Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

(I) Aim, Scope and Significance of the Study

In the 70s, three novelists received the Booker Prize, Britain's most prestigious annual literary award for their Empire-centred novels: J. G. Farrell for The Siege of Krishnapur (1973), Ruth Prawer Jhabhwala for Heat and Dust (1975) and Paul Scott for Staying On (1977). Of the three, Farrell is by far the most neglected and the least known in India and abroad. The fact that Farrell can very well stand comparison with the established heavyweights of the end-of-the empire genre of colonial fiction deepens the mystery behind this scholarly neglect and serves to justify the relevance of the present study.


Binns’s *J.G.Farrell* is itself slim and hardly exhaustive. As a nutshell review of the corpus of Farrell's fiction, Binns's book is a handy guide to Farrell and my study will use it as a point of reference; but my work will attempt to go beyond Binns in the following matters. The variety of factors that were at work in the making of a Farrell novel which Binns only touches on will receive more elaborate attention. Perhaps due to obvious pressures of condensation, Binns’s treatment of Farrell's fictional techniques and stylistic devices is only suggestively compact. Further, Binns does not pay enough attention to vital questions like Farrell's treatment of history and Farrell's profound response to colonialism in his Empire fiction. As Binns himself admits, “in the trilogy as a whole Farrell explores moral values and concepts of history and imperialism about which there will always be a great deal to say” (1986:102). My study will pay due attention to these questions and in doing so draw on the insights about historical fiction derived from Butterfield, Lukacs, and Fleishman, Umberto Eco and Linda Hutcheon and on colonialism and imperialism derived from Octave Mannoni, Edward Said and Martin Green. A minor but important aim is to refute Binns's belief that Farrell lies outside the broad tradition of British fiction about India. Though Farrell is not an Anglo-Indian novelist *a la* Kipling or Paul Scott, he undoubtedly deserves a significant niche within the rich tradition of British fiction about India. The proposed thesis, therefore, attempts to link Farrell more firmly to this tradition.

Farrell's early novels—*A Man From Elsewhere*, *A Girl in the Head* and *The Lung* are instances of pure fiction which are set against contemporary backgrounds while in the later novels, i.e., the Empire fiction, Farrell turned to historical settings. *Troubles* pictures the tragi-comic tale of a group of British
citizens in a decrepit hotel called the Majestic during the Irish troubles of 1919-1921; The Siege Of Krishnapur deals with the disturbances in India which culminated in the first struggle for Indian Independence in 1857; The Singapore Grip looks at the collapse of Britain's imperial supremacy from an economic standpoint and The Hill Station is a sequel of sorts to The Siege of Krishnapur. The Empire fiction, on the whole, deals with the jolts that British imperial pride received from three of its formidable colonies.

My use of the phrase 'Empire fiction' rather than the oft-used 'Empire trilogy' is not an accident. The term ‘Empire trilogy’ is inadequate in that it excludes The Hill Station (1982), Farrell’s unfinished sequel to The Siege of Krishnapur (1973). Binns's book is delimited by this exclusion in that a comparative study of The Siege of Krishnapur and The Hill Station, the former set in the troubled times of the Mutiny and the latter set in the middle of the long period of peace which followed the suppression of the Mutiny brings to light interesting contrastive affinities between the two novels. Fan-ell's own comments justify the term "Empire fiction." Farrell wanted his novel to be considered "as a triptych rather than a trilogy with each presenting a picture of the Empire at a different historical watershed and by their association shedding, I hope, some light on each other. I can't promise that I won't add other" (Dean 1978:68; Italics mine). Moreover, the inclusion of The Hill Station in the Empire fiction reinforces my argument that, Farrell, despite his interest in other colonies, takes India as the key. Shamsul Islam is of the view that India is "the key to the understanding of British imperialism and the imperial idea in general for the pattern of British colonial policy was framed in India" (1979:3). In concentrating on India in the way Farrell does, one gets an idea of Farrell’s insight into the Raj.

