CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

I'll have them fly to India for gold,
Ransack the ocean for orient pearl,
And search all corners of the new-found world
For pleasant fruits and princely delicates

Dr. Faustus in Faustus by
Christopher Marlowe, Scene - 1
The relationship between India and Great Britain is a unique one. The historical encounter between the two countries has had a deep influence on the cultures of both the countries. India always attracted the attention of the West in the past. Rich resources like spices, silk, pearls and precious metals like gold and silver lured them. The prospects of business potential were very high in India as compared to other countries.

Though the Englishmen entered India primarily with an eye on the business ventures, gradually they began to realise that India also offered political as well as geographical opportunities too. The Mogul Empire was growing weaker day by day because of the internecine wars. There was no unity and integrity among the already subdued natives. Denis Judd writes "the Indian society with its extremes of fabulous wealth and unspeakable poverty with rigid caste system of the Hindu religion, invited varied reactions from the British observers."1

The situation beckoned the Europeans with open arms to accept the challenge and to grab this rare opportunity coming their way. Confidence and courage, mixed with the diplomatic adeptness helped the British to steal the show from among the other European contenders. The dominance thus achieved once continued for almost the next two and a half centuries. Accession of a vast nation like India not only made England politically and

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geographically powerful, but it also strengthened the economy of the country. "Nothing succeeds like success", said Shakespeare, and when he said so, probably he said it with a prophetic vision. The success seen in India made England an "Empire where the sun would never set". India was, no doubt, a prize catch for the Empire. No wonder that prompted Benjamin Disraeli to praise India as 'the brightest Jewel in the Crown'.

-India could offer everything that the roving eyes of an Englishman were probably looking for - wealth, power, adventure and so on. It had so many things to offer: a businessman found bountiful natural wealth, while an explorer had the great Himalayas. There were vast tracts of deserts and thick tropical forests where he could take on the challenges of nature to test his power of machismo. India was a land where the British hoped that his dreams could be realised. The courage and confidence that the British gained in the initial stages of the British East India Company, entering India in 1608 under the stewardship of William Hawkins, got multiplied as the days passed. Scientific and technological developments in the West were certainly an added advantage. Once the Englishman became the master of the situation, he ruled the country with the ruthlessness of King Arthur.

Gradually he donned on himself the responsibility of a Protector since he believed that the natives were incapable of protecting themselves. The natives were treated as inferiors. The psychology of imperialism and a sense
of superiority complex continued to persist in him till his exit. The relationship that began with an economic motive, transformed itself to the realms of politics and geography. The two cultures interacted with each other for nearly three hundred years. M.K.Naik is of the opinion that “apart from money making, another kind of opportunity that India offered to the young Englishman - especially in the early days of the British conquest - was that of achieving distinction in two ways: he could display his valour by conquering new territory or make his mark as an administrator by bringing peace and the rule of the law to the conquered territories.”

Many of these Englishmen who came to India and who stayed here - either for a short period or all their life - have recorded their experiences. Ketaki Dyson tells us that many of these writers took to writing ‘to fill up the tedious hours that hung on’ their hands after leading very active life in India. She writes:

Through these diaries, memoirs, sketches and autobiographies people who had had some extraordinary adventures were able to leave for posterity their records of the same: people who did not write what is called ‘major’ poetry or fiction were nevertheless able to express themselves and fulfil their literary aspirations through this genre. However, they might have complained about India, it was India which had provided them with their ‘themes’; and it was for their expressions of Indian experience, their ‘Indian literature’ as they would have put it, that they would be remembered.

They have left behind records of their experiences in various forms like diaries, letters written to their friends and relatives, travelogues, short stories, poetry, and fiction etc. This body of writing - later called 'Anglo-Indian writing' - which is the result of intense experience, is a treasure trove that our modern literature today cannot afford to ignore. The list of fiction alone runs approximately to two thousand according the conservative estimation made by M.K. Naik on the basis of B.K. Gupta's book entitled *India in English Fiction: 1800-1970: An Annotated Bibliography* (1973). Unfortunately much attention was not paid to this body of writing until very recently. If we try to make an attempt to explore the reasons for this apathy, we may arrive at some of these plausible reasons:

First, much of this body of writing was generally personal in nature. For example, we can find correspondence between friends and relatives or memoirs in the case of letters and diaries. The chief purpose of writing was to inform about the way of life in India. It was to enlighten their fraternity back in England. This kind of writing was generally stereo type in nature. Therefore, critics might have felt that it was not worth taking note of or worth publishing. Somerset Maugham is of the view that if the purpose of the novel is only to instruct and not to please, then it is not a work of art at all. He says that 'the aim of the art is to please'.

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Second, the writers dealt with a land and its people whom the English treated as inferiors and thus it was not worth taking cognisance of. Anything that was associated with India was a 'chee chee' for them. Or the writing itself was considered to be of inferior stuff compared to the serious and creative works of art produced by their contemporaries back in England. Stephen Hemenway is of the opinion that "most of Anglo-Indians did not care or know enough about the Indians or to imagine themselves in their shoes. Hence, the overall view emerging from these novels is a distorted picture of 'the real Indian', an image at once both narrow and unfair."\textsuperscript{6}

Third, it could even be attributed to the reason that political and economic compulsions occupied the centre stage rather than the literary compulsions, and thus there was no time to bother about small things. Bagban Prakash feels that among the British, there was a very strong conviction, for generations, that the British Empire was enormously important to England as part of the British national identity.\textsuperscript{7}

In the beginning, the term 'Anglo-Indian Writing' was broad based. It was probably coined somewhere around the beginning of the 20th century when E.F.Oaten in his book \textit{A Sketch of Anglo-Indian Literature} - (K.Paul, Trench and Trubner, London, 1908) dealt with all the writings in English on

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\textsuperscript{7} Bagban Prakash, \textit{Indian Themes in English Fiction: A Socio-Literary Study}, Mittal Pub. New Delhi, 1994, p - 27
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Indian themes including Indian writers. The distinction between the Anglo-Indian writing and Indo-Anglian writing was still not very clear even much later until K.R.S.Iyengar tried to sort it out. Sometimes there was a mix up of racial consideration too. Considering the literary surveys on Anglo-Indian Literature, Iyengar writes, "In all these surveys, 'Anglo-Indian' literature has no racial significance at all; it means merely that this literature is a product of Indo-English literary relations. England and India had come together, or had been accidentally thrown together; and out of their intimacy - whether legitimate or illegitimate - had come this singular offspring that is Anglo-Indian Literature."8

