could ever help.

These are admirable and justiciable sentiments. But it is easier said than done. While reviewing a Canadian book *An Algonquin Maiden*, in *The Week*, January, 13, 1887, Duncan had already slipped. Tausky comments:

Duncan was always eager to applaud and encourage Canadian writing when no sacrifices in critical judgement were required; sometimes she even let her loyalty get the better of her judgement. Her review of *An Algonquin Maiden* is a fascinating instance of an internal struggle between the competing claims of patriotism and literary standards. *An Algonquin Maiden* is an old-fashioned romance of the kind Sara Jeannette Duncan was inclined to regard with contempt (see 'Outworn Literary Methods'). One suspects that only its Canadian authorship prompted her to launch into a defence of romance as a literary form (1978:101).

Once again one notices the gap between precept and practice. Justifying *An Algonquin Maiden* as a romance, Duncan jeers at the followers of the realistic school if they believe that there are no more romancists:

*An Algonquin Maiden* is a romance, a romance of the most uncompromising description, a romance that might have been written if the realistic school had never been heard of... the
title boldly states as well as implies the character of the book. 'A Romance,' its authors have had the temerity to sub-title it, 'of the Early Days of upper Canada'. This must be regarded as nothing less than a challenge to the modern ideal of the form of latter-day fiction (S.J.: 110).

Duncan's ambivalence comes to the fore when she theorizes about realism but follows the romantic dictate in many of her literary articles, and later on in her novels. Tausky, analysing this aspect, writes: "Duncan's objections to realism are, of course, more sophisticated than the outdated views she ridicules. It is this critical sophistication that enables her to praise, lavishly and perceptively, works such as *The Bostonians* and *Anna Karenina*. Yet it is perhaps a lingering devotion to what she often calls 'ideality' that makes her guilty of enthusiasm for a work by one A.H. Morrison, called *The Art Gallery of the English Language*" (1980:22). Referring to Duncan's ambivalent feelings about realism, Tausky quotes from *The Week*, 15th July, 1886: "The modern school of fiction, if it is fairly subject to any reproach, may bear the blame of dealing too exclusively in the corporealities of human life, to the utter and scornful neglect of its idealities" (ibidem:22).

A few months after the appearance of this piece, in another article titled "Outworn Literary Methods", *The Week*, June 9, 1887 Duncan writes:

The Novel of today may be written to show the culminative action of a passion, to work out an ethical problem of every day occurrence, to give body and form to a sensation of the
finest or the coarsest kind for almost any season which can be shown to have a connection with the course of human life, and the development of human character. Motives of this sort... inspire all whose work rises above the purpose of charming the idle hour of that bored belle in her boudoir whose taste used to be so exclusively catered to by the small people in fiction (S.I.: 113-14).

Here we find Duncan again vacillating between romance and realism. She claims that the approach of modern fiction has changed considerably. It has become less formal, to the point, where the subject dictates the style. As such fiction has become more intense, dealing with all aspects of the consequences of action and passion. This ambivalence Duncan carried right through her career. She was a great admirer of the realistic school of writers, praised Henry James and Howells, but many of her own novels are marred by romancist delineation of the plot, many of her denouements are flawed by her unproclaimed liking for romancist writing.

As a literary nascent nation Canada is bound to be influenced by Britain and America. Duncan finds Canadians being more familiar with American writers and their books although they have a pro-British bias. She finds nothing wrong in this attitude. In an article "American Influence on Canadian Thought", The Week, January 7, 1887, she believes America and Canada to be literary allies, socially alike, and to an extent culturally
similar. The affinity towards American literature, then, is natural. She justifies a Canadian buying an American book rather than British:

He buys the American book in part because it is the cheapest, but in greater part because he is in every respect the sort of person whose existence in great numbers in the United States makes its publication profitable.... But, like the Americans, we have a certain untramelled consciousness of new conditions and their opportunities, in art as well in society, in commerce, in government. Like them, having a brief past as a people, we concentrate the larger share of thought, energy, and purpose upon our future.... In short, we have not escaped; as it was impossible we should escape, the superior influence of a people overwhelming in numbers, prosperous in business, and aggressive in political and social faith, the natural conditions of whose life we share, and with whom we are brought every day into closer contact" (rpt. Carl Ballstadt 1975:40).

England is far away, both in distance as well as opportunity. A Canadian writer can hardly find a market there. "The market for Canadian literary works of all sorts is self evidently New York, where the intellectual life of the continent is rapidly centralising" (ibidem:41).

In another article, "On Criticism", The Week, November 4, 1886, Duncan questions the old literary traditions established by the British. The spirit of questioning, which is the hallmark of the age, has entered the field of literature too. Writers are becoming iconoclasts. The practitioners of "literary
democracy' won't accept the rule of the 'classics' any more. Even the critics are growing bold. The new spirit of liberation doesn't denigrate the old writers, Duncan assures us "If progress means anything, it means increased ability to discriminate" (ibidem:56). True, adherence to truth should not change, but as the environment changes, literature also is bound to change. This does not make it less worthy. As such, comparisons with books written "a century or two ago" become odious. That the contemporary critics have accepted this position is a matter of great satisfaction. The critic has even changed his outlook: "He is less egotistical, less arrogant, less aggressive than of yore.... His conscience is being developed at the expense of his spleen. The myrtle tree is coming up instead of the brier" (58). The critics have become more amenable to reason and that is a healthy sign of growth.

Duncan's appreciation of new approaches in criticism is in line with her acceptance of new styles in fiction writing. The romantic tradition becoming outmoded gets a derisive reference from Duncan in an article in Montreal Star, 17th January, 1888. She writes:

It is not surprising that they [readers] take a lively satisfaction in having affairs terminated to their minds and feel positively defrauded in being compelled to part with their interesting acquaintances under undesirable and unexpected circumstances. It is probable, however, that this large and respectable class of readers will continue to bewail modern tendencies in fiction for some time to come. The idea seems to
be gaining ground that life should be represented as it is and not as we would like it to be, regardless of probabilities (qtd. in Tausky 1980:21-22).

In an article published in Montreal Star on 5th December, 1887, Duncan, while praising Howells, had expressed sentiments that go contrary to the critical theory of the realistic school:

No theory of realism, however admirable its aim and useful its effect, can destroy our \textit{ad valorem} notion of nature. A cabbage is a very essential vegetable to certain salads, but we do not prostrate before the cabbage bed in everyday life.... And so we take the liberty of thinking that literature should at its best be true not only to objects upon and about which it constructs itself, but faithful also to all the delicate attractions and repulsions which enter so intimately into the highest art" (ibidem:22).

After analysing her views, one comes to the conclusion that inspite of her defence of the realistic school, (she couldn't perhaps have done otherwise for fear of being called old-fashioned) Duncan's natural inclinations were for the good old romantic school. The contradictions and inconsistencies that appear in her writing are a result of the difference between the kind of image she wanted to project - which was of an avant-garde, liberal and modern writer - and the old-fashioned traditionalist that, in fact, she was, which image she wanted at times to camouflage.
The contradictory inclinations that Duncan displays in her journalism harden into a single minded devotion to the cause of British imperialism in India. She was an imperialist even when she was a journalist. The "ambivalence" noted in her journalism finally developed into "Double Vision" with two sets of standards - one for the white imperialists whom she admires and defends, and the other for the black Indians whom she criticizes and condemns. In India, her imperialism turned into naked colonialism. This transformation is detailed in the following chapters.