In times of antiquity, imperialism meant a federation of states under a universal law and authority, spanning the entire known world, based on a
philosophy of peace, order, discipline and internationalism. But, today the term is too loaded to be contained within the narrow confines of a simple definition. Edward Said is of the view that imperialism is "a word and an idea today so controversial, so fraught with all sorts of questions, doubts, polemics and ideological premises as nearly to resist use altogether" (1993:3). In its narrowest definition, imperialism refers to a policy of territorial aggrandisement while, at a deeper level, it can be anything—from an unscrupulous exercise of political and moral license on an alien people to a nightmare regime of exploitation, slavery, and inhuman brutality. In the former sense, imperialism is more related to ‘colonialism’ which, though "almost always a consequence of imperialism, is the implanting of settlements on distant territory" (Ibid). The motive force behind imperialism, needless to say, is the building up of an Empire. Michael Doyle writes: "Empire is a relationship, formal or informal, in which one state controls the effective political sovereignty of another political society. It can be achieved by force, by political collaboration, by economic, social, or cultural dependence. Imperialism is simply the process or policy of establishing or maintaining an empire" (1986:45). In other words, imperialism implies an approach to politics which is profoundly anti-democratic. Unlike orientalism [which is "a kind of Western projection onto and will to govern over the Orient" (Said 1979:95)], imperialism is totally free from any geographical boundaries. "The basis of imperial authority is the mental attitude of the colonist. His acceptance of subordination—whether through a positive sense of common interest with the parent state, or through inability to conceive of any alternative—made empire durable" (Fieldhouse 1991:103). Imperialism is an ideology in the Marxian sense: “Neither imperialism nor colonialism is a simple act of accumulation and acquisition. Both are supported and perhaps even impelled by impressive ideological formations” (Said 1993:8). In other words, imperialism is a form of false consciousness in that it presents a world-view which is false primarily because it violently conflicts with the interests of the majority who conform to it (Larrain 1979:108). And a conscious attempt at the dissemination of false
consciousness was central to the concept of imperialism. ‘The White Man's Burden,' la mission civilisatrice of the French, the superior Kultur of the Germans were all part of the mystique of imperialism. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the staunch champions of the British Empire began to develop a theory of imperialism by creating and popularising a body of myths about India and the colonies. The important forces behind the formulation of the imperial mythology were biology, religion, economics, politics and literature.

The most dominant myth which Britain consistently perpetuated as an overriding justification for the preservation of Empire was a stubborn faith in the concept of a superior civilisation. In his influential book, *Prospero and Caliban: The Psychology of Colonisation*, Mannoni considers superiority an essential feature of the coloniser:

> a colonial situation is created, so to speak, the very instant a white man, even if he is alone, appears in the midst of a tribe, even if it is independent, so long as he is thought to be rich or powerful or merely immune to the local forces of magic, and so long as he derives from his position, even though only in his most secret self, a feeling of his own superiority (1956:18).

Biological science has had a significant role in the development of the imperial psychology even before Darwin pushed it to a new level of prestige. In 1841, Thomas Arnold had presented a racial theory of world history and a few years later, British biologist named Robert Knox of Edinburgh had explored the imperial implications of pseudo-scientific racism (Curtin 1971:xvi). The publication of Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* (1859) boosted the Englishman's imperial confidence and the Darwinian notion of the survival of the fittest engendered the myth of racial superiority (Halliday 1911:389). Darwin, 'a half understood household sage/ demonstrated that some races, like some
animals were more efficiently evolved than others and had a right to leadership and possession (Morris 1968a:32). This theory was found to provide a very sound basis for the justification of Britain's greed for imperial power and glory. As Brantlinger has put it, “Evolutionary thought seems almost calculated to legitimise imperialism” (1988:186).

Politically, Gladstone who described the triumphs of the Empire as ‘false phantoms of glory’ vehemently objected to Britain’s hectoring interference in the affairs of foreign nations. He argued that so long as foreigners showed no willingness to be guided by the Englishmen, it could never be to Britain's national interest to meddle in other people's concerns (Morris 1978:48-49). And it was largely at the expense of Gladstone's anti-imperialist stance that Disraeli, 'the glittering impresario of Empire,' gained immense popularity. Lord Salisbury, the Prime Minister, was a staunch imperialist and Joseph Chamberlain, the Colonial Secretary, was an insatiable expansionist of a new kind. Sir Charles Dilke, himself a politician of no mean calibre, published his book Greater Britain (1869) which was instrumental in the spread of imperial myths. Dilke, while detailing the reasons for subjugating the colonies on a permanent basis, offered the educated Britons a new vision of themselves as a benevolent master race (Chakravarty 1991:6). This rhetoric of power continued to have an uncanny impact on writers and thinkers of the time. As Said aptly puts it: "the rhetoric of power all too easily produces an illusion of benevolence when deployed in an imperial setting’’ (1993:xix). John Seeley’s The Expansion of England (1884) was more than an expression of "that greater pride in the Empire which is called imperialism and is a larger patriotism'' (Rosberry in Thornton 1959:xxx). As the journalist, Monypenny noted, 'Empire' and 'Imperialism' had taken the place which had been held by 'nation' and ‘nationalism’ (Ibid). Reporting the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria in 1897, the Golden Issue of the Daily Mail printed throughout in golden ink and sometimes breaking into exultant cross-heads said "The British-bred colonials were all so smart and straight and strong, every man
such a splendid specimen and testimony to the greatness of the British race that there was not an Imperialist in the crowd who did not from the sight of them gain a new view of the glory of the British Empire" (In Morris 1978:32).