Gradually the term 'Anglo-Indian Writing' was applied to the body of literary work created by the Englishmen about India. Indo-Anglian Writing was something that the Indians attempted writing in English. Clarifying this point, K.R.S.Iyengar points out that "the Englishmen who once spent long years in India and attempted to creative expression through English, in other words, men like Sir William Jones, John Leyden, Sir Edwin Arnold, Meadows Taylor, F.W. Bain- were a class apart; we shall not see their like again and there should be no harm in continuing to describe them as Anglo-Indians."9

Another critic, Stephen Hemenway, also complements this view. In the introduction to his book The Novel of India he writes: "The Anglo-Indian

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9. Ibid.
Novel (or the British novel of India), a work of fiction produced by an Englishman writing about India, is complemented by the Indo-Anglian novel written in the English language by an Indian, surprisingly, both traditions are relatively untapped areas for scholarly investigation.\textsuperscript{10}

Recently, M.K.Naik has attempted to give us a definition of Anglo-Indian Writing, in his book \textit{Mirror on the Wall}. The definition is broadly accepted in the literary circles too. He tries to study the Indo-British encounter as found in the Anglo-Indian fiction. M.K.Naik is of the opinion that, “Anglo-Indian fiction may broadly be defined as fiction by British writers in which generally a British or occidental protagonist operates mostly in an Indian setting (though the scene may shift to England occasionally), and interacts with Indian and other British or occidental characters. It may be noted that this definition applies largely to the main-stream of Anglo-Indian fiction.”\textsuperscript{11}

Whatever the reasons might be, the point that remains as a factual truth, is that the Anglo-Indian writing was sidelined. There are a number of English writers who have written on India and about India, and yet remained unnoticed until recently. In the introduction to his book \textit{The British Image of India}, Allen J.Greenberger writes that the number of authors and works dealing with India from the 1880s is unbelievably large. He quotes the instance of Bhupal Singh’s list of the titles of works on India that ran into fifteen pages

\textsuperscript{10} Stephen Hemenway, \textit{The Novel of India} Vol 2, Writer's Workshop, Calcutta 1975, p - 3
\textsuperscript{11} M.K.Naik \textit{Mirror on the Wall}, Sterling Pub. Delhi, 1991, p - 3
in the mid 1930s. Greenberger surmises that hundreds of additional works must have been added since then. He is of the opinion that, "the inclusion of men like Kipling and Forster raises the literary tone of the works studied, but on the whole, the literary value of this genre is slight. There is little distinction between the ideas of men like Forster, who are acknowledged giants in the field of fiction, and the other writers of popular pot-boilers."\(^{12}\)

The collective writing of these writers is so large that the modern critics felt the need to create a separate entity in English literature and to label it as "Anglo-Indian Writing". Many may contend that Anglo-Indian writing does not have any significant literary value except in a few writers like E.M. Forster, Orwell or Kipling. Bagban Prakash says that in most of the novels the subject matters and their treatment, display what the Englishmen and women actually made of their challenges and opportunity to the real India and its people.

He points out that in some cases the writers reveal themselves more than the themes. This attitude invites a persistent criticism against the Anglo-Indian "that most of it was more of guess work and half-truths uncovering the fantasies, prejudices and obsessions of the writers."\(^{13}\)

C.L. Nahal, commenting on the Anglo-Indian novel points that the work produced by the Anglo-Indian writers cannot produce creative art because they wrote on something that was not native to their experience. He writes:

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A creative work of first rate order can be produced by an author in his mother tongue alone. Consequently, it follows only in works executed in such a language can a true picture of a nation or a people be discovered. No wonder therefore, that the two hundred years of Indo-British partnership have not brought forth a single novel in English which succeeds in depicting the Indian character and life with a penetrating and deep understanding or with a magnificent sweep.14

But another viewpoint is that there are at least three authors who have produced serious work of art. They are Rudyard Kipling, George Orwell and E.M. Forster. Meenakshi Mukherjee takes this view about the influence of E.M. Forster: "E.M. Forster was the first English novelist to pit India against England as protagonists. Since A Passage to India, no novelist writing in English, Indian or British, dealing with an Indian background, has been able to evade the shadow of Forster."15 But since Forster and Orwell are confined to only PASSAGE TO INDIA and BURMESE DAYS respectively, Kipling alone remains in the fray. Even Kipling was not free from the bias. Bagban Prakash says, "This India-born English writer was known for his divided sympathy - an attraction for India and an identification with the White man's prejudice and pretensions."16

K.R.S. Iyengar is of the view that Kipling was conscious of the dark areas in Anglo-Indian relationship that he could not probe. Kipling chose to pass by such areas without losing his own track.

14. C.L. Nahal, Quest, XXI April-June, 1959, p - 98
15. Meenakshi Mukherjee, The Twice Born Fiction, Arnold Heinemann, Delhi, 1971, p - 27
Kipling didn't evidently like to grovel in the labyrinths of obscurity and psychological profundity. He knew of the existence of the dark imponderables, - he occasionally grazed against them, - but on the whole he just preferred not to lose himself entirely among them. How much can the bucket understand the well? An Englishman's - a sahib's - understanding of India cannot reach any further. The sahib in India was, on his own chosen ground, an impressive and useful figure; he bore his imperial burden with zest and assurance.17

The apprehension, that there are no writers other than these three, is unfounded. Saros Cowasjee brushes aside this fear and asserts that it is far from reality. He writes, “Anglo-India has produced a large body of work, perhaps the largest of any community in relation to its size. Granted that the bulk is mediocre (a truism for literature anywhere in the world), there still remains much that is good by any standard of excellence.”18

The number of writers belonging to the Anglo-Indian writing is, in fact, too large to be ignored. M.K. Naik lists about one hundred novelists. There should be many more and some of them might have even been lost into the oblivion because of the lack of concern, both from the side of the British and the Indians, to preserve and to document them. There have been a number of novels published since the arrival of the British in India. A novel like *The Disconcerted Nabob*, written by an anonymous author was published way

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back in 1785 - nearly two hundred years ago. The following words of K.R.S. Iyengar are proof enough to make us sit up and take a fresh look at this disappearing body of writing:

Belittling Anglo-Indian fiction is easy. In its run of a century or more, what are its trophies after all? Who reads - who even heard of - Crocker or Curwen or Cunningham, Forde or Fraser or Hockley? Doesn't oblivion already cover them?¹⁹

The works of these Anglo-Indian writers did not get the prominence they ought to have got. On the one hand, the British ignored these writers for their own reasons as discussed earlier; while on the other hand; the Indians too did not give much importance to them and thus sidelined their significance. The cold response, from the Indian side, could either be an unconscious backlash to the dreadful colonial experiences of the past or the Indians were unable to palate the distortion of facts presented in these works about India. But still, both of us - the colonised as well as the coloniser - are unable to completely keep away the memory of that colonial experience. It is evident from the colonial hangover that is still experienced by us.