The prime motive of British imperialism was economic. Though nobler and subtler motives played their part, the deepest impulse of the Empire was the impulse to amass richer wealth. The imperial overlords considered the colonies as a vast estate or plantation the profits of which were to be withdrawn and deposited in Britain. As a result, the colonies were systematically plundered. There were numerous instances of Englishmen rising from 'rags to riches' overnight and returning home as self-styled nabobs, for, as Benjamin Disraeli said, "The East was a career" (In Said 1978:5). In those 'gold-rush' years, Britain had found gold and silver in Australia, in New Zealand, in Canada and in India. In South Africa, the British had built the gold metropolis of Johannesburg, and the Big Hole created at Kimberly was "one of the most astonishing memorials to the impetus of avarice" (Morris 1968b: 100). Most leaders believed that the loss of overseas possessions would be disastrous to the imperial country. They thought that the dissolution of the Empire would be tantamount to a senseless act of economic self-destruction. "The Repeal of the Union we regard as fatal to the Empire and we will consent to it never - never - never" declared Macaulay in the nineteenth century and "India is our bread and butter, and without it we will go out, down, and under" asserted Winston Churchill in the twentieth century in a Parliament speech" (In Islam 1979:3). Thus, the Empire-builders fostered the myth of strengthening the economic structure of the colonies and providing an ideal government to them and went on to become the world's richest nation. This aspect of imperialism is masterfully handled by Farrell in The Singapore Grip.

At the religious level, the myth of the 'elect nation' was propagated as justification for imperialist policies. The pious imperialists believed that 'empires are successive incarnations of the Divine' (Cramb 1900:230). The Evangelicals...
projected themselves as representatives of a superior civilisation whose divine mission was to redeem the ignorant heathen of the tropics, and to establish light, order and law in dark places and whoever resisted the civilising mission would be tackled with an iron hand. As Calcraft-Kennedy boldly declared:

Our mission is a high and holy mission. We are to govern India as delegates of a Christian and civilised power. We are here as representatives of Christ and Caesar to maintain this land against Shiva and Khalifa. In that task we shall not falter, we will oppose ideal to ideal, force to force... If you agitate you will be punished; if you preach sedition, you will be imprisoned; if you assassinate, you will be hanged; if you rise, you will be shot down (In Parry 1972:18).

The hollowness of this religious version of the high-sounding rhetoric of imperial power is held up to ridicule in The Siege of Krishnapur. As part of the dissemination of the imperial mystique, they promised to establish justice, relieve miseries, enlighten ignorant savages—all with the help of the agency of British power and money. Christian philanthropy was always a potent force in the colonial society and the existence of numerous inhuman social practices like suttee, thuggee, and infanticide not only provided the imperialists with an appropriate testing-ground for their philanthropic excesses but also corroborated the need for a civilised leadership. The suppression of the Indian Mutiny of 1857 was also taken to be a triumph of the Christian God against the evil pagan deities, of Western culture over the Indian. Lord Curzon’s passionate plea to the rulers of the Empire ‘to abhor the imperfect’ and “to remember that the Almighty has placed your hand on the greatest of His ploughs, in whose furrow the nations of the future are germinating and taking shape, to drive the blade a little forward in your time, and to feel that somewhere among these millions you have left a little justice or happiness or prosperity ... a dawn of intellectual enlightenment or a stirring of duty, where it did not before exist, that is enough, that is the
Englishman's justification in India" (In Dennett 1953:105) is a measure of the reigning sentiment of religious superiority among the Imperialists. Farrell suggestively satirises this imperial pretence in The Siege of Krishnapur.

Most theorists of imperial literature tend to take Shakespeare's Tempest as a starting-point for an elaborate chronicle of imperialism in literature. Mannoni's exploration of the 'Prospero complex' is based on this chronology. In his pioneering study of literary imperialism, Dreams of Adventure, Deeds of Empire, Martin Green makes a case for a different view of the matter:

There are reasons for dating the British empire's rise at the end of the seventeenth century, in fact at the Union of England with Scotland, in 1707; which is to say at the very historical moment when the adventure tale began to be written, since Robinson Crusoe appeared in 1719. Defoe was one of the English government's agents in negotiating that union. And Defoe, rather than Shakespeare, is my candidate for the prototype of literary imperialism (1979:5).

Green suggests that the origin of the adventure tale is almost synchronous with the beginning of imperial discourse itself and even goes to the extent of concluding that the genre of adventure fiction was probably "more influential than the serious novel" (1979:49)—it is in this context that Farrell’s parody of this genre in the Empire fiction assumes significance.

In the vast body of literature that followed—from Defoe to the present day—the dominant attitude towards imperialism has consistently been one of unqualified acclamation. In other words, in the literature inspired by British imperialism, the imperial rhetoric of power enjoyed a pride of place. In the heydays of the Empire, the quantity of imperial literature increased by leaps and bounds but without a corresponding rise in their literary quality. A substantial
number of works dwelt on life in the exotic East, in the heart of the Congo, and in a wonderful land of rajahs, and babus, pukka sahibs, burramems and punkawallahs and of elephants, crows, rivers and cane-chairs on gymkhana verandahs. In all these works of fiction, the “mysterious Orient” [to use Edward Said’s enviable phrase] was depicted as a fantasy realm of ahistorical, exotic and erotic pleasures. The massive intellectual output on the imperial theme clearly points to the fact that one of the driving forces behind this spurt of creativity was the propagation of the imperial chanson de geste. The imperial literature, to a great extent, was an expression of ecstasy about the ever-expanding colonial world and also about the exploits of a so-called ‘exile race in action.’ Imperialism had become a popular culture. Valour, glamour, dominion, law, discipline, and class were the most conspicuous aspects of a cultural consciousness. It was as though the whole nation was being deliberately disciplined into the imperial fervour” (Chakravarty 1991:2). Of the major instruments for the dissemination of colonial consciousness, John Mekenzie includes post cards, music halls, cinemas, boys’ stories, school books, exhibitions and boys’ scouts (1984:109). Even the theatre of the time was primarily devoted to the creation of racial stereotypes. In this literature of imperialism, figures like Kipling, Conrad, Orwell, Forster and Paul Scott stand out as writers of all times who succeeded in giving certain depth and respectability to the genre of imperial fiction, while Raj writers like John Masters, E. J. Thompson, Rumer Godden, Henry Rider Haggard, Leopold Meyers, Flora Annie Steel, Maud Diver, Philip Meadows Taylor, M. M. Kaye and novelists of Empire like Elspeth Huxley of Kenya, Olive Schreiner of South Africa, Jean Rhys of Dominica and Katherine Mansfield of New Zealand have either failed to pose any serious challenge to received ideas on imperialism in their works or to enter the mainstream of English academic culture. These writers may be seen to fit into the two broad categories of imperial fiction postulated by Martin Green.
In his book, *The English Novel in the Twentieth Century; The Doom of Empire* (1988:160), Martin Green explains how a writer's reputation stands or falls in course of time. Not all writers survive his/her generation of readers. In some cases, the writer as a man of letters passes into oblivion while he continues to be remembered for his ideology. In other words, the succeeding generations of readers do not read his/her work but they react to the idea that s/he has come to represent. For instance, in the fifty years after 1920, Kipling was widely ignored as a writer, though he was all along on the minds of readers of imperial literature as an ideologist. And the influence of such writers stays due to the fact that they were widely read by the people of their time. There are certain other writers, Green implicitly adds, who are forgotten both as writers and ideologists. Going by Green's theory, Farrell can be seen to present a Janus-faced personality—he is an ideologue of historical fiction whose works can make illuminating reading for all generations of readers to come.

All the novelists of colonial consciousness included in the category of immortals of imperial fiction [Kipling, Conrad, Forster, Orwell and Paul Scott], despite certain significant formal differences in the treatment of the colonial question, share traces of imperial pride in their writings. Kipling, 'the bard of empire's master class' and 'the great myth-maker of the colonies' [Martin Green's phrases] propagated the mystique of imperialism in most of his works. Kipling announced his artistic loyalty to the rulers of the Empire, exulted in his racial superiority and almost invariably attempted to spread the imperial myths. In other words, his works represent the most ardent expression of the rhetoric of power. The most recurrent image of an Indian in the works of Kipling is that of a 'half-devil' and 'half-child' and it was in his view the God-given mission of the Empire-builder to exorcise the 'devil' and educate the 'child.' Kipling's notorious description of the colonised as 'lesser breed without the Law' is usually taken as a clear proof of his racial bias. Kipling had a heightened sense of the Empire's glorious possibilities and at the same time a strong feeling of well-
meaning scepticism about the fruition of those glorious hopes characterised his mature writing.\textsuperscript{14}

All colonial writers of later generations following Kipling have maintained a Kiplingesque streak of adulation towards the Empire. Conrad’s case is no less different. Conrad is said to have maintained a sharp difference between himself and Kipling\textsuperscript{15} and is credited to have anticipated some of Mannoni’s insights into the colonial psychology and also to have debunked some of the imperial myths in his works like Lord Jim (1900), The Heart of Darkness (1922), An Outcast of the Islands (1896) and Nostromo (1904).\textsuperscript{16} Yet, his attitude to the imperial idea was not one of uncompromising antagonism. Conrad played a dual role in conflict with each other—as a critic and defender of imperialism. Despite the differences in the formative influences on their artistic development, Conrad, like Kipling, has eulogised the Empire-builder as "one of those unknown guides of civilisation, who on the advancing edge of progress, are administrators, warriors, creators ... They are like great artists, a mystery to the masses, appreciated only by the influential few, wilfully neglected by the great who love ease. Their work lives, but the simple wisdom which has given the very quality of their work is hidden forever to the common mind" (1920:4). Avrom Fleishman is of the view that Conrad had a colonial heritage which has helped to shape a pro-imperialist stance. "In the final analysis, (for Conrad) colonisation is a viable—the only viable—form of imperialism" (1967:288). Thus, in order to form a correct view of Conrad’s reaction to the Empire, one must take into account not only those specific moments in Conrad’s works when the power of imperial rhetoric holds sway but also the resultant contradiction in his personality.\textsuperscript{18}