It is really very hard to come out of the mood of hangover. It is difficult because it is a kind of a sweet and sour experience. There is a strange kind of emotional pain and pleasure associated with that experience. Ketaki Dyson

gives a very beautiful description of such emotional experiences in her book, *A Various Universe*, in the following words:

This is a literature of greetings and farewells, of tears and embraces, of continuous daydreams about future reunions. We read of the initial parting from Britain and also of the genuine regret which many felt at the final parting from India, from houses and gardens which had become homes, from servants who had grown attached to their masters and mistresses, from friends who would never be greeted again. While looking forward to returning to Britain, many also felt the ache of leaving a country forever.20

However hard we try to forget the pain of the colonial era there is also that fear of losing the nostalgic pleasure embedded in the memory that is attached to it. The entire gamut of Anglo-Indian writing exhibits this emotional experience. We have a great deal to learn and unlearn; to teach and to get taught; to ruminate and to introspect just as to remember and to forget.

As Indians, though we tend to make an attempt to intentionally forget the painful annals in the history by undermining the contributions of Anglo-Indian writers, in reality we are unable to do so. It is because the memory continues to haunt us even today. There are so many experiences that are not only relevant, but also common to both of us. If the discovery of India helped the British to become rich and powerful, the Indians on the other side came in contact with the Western thought processes, which resulted in the

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development of education, science and technology. Otherwise, left to themselves, Indians could have taken many more decades to enjoy the fruits of modern culture. Mingling of the two cultures has reciprocally helped both India and England in many ways.

John Strachey gives us a nostalgic and introspective account of why the Raj is still important to us even after the independence of India. He writes in his book, *The End of Empire*:

Again, there are simpler reasons why it seems to me appropriate to begin a book dealing with imperialism with an account of the conquest of Bengal. For us, in Britain, this eighteenth century lives in a way that none of the other conquests of world imperialism can do. The Black Hole of Calcutta etc. are part of our national folklore. Countless British families, exalted and obscure, have served - as mine did - generation by generation in India; their children still see hanging on the walls of their homes this or that memento of the conquest. Thus it is especially desirable for us in Britain to reconsider this historic event. For, if we have preserved the story in our folklore we have done so in a decidedly one-sided way, to say the least of it. For our own mental health we need to try to get the record straight.\textsuperscript{21}

The literary field is also not an exception. Hundreds of Anglo-Indian writers have recorded their experiences. There are civil servants, persons from defence establishment, visitors, missionaries, historians, explorers, administrators, teachers - the list goes on and on. The quantum of their

\textsuperscript{21} John Strachey, *The End of Empire*, National Book Trust, Govt. of India, Delhi, 1959, pp - 11-12
contribution to the world of letters is so huge that we certainly cannot sideline them.

We generally speak of very few popular writers like E.M. Forster, Rudyard Kipling, Jim Corbett, Flora Anne Steele, Meadows Taylor, Paul Scott etc. But there are hundreds of other writers like E.W.Savi, Valerie Fitzgerald, C.F.Andrews, Rumer Godden, Edward Thompson, Denis Kincaid, W.W.Hunter, M.M.Kaye etc. who are seldom mentioned. Many people do not know about them. In the first place, we did not know that such writers existed. Secondly, their existence was clouded because of the brighter luminaries like popular writers. The works of these less known writers are not small by any standard. Besides, they are not irrelevant to us today. They are relevant to us today not just because they lived in India, but the memories they have left behind are so vivid that they speak of the emotional attachment they had developed for this country. The bond is stronger than we imagined. Their records help us to re-read our own history from various perspectives.

Allen J. Greenberger highlights the relationship between the two countries in the following lines:

The British connection with India is one of the most fascinating occurrences of history. This relationship between two far distant areas took place not only in the spheres of law and administration, but also in the realm of ideas. A more complete understanding of British policy towards India can be gained through recognition of the ideas and images, which the British rulers held about their Indian subjects and Indian possessions.22

Ketaki Dyson who has tried to study the journals and memoirs of the British serving in India in her book *A Various Universe*, writes that "interpreting India to the West continues to be a pre-occupation in our times, in which Indians themselves have joined."\(^{23}\)

Rabindranath Tagore had a great regard for the cultural and literary values of the English society. He holds the English culture in high esteem. The contribution of England to India in terms of moral values is invaluable. India should always remain indebted for having learnt these great values from England. The following lines express his perception of the English culture:

> Indians should remember that the great race of the English is not necessarily the one, which is ruling this country. We are the subjects of a bureaucracy that has grown out of years of administrative confusion that has created a whole lot of artificial human beings. We should realise that there exists a great nation of the English, which is actually located out in the globe. ... Respect for truth, justice, and freedom is the ideal of this race. Those ideals are expressed in their literature and in their historical writing and even in this war ideals sustain the culture inspite of deception and treachery.\(^{24}\)

Therefore, the Anglo-Indian Literature is relevant to us in more than one way. It served - and still continues to serve the purpose of a cultural emissary by carrying the information from the East to the West. The process

of public opinion formation in the West was mostly based on the messages that these books carried. Stressing the need to study these works, Ketaki Dyson is of the opinion that -

These books belong to the literature of self-revelation. Their authors not only observe and take notes, but also they reflect, ruminate and declaim. There is observation as well as introspection. ... The majority of the authors are aware of speaking to an audience they know that their writings are in the service of ends as diverse as dissemination of information, philosophical enquiry, artistic self-expression and persuasion, whether intellectual or rhetorical."25

Yet another author Zareer Masani also asserts the relevance of the study of the literature of the Raj. In his book, Indian Tales of the Raj, he says that for us Indians, the Raj still has relevance. Not just because we are its legacy, but because we have lost what was best in our colonial heritage - the idealism and courage, scholarship and versatality of an older generation that accepted the challenge of the West without being conquered by it. He writes:

The British, it is sometimes said, have never paid much heed to what other races think of them; and this was one of their greatest weaknesses in the heyday of empire. But perhaps, the time has come when they can begin to see themselves as Indians saw them; not the princes propped up or the servants they commanded, but the Indians who have been the most enduring legacy of the Raj - the Western educated middle class whom the British fostered to serve their interest but which eventually threw them out.26

India fired the imagination of all the Englishmen who came in contact with it. It thrilled them with its tigers, lions and elephants. While the mighty Himalayas beckoned and threw a challenge to the English spirit of exploration and adventure; the heat and dust, malaria and diarrhoea created nightmares in them. From one angle they sympathised with the superstitions and illiteracy in the natives, on the other, their zeal to transform the 'heathen' into a cultured society made them dedicate themselves to civilise the natives.