Though Orwell is generally regarded as an enemy of the Empire, rejecting the Empire along with its attendant myths and protesting against the immorality, injustice and hypocrisy of the entire colonial system, some writers have identified
Orwell could never bring himself to hate the Raj with the intensity of contempt which characterised his attitude to Fascism or Communism. He is absolutely certain that the real motive behind imperialism is the economic exploitation of other people and he makes a mockery of the pious theories about the white man's burden. But in his later writings, Orwell's criticism of the Empire can be seen to have lost its sting due to his belief that when compared to other tyrannies of the world, the British counterpart was relatively mild. As E. M. Forster has aptly put it, "British imperialism, bad as he [Orwell] found it in Burma, is better than the newer imperialisms that are ousting it. All nations are odious but some are less than others, and by this strong unlovely path he reaches patriotism' (1974:71). Like Conrad, there was a latent contradiction in Orwell's personality too—as one of the most vocal detractors of Fascism, Orwell was aware of the imminence of imperial doom but at the same time, he wanted it to endure because he was confident that "it is a good deal better than the young empires that are going to supplant it" (Orwell 1980:92). So, Orwell too was not a thoroughgoing anti-imperialist as he is generally held to be; he was in fact, pretty close to Kipling in many ways' (Islam 1979:84).

E. M. Forster was perhaps the first novelist to consistently demystify, by suggestion and implication the imperial double-speak—of protecting India and adopting a policy of exploitation. Forster exposed the hypocrisy of reading lessons in constitutional behaviour to autocrats one day and to encourage insurgent factions the next, of supporting the doctrine of nationality in one case and ignoring its aspirations in others. Long before the disintegration of the Empire and the consequent intellectual proscription of imperialism, Forster was so dissatisfied with the imperial idea that he almost totally dissociated himself from the empire and left his readers in no doubt as to which side he belonged. Forster wrote chiefly against *the Kipling truths.' His masterpiece, *A Passage to India (1924)* shows that the imperial myths lead to inter-personal as well as inter-
racial alienation which in turn leads to the doom of Empire. As Sujit Mukherjee has aptly put it: "A Passage to India is the first clear intimation in literature of the mortality of British rule in India" (1993:3). Forster expended a substantial amount of his creative energy in tracing the essential link that could have legitimised an intense symbiotic relationship between the two races and strengthened its nerve-centre. But curiously enough, despite all his sympathy for the Indians and his vehement rejection of the imperial idea, Forster did not favour granting of independence to India. In a letter to Lowes Dickinson, Forster expressed his conviction that "in India we have done much good and have a right" and "our sudden withdrawal would be disastrous" (In Chakravarty 1991:249). In an essay where he recorded his impression in a Kipling-like manner, he jumps to the conclusion that "[T]he tragic problem of India's political future, I can contribute no solution" (1974:331). In the last analysis, though Forster cannot be equated with Kipling or Conrad or Orwell, his attitude to imperialism verged on the ambivalent.

Paul Scott has concerned himself with the theme of British imperialism on a massive scale and in The Raj Quartet: 1966-1975, he has successfully recaptured the final years of the Raj. His novels are artistic portrayals in the realistic mode of the nature and causes of the failure of the Raj, and also represent vehement denunciations of the treacherous policies of the British Empire—their faith in the illusion of race superiority and the "bloody-minded game of divide and rule." But, despite Scott's highly publicised sympathy for the Indians, nowhere in his entire corpus does he portray the proverbial Indian kindness and generosity (Kohli 1987:123). On the other hand, Scott takes extreme care to portray the British restraint. There is not a single English character in Scott who is indiscreet or dramatic in public. It is quite curious that the very Englishness which renders Scott capable of depicting the English character with great perspicacity incapacitates him to depict certain traits intrinsic to the Indian character (Ibid). Saraiya expresses a similar view: "Scott never grew to love
India ... nor could he intuit Indians, despite his loud protestations. Many of his Indian characters ... are projected as Indians seen by the British. Scott's concern was strictly a Britisher's concern for the British failure in India" (1994:38). According to Hilary Spurling, Scott saw the process of British withdrawal from India as a form of humiliation; he saw the colonial past as an "unfinished business" and consequently, was accused of "a sneaking desire to return to the bad old days of British supremacy" (1994:118); she is of the view that even Scott's choice of India was not the result of a genuine concern for the country and her people: "for Paul [Scott], the trip to India was a last desperate gamble, one he had put off as long as he could and risked [now] only because he could see no alternative for himself as a writer" (1990:268). That Scott was at peace with certain elements in his native imperial culture can be seen in Division of the Spoils where he commends (of course, with the typical British restraint) the greatness of Englishmen in peacefully granting independence to the colonies in an act of "Glorious Bloodless Renunciation," thereby miraculously averting the retaliatory violence imperialism should have provoked, and it is because of this, Scott seems to say, that the British have not been held responsible for the communal bloodbath between the Hindus and the Muslims which followed the partition (Green 1986:190). And this is how the rhetoric of power works in Conrad, Orwell, Forster and Paul Scott, unknown to the authors themselves but profoundly capable of dismantling the apparent anti-imperialist 'structure of feeling' [Said's phrase] in their works. Moreover, such rhetoric always carries heavy ideological baggage and "lead[s] inevitably to mass slaughter, and if not to literal mass slaughter then certainly to rhetorical slaughter" (Said 1991:28).