The experiences are innumerable; and all these experiences find their way in their writings. M.K. Naik says that the Englishman's motives behind conquering India were entirely noble and purely altruistic. "He simply wanted to confer the wonderful benefits of the white man's indubitably superior civilisation and culture, and government on a vast, amorphous Asiatic mass, obviously sunk deep into the mire of primitivism, ignorance and anarchy."²⁷

Though there are hundreds of books written on India, a cursory study of many of these works gives us a strikingly similar picture of India with a lot of stereo typed images. India is always seen as a land of magicians, snake charmers, dancing girls, prodigal kings who are unmindful of their subjects' welfare, people who are deeply immersed in superstitious rituals like thuggery and sati, fatalistic attitude etc. It does not mean that the British, who stayed in India, were incapable of analysing the real Indian mind beyond this point.

They were very adept in psycho-analysis. The analysis of the Indian psyche relating to the superstitions, administrative chaos, lack of scientific temper, fatalistic belief, sluggishness, and unhygienic environment etc. are really appalling. The works that are produced in the earlier phase of the British experience of India express a sense of awe. The latter ones show the Englishman's concern to transform the natives into better humans. There is an inner urge to don the responsibility of a Prospero, as most would like to put it. But when the natives showed resistance to transform, he (Englishman) grew aggressive and resorted to deal with the situation with an iron hand. At times, he had to sacrifice his life too and find consolation in martyrdom.

The ethos of cultural Imperialism is the undercurrent of most of the books written during the earliest period of British settlement. Gradually, the sense of aggrandisement gives way to a sense of atonement in the latter part. But the major chunk of the writing is soaked deep into the river of imperialism. In a nutshell, the overall impression that these writers created appears to be either distorted, biased or prejudiced. Udayon Misra comments that these British writers lacked independent vision. Commenting on the imperial attitudes in Hockley's works he says:

The British authors of his (Hockley) time generally came to see India in the light of their direct or indirect involvement in the administration of the country. So, it was inevitable that their views of the people and their problems were often tinged by the bias of the ruler-ruled relationship. The historical conflict endemic in the Indian society as viewed from the
British perspective, however well intentioned and searching that may be, was bound to reveal only part of the truth.\textsuperscript{28}

Continuing his argument, Misra comments on the characters created by Philip Meadows Taylor, Misra writes: "Being, in most cases, immediately connected with the administration of the country, these British writers on India displayed an incapacity to develop independent views and allowed the concept of superiority attendant on the ruler-ruled relationship to colour their writings."\textsuperscript{29}

In a way, the distortion appears quite natural because these people never stayed in the midst of the people of India. They lived an insular life. The insular life kept them away from the real culture of the country. They lived in the sprawling bungalows that were mostly far removed from the main centres of the society. They had created mini British Isles for themselves. That is probably one of the reasons why they could not get an opportunity to feel the pulse of the people of India. The insularity created a yawning cultural gap between what they perceived outside and what really existed inside. The gap persisted till the last day of their exit. And this distortion was carried to the West which, surprisingly, believed that it was true. The legacy continued. In fact, it is in this context that we can find the difference between the Muslim and English rulers who ruled over India. The Muslims not only lived in the

\textsuperscript{28} Udayon Misra, \textit{The Raj in Fiction}, B.R.Publishing Corp., Delhi, 1987, p - 46
\textsuperscript{29} Ibid, p - 107
midst of the Indian society, but they also made attempts to understand Indian culture. Swapan Majumdar observes that: "As colonisers both (Mohmedens and the British) resorted to power dominance no doubt, but while the former acculturated and opted to settle in India, the latter preferred to remain alien masters till their retreat."30

Allen Greenberger writes that there is certainly little doubt that the images that came to England through fiction had their effect. He quotes the words of Edward Thompson: "that one of the major reasons for the lack of understanding between the British and the Indians which led to the political conflicts is the mistreatment of Indians in fiction."31

To most of these Anglo-Indian writers, India was a temporary home. Their primary purpose was to inform, entertain and enlighten the people living in England, about India. The British interests were more important to them than anything else. There was pleasure in pleasing the people of their motherland. Commenting on the concerns of the Anglo-Indian authors, Mulk Raj Anand writes:

First, I believe many English novelists writing about India, have been mostly concerned with themselves and the English community in India, particularly in its relationship with the Indian people, and therefore maturing a kind of regional tradition of the English novel, closely linked

with the novels written in and around the metropolis of London. Secondly, the attitude of these English novelists to their own fellow Englishmen and women, as well as to the Indians who figure in their books, reflects the general attitude towards Empire problems of the period in which they write. London is therefore, the key to India in this as in many ways.\textsuperscript{32}

There are many other critics who subscribe to this theory that there was distortion of the facts while representing the true India to the West. Bagban Prakash holds a view that "such literature helped in spreading the mythology of empire and popularising a series of myths and stereo typed images of India that rationalised the mystique of the Raj. Often these fictional images were taken to be real and their authors were considered experts on which they hardly knew or understood."\textsuperscript{33}

The most common criticism against Anglo-Indian fiction is that it is strikingly similar in the portrayal of India, no matter who authored them. Even Kipling has not been spared on this count. Louis L. Cornel writes that, "Out of thousands of observations he made, Kipling produced several hundred pieces of prose and verse; and these may be thought of as the various fragments of a single vision of India, a vision that strives for realism but is in fact personal, even idiosyncratic."\textsuperscript{34}

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\textsuperscript{32} Mulk Raj Anand, \textit{Images of India in Western Creative Writing}, Ed.by M.K.Naik, Macmillan and Karnatak University Dharwad, 1971, p -13
\textsuperscript{33} Bagban Prakash, \textit{Indian Themes in English Fiction}, Mittal Pub. New Delhi, 1994, p -70
\textsuperscript{34} Louis L. Cornel, \textit{A Vision of India}, Macmillan & Co. London, 1966, p -142
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M.K.Naik also supports this view. He says that the British novelists who chose to write on the Indo-British encounter had ‘a fabulously rich mine of material to explore and exploit’ in such a vast nation like India with its complex and interesting human drama. But, unfortunately, no Anglo-Indian fiction has succeeded in meeting the challenge. Quantity-wise there could be a positive answer, but qualitatively these novels suffer from inadequacies, omissions, inaccuracies and misrepresentations. He writes in the following words:

In fact, the total picture of India that Anglo-Indian fiction has so far presented of Indian history and politics, civilisation and culture, religion and society, Indian character and personality, and the different ways in which the Englishman on the one hand and India and Indian on the other, impinged upon each other’s consciousness is surprisingly marred by numerous inadequacies of different kinds virtually unthinkable in any serious body of writing.35

Kushwant Singh writes that he is very uneasy with the books written on India by the English. Though the books by themselves are excellent, they could not get to terms with Indians. Whether it is Forster, Paul Scott or Kaye, their books “give vivid description of the heat and dus: of Indian summers, painted living pictures of the onset of monsoons, made forests come alive, but when it came to Indians, their characters became brown stereotypes on which they had been nurtured.”36

Somerset Maugham has his own explanation. He says that once the author chooses a subject he becomes a slave of his own idiosyncrasies however hard he tries to be objective. The novelist is at the mercy of his bias. “Whatever he writes is the expression of his personality and it is the manifestation of his experience. However hard he tries to be objective, he remains the slave of his idiosyncrasies. However hard he tries to be impartial, he cannot help taking sides. He loads his dice.”

M.K.Naik argues that he (the novelist) is perfectly justified when he makes his British characters enunciate the standard imperial doctrine, “for, this is exactly what is to be expected from these characters”. But, as artist, he should be far more imaginative, sensitive and rather discriminating than reciting the colonial creed like a parrot.

Suhash Chakravarty is of the opinion that 'The Raj' was a political obsession in Britain. He writes in the Preface to his book, *The Raj Syndrome*, that the influence of the imperial strategy was enormous. It was because of this strategy that the economic power and military authority were sustained. The loss of the Raj was unbearable to the British. It could have caused 'neurosis' in them. India, Suhash says, deposited layers of 'racial silt' in the British psychology and that is why they displayed an arrogant and an authoritarian rule that was quite different from the policy which was followed.

in their fraternal countries like Australia, Canada, South Africa or New Zealand.

For nearly a century, The Raj continued to create its myths and legends. It sparked off its various imperial stereotypes; fashioned objects of its 'investigative modalities'; tinted the imperial looking glass; ensued in official and public debates different strategic discussions; encouraged and applauded soldiers, administrators publicists and missionaries; animated its extrovert troubadours and comforted its patient and plodding reconcilers.39

But despite all these tactical differences, there were many liberal English citizens who morally sympathised the cause of the Raj for freedom and at the same time those who opposed it, but their views could not gather sufficient support. Suhas adds that:

The experience of the Raj was put in practice by administrators and soldiers in Nigeria, Ghana, Sudan. Egypt and Rhodesia alike. It offered a blue-print to the European powers elsewhere in their mission abroad. Between the definite perceptions of the Raj of itself and the remarkable flamboyance of imperial braggadocio on the one hand and the consistent line of thought about the 'contemptible' India and its so-called inevitable failure to graduate in the school of self-government on the other, imperial sensibility gathered a wide and influential audience. It was not merely an upper class affair. Even the British working class was attracted by the seductive prospects of a colonial overclass. If Rudyard Kipling and Maud Diver stood at the one end of the imperial spectrum signifying unflinching imperial will and determination, E.M. Forster and Edward

Thompson stood at the other end of the same world-view upholding various sentiments to buttress the imperial logic.\textsuperscript{40}

But even keeping all these shortcomings at the back of our mind, it is still worthwhile to study the Anglo-Indian fiction. The works open up many other vistas that are helpful from a literary as well as cultural angle. They help us understand the attitudes. Therefore, the Anglo-Indian fiction provides us umpteen number of opportunities, especially for a literary enthusiast.

First, the area of Anglo-Indian fiction is still fresh and comparatively remains untouched. The freshness offers avenues to probe from a fresh angle based on the recent studies in other disciplines like psychology, anthropology, sociology etc.

Secondly, it provides an opportunity to study the distortions and correct these distortions if any, apart from evaluating their literary merits and demerits. In fact, the Indian stands doubly privileged since he is familiar with both the cultures. Let us try to take a look at what M.K.Naik has to say regarding the advantages of an Indian studying Anglo-Indian fiction. He is of the view that an Indian with absorption of Western culture, can provide, adequate competence in understanding the British point of view:

He (i.e. Indian critic) can indeed, play a valuable role in supplying a much needed corrective to Western assessments of this literature which

\textsuperscript{40} Suhash Chakravarty, \textit{The Raj Syndrome- A Study in Imperial Perceptions}, Penguin Books India,1991, Preface
is often lop-sided, as when for instance, we are assured that KIM or A PASSAGE TO INDIA is the very last word on India, which neither novel actually proves to be, when intensively scrutinised. The Indian scholar can also expose the ignorance of the (learned) British about Indian life and culture, so that the record is kept straight.41

So far the attention of the literary enthusiasts in the field of Anglo-Indian fiction has been mainly focused on some popular Anglo-Indian writers like Rudyard Kipling, George Orwell, E. M. Forster and the like. Much lesser known writers like John Masters, M.M.Kaye, Valerie Fitzgerald, Meadows Taylor, Maud Diver, Flora Anne Steel etc. have seldom been taken for serious studies. The popularity of the well-known authors overshadows the existence of the other less known writers posing a threat of pushing them into oblivion.

In a large literary landscape even small hillocks become landmarks. Actually it is not that easy to work on the less known writers. The availability of source books itself poses a challenge. But still, the challenge is worth accepting and pains taking.

It is in this background, that a study on John Masters (1914-1983) is undertaken here. John Masters, in fact, is not all that unknown to the readers. He was a well-read novelist during the 1960s and 70s. His first novel Night Runners of Bengal (1951) brought him almost an overnight fame. People came to know of him because of the film, Bhowani Junction, which

was based on his novel of the same name. With Ava Gardner in the lead role, the film was a hit in those days. The film, besides bringing him name and fame, also brought him quite a good deal of money, which he needed most at that time.