All these major novelists of Empire, discussed briefly in the preceding pages, have a certain close affinity in their ambiguous relationship to the colonial enterprise. Kipling exulted in the imperial glory while Conrad was a Kipling, guiltless of his proclivity towards racism. There can be no doubt about Forster's liberalist, anti-imperialist stance but he was not far-sighted enough to see a future
for free India. Orwell abhorred the fascist overtones of economic imperialism and at the same time, shared with Kipling a patriotic liking for the Empire. Though Paul Scott was basically an anti-imperialist writer of post-imperial Britain, a nascent streak of Kipling is demonstrably evident in his fiction. In short, no Empire-novelist of consequence before Farrell has been able to fully withstand the powerful pressures of Kipling’s rhetoric—*the rhetoric of power*. While some of them basked in the sunshine of Kipling, openly acting as spokesmen for the Empire, others have not been completely successful in their attempts to escape the fall of Kipling’s shadow.

Farrell certainly is one writer who can be seen to have transcended Kipling and his successors on the imperial theme in a self-conscious attempt to go *beyond the rhetoric of power*. Farrell is a writer of epic scope and scale and dwarfs his contemporaries and established masters in the field by what might be called a highly comprehensive treatment of the end of Empire in his fiction. Allen Greenberger, in his book Images of the Raj speaks about three distinct periods in the history of literature on the imperial theme. The first period from nineteenth to twentieth century is called the ‘Era of Confidence,’ the second period beginning with World War I is called the ‘Era of Doubt’ and the third period extending from 1940 to the present the ‘Era of Melancholy.’ Significantly, each of Farrell’s complete novels in the Empire fiction is set in these periods. The Siege of Krishnapur is set in the middle of the Era of Confidence (1857), Troubles in the Era of Doubt (1919-21) and The Singapore Grip in the Era of Melancholy (1941). In the first two novels, Farrell isolates the mutinous moments of British imperial history and fictionalises the initial jolts to imperial self-esteem and the last novel centres round the disintegrating economic basis of imperialism. Landscaping the imminence of imperial doom in three important colonies of the Empire, Farrell gives representative pictures of the three important phases in the history of the decline of British imperialism. Thus, in comparison with the stalwarts of colonial fiction discussed above, with a nascent streak of
Kiplingesque adulation for the Empire in all of them, Farrell occupies a unique position for two important reasons: (a) comprehensive treatment of a facet of history and (b) fictional experimentation. A study of these two constituent elements of Empire fiction combine to make Farrell an essential component of any serious discussion of post-war British fiction about India and the imperial colonies.

(a) Comprehensive Treatment of a Facet of History

Farrell’s magnificent obsession is the disintegration, physical/spiritual, of the individual and society, of the body-politic, of dogs and other animals and of all the spatial and temporal structures within the text of the novels. The idea of disintegration, conveyed most powerfully through recurrent images of disease, death and decay is foregrounded to such an extent that it assumes an allegorical significance, heralding the doom of Empire. In other words, Farrell’s Empire fiction is an extended allegory of the decline of British power.