John Masters was born in Calcutta on October 26, 1914. He was sent to England at the age of seven. He studied in Cheltenham School and in Wellington. Later, he joined the Royal Military College at Sandhurst. On the completion of his training he served for the British Army in India from 1934 till his retirement in 1947. He joined as a Second Lieutenant serving the second battalion of the 4th Prince of Wales' own Gurkha Rifles. He served mostly in the North West Frontier of the Empire but later, he also served for some time in Iraq, Syria and Persia during the war. He was honoured with various medals like D.S.O. (Companion, Distinguished Service Order) in 1944, and O.B.E. (Officer, Order of the British Empire) in 1945. He rose to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel before his retirement in 1947. After the Indian independence he emigrated to the United States.42

The end of the Second World War, followed by Indian independence, changed the fortune of British officers. There was a lot of confusion as to what kind of future plans they had to make. Many of them were preparing to go back to their homeland. Masters was interested in staying back in India,

at least in the civilian capacity, if not in his military capacity. But he decided to go back to England for some brief period until the things got settled in India. Besides, there was a vacancy awaiting him in the Staff College at Camberley. He was to be a member of the Directing Staff to train the soldiers on mountain warfare etc. He did a good job there as a lecturer. But somehow he did not like post-war mood in England. His biographer John Clay writes:

> After the width and expanse of India, England was small-scale and insular. Contrasts were apparent in every sphere. In India food and domestic help had been plentiful, here both were in short supply. And the class system, which the war had done so much to eradicate, seemed to be falling back into place. ... He was impatient with this life; the war had fired him up and, like many of his contemporaries, he did not want to settle back into a humdrum existence.43

Masters’ dream to come back to India and serve his Gurkha regiment in some capacity was also shattered as the Regiment was merged with the Indian dominion instead of giving it a separate identity. He was shocked and felt aggrieved to learn that there was no place for him to return. The serving British officers were given an option to join the British Army, but with least attraction in terms of pay, perks or promotions. “They’ve taken my India away from me”; he seems to have desperately commented before one of his fellow Indian Army Officer in Piccadilly.44 The words, “My India”, make ‘all the difference’ to us.

44. Ibid., pp -154, 155
It is at this juncture that he decided to go to the US and settle down there. It was also not easy. As he was born in India, he was not issued with the immigration visa and he was asked to wait for four years. With great difficulty he went on a visitor’s visa and later settled in the US. In the beginning he had hard times finding a suitable job to live and lead a comfortable life. For some time, he worked as a travel agent, travel editor, salesman etc., but all in vain. Ultimately, he took to writing and succeeded as a fiction writer.

His first novel, *Night Runners of Bengal*, brought fortune to him. Thus his Indian experience in India and about India brought him name and fame. He wrote twenty-five books including three fictional biographies. Out of these twenty-five, ten are associated with the Indian theme. He died on 7th May 1983, at the age of sixty-nine. His biographer John Clay describes him as “an intensely driven man who resorted to continuous activity as a means of regulating his energy”.45

The choice of John Masters for the study has some special reasons. First, he represents the fifth generation of a British family that continuously stayed and served in India. He recollects the political developments that were taking place at the time of Indian independence, in his fictional biography, *The Pilgrim Son*, and tells how he felt that India was nearer to him than England. He writes:

The Auk (Auchinleck- his officer) had always been a strong and dedicated advocate of early independence for India and from his example all of us took immense pains to separate India’s interests from Britain’s in the problems that came to us. Several times, especially on financial matters, we received blasts from London to the effect that we seemed to be treating Britain as a hostile power; but we were not, we were simply pressing India’s interests, as we saw them, against anyone else’s including Britain’s. I did not find this difficult, for India seemed more home-like to me than Britain did. My family had worked here for 150 years. I was the fifth generation to serve here, as part of the British overlordship.46

His great grand father had come down to India in the year 1805 and had served as a quartermaster of the 8th King’s Royal Irish Light Dragoons. Since then, the family had served in India under different capacities. The family name of Masters is significant in yet another sense. It is told that it was the great uncle of John Masters who discovered the tea plant growing wild in Assam around 1847. Thus his family name is associated with the tea plantations in India. John Masters’ father himself was serving the army with the 16th Rajaputs. He gives the details of his family association with India in the following words:

It was through my father that my seemingly inescapable destiny had caught up with me. He had served his time with the old 16th Rajaputs. His father had been in the Indian Police. His grand father had head master of La Martiniere School, Calcutta and died as a Professor at Kishnaghur College, also in Bengal. His great grand father had gone out to India in 1805, was appointed quartermaster of the 8th (King’s Royal

Irish) Royal Dragoons in 1812, and died at Cawnpore in 1819. His great-uncle discovered tea plant growing wild in Assam in about 1847.

The essential point is that the Masters family had served continuously in India, in many fields of endeavour, since 1805. In fact they had neither served nor worked anywhere else. I myself was born in Calcutta, my younger brother in Karachi. No one forced me to go to India when my turn came - but where else was there to go?47

Secondly, John Masters is nearer to the Indian soil than any other Anglo-Indian writer. Rudyard Kipling, George Orwell, E.M.Forster, or M.M.Kaye - all wrote about India and created memorable characters in their works no doubt, but the characters of Masters are far nearer to reality. Kushwant Singh is of the opinion that both Kipling and Masters understood India, but only Masters understood Indian. He acknowledges this quality in the following words:

It is in this respect that John Masters did better than others. And for good reason: Masters spent many more years in India than Kipling, Forster, Scott or Kaye. Apart from his childhood he spent 19 years in the Indian Army; he came to India five times on writing assignments and making films for BBC. He was the only one who could speak an Indian language: being attached to the Gurkha Regiment he learnt to speak Gorkhali and a smattering of Hindi. Indian blood runs in his veins. His main contact was with the Anglo-Indian community that he was able to portray with merciless accuracy as well as empathy in his most successful novel Bhowani Junction.48

47. John Masters, Bugles and a Tiger, Michael Joseph, London, 1956, pp - 34, 37, 38
The third reason is that John Masters himself makes a claim that his knowledge of India is better than that of any of his contemporary writers writing on India. He says that what he knows most about is the English; not the English in England, the English in India. He writes that the breakdown of the Mogul Empire was far more real to him than the Industrial Revolution. He admired Indian heroes such as Ashoka. "So I could write about India and more particularly, about the British in India."49

John Masters had a grand plan to write a saga of 'the British India' beginning from 1600 to 1947. He had made a list of thirty-five areas of conflicts about which he could write novels. Recollecting his plan to write novels on India in his biographical fiction, Pilgrim Son, he writes:

In the course of a long day I listed thirty-five areas of conflict about which I felt I could write novels. They covered the whole period from 1600 to 1947. Taken as a whole they would present a large canvas of the British period in India. The British would be in the foreground, as they had been in actuality; yet I thought the canvas would show how they were controlled by their environment -India - even while they were ostensibly directing it. Such a large project would benefit from an imposed unity.

Since I was going to cover all India, which is a large place, and 347 years which is a long time, I thought that the only course left open to me was to put into the foreground of each book some member of a single continuing family. The family should have dominant, recognisable characteristics, which in turn should resemble the characteristics of the British as they showed themselves in India.50

50. Ibid., pp. - 117,18.
That he could not accomplish the Herculean task of writing thirty-five novels on Indian theme is a different matter. But nevertheless, he has attempted to portray a single family - Savage family - in all his Indian novels beginning from *The Coromandel* to *The Himalayan Concerto*.

Therefore, the case of John Masters would be a unique one for a cross-cultural study. We have a long legacy of nearly a hundred and fifty years of Anglo-Indian culture in him.

Though Masters claims to know India and Indians better than any of his contemporary Anglo-Indian writers, he is not free from the general bias and ignorance towards India that most of his peers also suffered from. For example, the sense of 'white man's burden', and the imperialistic attitude continue to operate in his novels unconsciously. Almost all the writers of his time were invariably influenced by the writings of Rudyard Kipling. Masters himself acknowledges this fact. Expressing his feelings on India in his autobiographical book, *The Bugles and a Tiger*, he writes:

Everything here was different from the north that I was beginning to know. Yet there was a familiar 'feel' to the forests of dwarf teak, and the dried teak leaves made a remembered crackling underfoot, and I had seen these white villages and these thin-legged peasants before. I could not understand until I looked at map and saw, a little off to the east, the name 'Second Hills'. This was the country of the Jungle Books. Kipling's genius for transmitting atmosphere had been here, and that was why I already half knew the place. Later, when I first went into the Himalaya,
I was to recognise that I had travelled in them too, with *Kim*, the best book that has ever been written on India, that I had felt the tang of the air and heard the silence and seen' the appalling sweep and dispersal of the cloud shadows after rain.51

The legacy left behind by Kipling continues to operate vehemently in the novels of many Anglo-Indian writers and, obviously, Masters is no exception to that. One of the novels written by Masters, *The Lotus and the Wind* resembles Kipling's *Kim* in many respects. M.K.Naik points out such obsessions of Anglo-Indian writers including that of Masters:

John Masters, another prolific Anglo-Indian novelist, claims that his novels on India are desperately concerned with transmitting its reality. Inspite of these laudable intentions however, both Diver and Masters, are seen to be guilty of many a hopelessly false touch in their depiction of India and the Indians. In fact, this charge can be levelled at almost every significant Anglo-Indian novelist with some justification. The ignorance of the learned British novelist writing on India is indeed shocking.52

It is quite a difficult task to come out of the colonial mentality. The imperialistic stream continues to flow as an undercurrent in the subconscious mind of all these writers. Stephen Hemenway supports this view with regard to the novels of John Masters. He says that though Masters shatters the myth, he is not *altogether averse to glamorising exotic aspects of India. His novels are apt to induce nostalgia for the days of the yore among those British now departed from India, touches of chauvinism among patriots lamenting

the loss of the Empire, and the feelings of disbelief among the Indian forging a twentieth century power from an underdeveloped nation. There is a nice blend of Kipling and Forster, of the old bravado and the new breast-beating in the novels of Masters.  

Hemenway pays rich compliments to Masters and tells that he (Masters) is more objective than most of the pre-1924 Anglo-Indian novelists. Masters puts the things straight. He did not even hide his displeasure. He minced no words. His two works *Bugles and a Tiger*, and *Bhowani Junction*, 'abound with British blunders'. Masters sympathised with the Indian cause of Indian independence.

Louis Cornell speaks of the lack of understanding between Indians and Europeans in the Anglo-Indian fiction and comments that Forster's *A Passage to India* is a notable example and it has fascinated 'lesser' writers like John Masters, John Berry and many others. Cornell says that the Anglo-Indian and Indo-Anglian fiction has flourished since the Indian independence in the Kipling tradition but Masters' fiction is not of Kipling's stature. Kipling himself saw a partial view of the native Indians.

As we might expect, what he sees on the other side is a partial and somewhat distorted version of the world of the native Indians. It is a version based on Kipling's own experience, to be sure and as such it is true to the facts as he saw them; but his experience of India was sharply

limited by his being a member of the conquering race. For all Kipling's tact, curiosity and linguistic skill, he could not gain access to a normal, middle-class Indian household.54

But the psychology of Imperialism itself is a very strange one. It need not necessarily involve domination, exploitation etc. It may be true to a larger extent that domination, exploitation are the natural fallout of a close encounter between two cultures, especially between a strong and a weak nation. But, underneath this phenomenon there is a strange kind of love-hate relationship. The initial reaction of a stronger power is that it tries to pity the weakling. Then comes the process of empowering them. The process of empowerment involves deep involvement and that brings them closer to each other. The proximity, strangely sometimes, breeds love and not contempt. Once the weakling gets empowered it urges for freedom to come out of the fledgling cover. It is really a very intricate kind of relationship and is hard to understand. This kind of relationship of like and dislike, love and hate, respect and disrespect is found in most of the Indian novels of Masters.

An attempt is made here to undertake a study of ten novels of John Masters, wherein Indian setting is used. For the purpose of convenience, these ten novels are divided into three categories, keeping the Indian Mutiny of 1857 as the centre point. So we have novels that deal with the period before the Mutiny, around the Mutiny and after the Mutiny. The classification

is made on the thematic basis of the novels rather than on the chronological year of the publication of the novels.

Historically, too we can classify the British stay in India, into three phases. First, the arrival of the British East India Company, its settlement and consequent expansion. Second, their gradual taking over of the administration followed by the attempts to get a firm footing in the country which results in the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857 and its suppression. In the third phase, introducing Queen's rule in the country with many reformist policies. In other words, the sense of awe, aggrandisement, assertion and atonement follow one after the other.

The titles of Indian novels by Masters undertaken for the study, along with the year of publication and the setting are given at the end of the chapter. It is followed by another list that contains full list of the works authored by Masters, along with the year of publication and name of original publishers.

The second chapter is devoted to discuss the theoretical concepts associated with imperialism and colonialism. In a general sense both the terms are used to communicate the same meaning - that is to expand the territories for political, geographical or economic reasons. An attempt has been made here to understand the terms of imperialism and colonialism as interpreted by the dictionaries, social scientists and literary critics. The word 'empire' was used as early as the Roman civilisation. In those days, the
territories were extended either to create a buffer zone to shield their own country against the foreign invasions, or to subjugate the people of weaker nations to serve under them so that they led a luxurious life. Later, during the middle ages, the trend slightly changed to the establishment of colonies. The colonies were to supply the raw materials required for the production of industrial goods like steel, clothes. The establishment of the colonies led to the idea of colonialism. The victorious nations tried to force their culture on the vanquished nations. It was because of the psychological belief that their victory was due to their superior culture and technology. The process not only provided an opportunity to the conquered nations to exploit and extract what they needed from their colonies, but it also paved them a way to sell their finished goods for profit and thus to easily find a market for themselves.