An analysis of Farrell’s thematic preoccupation with imperial decay is of paramount importance in any study of the author's oeuvre for two reasons. In the first place, such an analysis has not yet been fully undertaken. Binns's J.G. Farrell (1986) compresses too much in too brief a space and the resultant compactness, though quite helpful in the form of vital clues to the multifarious aspects of Farrell's writing, largely overlooks Farrell's peculiarly distinctive mode of critiquing Empire and the imperial civilisation. Most writers on Farrell, including Binns, have marginalised Farrell’s fictional explosion of the imperial mystique. A brief look at the critical focus in some discussions of the Empire fiction would substantiate my point. John Mellors described The Singapore Grip as "an exciting adventure story, with powerful descriptions of air-raids, fires on the docks and fighting in the jungle" (1978:410). According to Binns, "[T]he underlying philosophy of the novel has less to do with loving other people than with sustaining a stoic detachment in the face of the tragic condition of humanity"
Again, in his analysis of The Siege of Krishnapur, Dinns compares Farrell with Forster and Paul Scott to Farrell’s utter disadvantage and concludes that "Farrell's interest lies less in the causes of the Mutiny or its historical developments than in the condition of an isolated community caught up in the dramatic experience of being besieged" (1986:64). Margaret Drabble argues that Farrell’s novels work towards a "revelation of the absurdity and injustice of things as they are" and goes on to say that "Farrell combined a sense of the pointless absurdity of man with the real and increasing compassion for characters caught up in decay and confusion" (1981:181). John Spurling believed that the most dominant theme in Farrell’s work is the horror at the in-built competitive nature of man: "Competition is built into human beings, from their mating habits to their recreations to their personal and national relationships to their religions and political creeds" (1981b: 145). Thus, most critics on Farrell have played down the imperial theme in his fiction. Though the fact that Farrell’s Empire fiction can be interpreted even in purely ahistorical terms speaks volumes for the richness and complexity of Farrell’s work, such interpretations would have the totally unintended effect of dethroning Farrell from a privileged position in the literary canon of English historical fiction. One reason for this critical neglect of an important theme could probably be that the imperial aspect of the Empire fiction is taken for granted—a fact which, far from justifying its own exclusion in any analysis of Farrell’s work, corroborates the necessity of a detailed treatment of the subject. Part-A titled Empire And Disease of the first section—The Rhetoric of Disease of Chapter II—Farrell and Empire: The Rhetoric and Beyond inquires into this aspect of Empire fiction.

The second reason is that, though Farreirs obsession with the theme of disease and decay has been commented upon by most critics, no attempt has yet been made to show that Farrell’s disease imagery can be interpreted in terms of a distinctively postmodernist and symbolic critique of imperialism. The present study would attempt to show that Farrell’s language is fundamentally metaphoric
and poetic rather than conventionally realistic and prosaic as most of his critics believe. Edward Arnold writes: “Farrell writes omniscient prose about the past, in the past tense, using a tough narrative voice to prevent his work appearing to be pastiche or uneasy current Victorian” (1979:30). In my view, nothing could be further from the truth. Unlike most writers on the theme of British imperialism, Farrell’s novels rely for their magnificent effects on the powerful use of symbolism, of a fundamentally figurative language which is anything but Victorian. Farrell never attempts to prevent his work appearing to be pastiche or uneasy Victorian; on the contrary, Farrell makes generous use of pastiche and of numerous 'uneasy' metaphors to critique the disease of Empire and its civilisation.

An examination of the illusory faith in the concept of a civilised master race is significant in any study of Farrell for two important reasons. In the first place, discussions of the British-India encounter have almost always focused the magnitude of the impact which the British government made on India and its peoples (Parry 1972:1) and consequently, the Messianic mission of the Empire was always beyond suspicion. Secondly, Farrell’s Empire fiction launches an extended critique of the concept of superior civilisation. In other words, Farrell’s Empire fiction is an extended fictional illustration of the collapse of a superior civilisation founded on a brittle body of myths. Through his exposition of or inquiry into the theme of disintegration in his Empire fiction, Farrell seems to suggest that the cultural and racial superiority of the British is an imperial construct and as such cannot have any significance or meaning outside the realm of imagination. Farrell seems to suggest that the idea of a superior culture leads the colonisers to assume a self-righteous posture of unbounded self-confidence which results in an adaptational breakdown in times of acute crisis, personal or governmental—a theme gloriously handled in The Siege of Krishnapur. Farrell pictures the ordinary spokespersons of this imperial creed and shows how they are too crippled by this faith to face out the pressures of native resistance. All the
Empire novels, except the unfinished The Hill Station, address this vexed issue in a subtly postmodernist fashion. The opening sections of all these novels focus the colonisers' luxurious routine of dreadful complacency whereas later sections place their states of abject misery and vulnerability in sharp contrast. The topics of their discussions, formal or informal, change from civilisation and progress in the peaceful days to the bare needs of survival in turbulent times. Under the mounting pressures of militant nationalism, the usually self-assured and often arrogant British revert to a primordial state of instinctual existence which is anything but civilised. As A. P. Thornton has aptly put it: "Every doctrine of imperialism devised by man is a consequence of their second thoughts.... Imperialist ideas are less ideas than instincts" (1965:8). Farrell treats of this feature of the imperialist in a skilful manner in The Siege of Krishnapur—by presenting a strange world in which people ground their lives on chimerical abstractions. As Mannoni pointed out, "Civilisation' is necessarily an abstraction. Contact is made not between abstractions, but between, real, live human beings" (1956:23). It is quite interesting and enlightening to see how a people nurtured on a set of abstract notions of superiority conduct themselves when they are forced, for the first time in their colonial life, to fight desperately for survival against a group of real, live human beings.' The second sub-section titled Civilisation and Disease of Chapter II—Farrell and Empire: The Rhetoric and Beyond undertakes to explore this component of Empire fiction.