Thus we can observe that while imperialism is a kind of fall out emerging out of the psychological, geographical or defense process; colonialism is more or less the result of economic process. The capitalists view colony from the business opportunity angle, and the Marxists view the process from the angle of exploitation of the colonised by the colonisers to get their own purposes served. The exploitation of the fellow human beings takes place by both conceit and deceit.

In literature, the concept of imperialism is used to impose coloniser's culture on the colonised. The coloniser develops a sense of superiority complex as a result of his success theory derived from his own experience. He keeps
this trick to himself to act like a trump card. Though he pretends and vows to reform his colonised community, he does not want it to happen on a full scale lest he loses out his importance. He would always like to maintain a distance for himself. In order to sustain this system, the coloniser keeps on repeating and reminding the coloniser that he is incompetent, inefficient, less cultured so on and so forth. He rides on this sentiment and psyche that he has either learnt by himself or learnt through his tradition. The Subaltern' - what Gayathri Spivak would like to call it - should always remain as a subaltern so that he does not pose a threat to the existence of his master.

The British experience of imperialism in India for nearly three hundred years has passed through different phases. The early period was filled with a sense of awe, the second phase was marked with an attempt to assert their existence strongly and the third phase was ruminative with a sense of remorse and atonement. The chapter makes an attempt to discuss these views. The British experience of India was not just hatred and annihilation. As a sensible and cultured race they could also see the strength and beauty that sustained this ancient civilisation in India. For many English reformists, missionaries, officers, educationists, explorers, writers and scientists Indian experience was an unforgettable event in their life. Though the Anglo-Indian fiction is abound with stereo-typed images, it also has the appreciation for the Indian culture, land, seasons, animals, rivers.
The third chapter takes up the analysis of the first (thematically) three novels of John Masters. The novels are: Coromandel, The Deceivers and Night Runners of Bengal. Coromandel tries to describe the first stage of British entering India. It is also partly biographical in the sense that Masters' forefathers came from Wiltshire in England to India. Masters tries to imagine the times in the 17th century. The earliest sense of awe, enthusiasm to explore, eagerness to make money etc. is seen in the novel. The novel also gives us the hints on the Indian problems like internecine wars, sati system, thuggery etc.

The Deceivers is a novel that is based on the British attempts to eradicate thuggery from the central part of India. The incidents are based on Sleeman's selfless work to root out the social evil practiced in the name of Goddess Kali by a group in the central part of India. The gang strangulated the innocent tourists travelling through the land and robbed their belongings. Honest attempts made by the British officers to reform the nation and instill a sense of security among the natives is the central idea of the novel.

Night Runners of Bengal is one of the most successful novels of Masters. He established himself as a popular novelist with the publication of this work in 1951. The novel tells us the horrendous tale of the Indian Mutiny in 1857. The novelist takes a view that mistrust and misunderstanding between the rulers and the ruled resulted in the Mutiny. Masters writes that he did a
good deal of research to portray the facts as lively as possible. The experience of Mutiny taught a lesson to the English to take their subjects into confidence and introduce reformation in the future.

The fourth chapter takes up the study of four novels viz. *The Lotus and the Wind*, *The Venus of Kortpara*, *Far, Far the Mountain Peak* and *The Ravi Lancers*. *Lotus and the Wind* is based on the espionage activity. It describes how the British gathered intelligence on the possible invasion by the Russians on Indian Territory and prevented it. The novel resembles Kipling’s *Kim*.

*The Venus of Kortpara* is a novel based on the excavation made in the central part of India where the Gond tribes lived. It tries to prove the theory of Aryan invasion on the Dravidians who were the original settlers but later driven south by the Aryans.

*Far, Far the Mountain Peak*, is based on the mountain expedition. A British District Collector of Rudwal in Punjab, tries to lead a team of mountaineers to climb the Himalayan peak of Meru and fails. At the same time we have the sincere efforts made by the officer to improve the living condition of the people in Punjab by establishing school and hospital. There is also the description of rescue operations taking place at the time of an earthquake.

*The Ravi Lancers*, deals with the Indian provincial army from the foot hills of Himalayas taking part in the First World War in Europe to help the
British to win. Masters takes this opportunity to pay back his tributes to his Gurkhali people and the Indian soldiers who laid down their lives for the sake of their masters. The Indian help inspite of Nationalist feelings rising high against the British rule, show the sense of Indians gratitude too.

The fifth chapter analyses the imperialistic attitudes as seen in the three novels namely, *Bhowani Junction*, *To The Coral Strand* and *The Himalayan Concerto*. The first two novels are set around the time of Indian independence. *Bhowani Junction*, is perhaps the second novel by Masters that was celebrated most. The plot is knit around the Anglo-Indian or Eurasian girl called Victoria Jones. The novel discusses the dilemma of the Eurasians trying to search for identity in the background of the British leaving the country and going back to *home*. The English could not accept these half-caste Eurasians nor could the Indians. Victoria’s futile attempts to seek identity among the British. She ultimately realises that her place is in India. Identity forms the theme of the novel.

*To The Coral Strand*, is written just around the time of Indian independence. The ground the British, which they thought was never going to collapse, has finally collapsed. There is disappointment and desperateness to hang on to something which was already out of the hand. Masters’ individual experience of leaving the country that had become a part of his life can be seen in the novel. There were many men like him who shared his
experience. He feels as if the country was slipping back to the period when chaos ruled the roost. There is pain of parting in the story.

*The Himalayan Concerto*, is set in the post-independent India. Masters revisited India after a long time. The nostalgic moments are lived again. The places, people are recollected once again. The plot is again espionage - this time it is against the Chinese designs to invade India. The Englishman returns as a musician who decodes the secret messages for the Indian Government and saves the country from a possible attack.
### ORDER IN WHICH MASTERS’ INDIAN NOVELS ARE TAKEN UP FOR STUDY

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<td>THE DECEIVERS</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>NIGHT RUNNERS OF BENGAL</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>THE LOTUS AND THE WIND</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>THE VENUS OF KONPARA</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>FAR, FAR THE MOUNTAIN PEAK</td>
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<td>TO THE CORAL STRAND</td>
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### FICTIONAL AUTOBIOGRAPHIES

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