The question of economic imperialism has fired Farrell’s imagination so powerfully that his most ambitious novel The Singapore Grip is devoted to an exploration of the Empire's intricate conspiracy of economic exploitation of the native population. It is in The Singapore Grip that Farrell's critique of imperialism attains maturity and fullness. By centring the novel on the life and fortunes of two formidable English business families of Singapore, Farrell exposes not only the heinous ways in which the representatives of the imperial mission amassed fabulous wealth but also the rhetoric of power which was used
to achieve their economic aims. The second section of Chapter II—The Rhetoric of ‘Grip’ studies the Empire fiction from this angle.

Thus, on the whole, Chapter II—Farrell and Empire: The Rhetoric and Beyond, by discussing the multifarious ramifications of Farrell’s use of disease as a central controlling metaphor in the Empire fiction, attempts to fill a ‘gap’ in Farrell scholarship. In other words, the comprehensive and masterful handling of the theme of imperial decay gives an added dimension to Farrell’s treatment of history and serves to underscore Farreir’s uniqueness as a writer of the end-of-the-empire genre of fiction.

(b) Fictional Experimentation

Farrell is a brilliant experimenter of form in the genre of historical fiction after World War II, rubbing shoulders with the master-innovator, John Fowles. Though not avowedly metafictional like Fowles, Farrell’s work suggests possibilities of ‘experimental’ fictional techniques. In the complexity of his narrative, Farrell goes a few steps beyond his contemporaries like John Masters and Paul Scott. Due to his postmodernist orientation, Farrell’s fictionalisation of history does not follow the traditional mimetic mode and the narrative is not a straightforward omniscient one. In this context, it is instructive to note that an anthology [edited by Bradbury (1979)], devoted mainly to the study of the experimental reaction in fiction contains an essay on Farrell while Paul Scott’s The Raj Quartet: 1966-1975 is almost ignored as "extended works derived more or less directly from personal experience" beyond which "lies the possibility of writing historical fiction proper" (Bergonzi 1979:59). The first section, From Historical Fiction to Historiographic Metafiction of Chapter III—Farrell and
the Fictive Imagination focuses on how Farrell’s concept of historical fiction conforms to and departs from the traditional notions of the historical novel.

Farrell’s use of postmodern techniques like parody, pastiche and intertextuality are closely bound up with his subtle critique of imperialism. Through parody and pastiche, Farrell suggests not only the obsolescence of earlier literary modes of fictionalising imperial history but also of the British way of looking at the so-called exotic East, and the staggering number of intertexts in his works serve to remind us that his own texts are ‘links in the chain,’ drawing extensively on ‘the always already-written,’ that the past is available to us only in textual form. As Bergonzi has aptly put it, "Farrell shows himself adroit at the manipulation of multiple fictional codes" (1979:62). Bergonzi does not proceed to apply the structuralist model of codes in his brief overview of Farrell’s themes; nor does he relate it to Farrell’s critique of imperialism. It can be seen that Farrell’s texts respond energetically to the Barthean aesthetic of reading. According to Barthes, there could be any number of codes in a work of art and these codes which determine our reading are present as much in the reader as in the text. The textual structure produced by the codes is not a fixed one but an ever-growing multiplicity of significations:

The text is a galaxy of signifiers, not a structure of signifieds; it has no beginning; it is irreversible; we gain access to it by several entrances, none of which can be authoritatively declared to be the main one; the codes it mobilises extend as far as the eye can reach, they are interminable (Barthes 1975:4).

Though no attempt will be made to stick slavishly to the Barthean concept of codes, the idea that “the text is a galaxy of signifiers, not a structure of signifieds” will hold good throughout the present study. In other words, while no attempt will be made to divide the texts into different ‘lexias’ or reading units and


to read them sequentially through the grid of five codes, the present study would use the term 'code' as it refers to that part of a novel which once reactivated through a dynamic reader-participation would throw into relief the various fictional techniques employed by the writer. This partial use of this structuralist model of reading is justified on the ground that Farrell's Empire novels are 'writerly' or 'scriptible' texts which call for an active involvement on the part of the reader, producing or identifying varying levels of meaning ("to produce structuration"), while, on the other hand, a dogmatic adherence to a single method of reading will tend to delimit the scope of the study. Consequently, the present study makes varying readings of the same texts in different chapters, though all the readings are shown to have an inherent unity. For instance, Chapter II makes a reading of The Siege of Krishnapur and Troubles in terms of the 'cultural code' or disease, the controlling metaphor for the diseased imperial system while Chapter III interprets the same texts in terms of fictional experimentation and Chapter IV analyses The Siege of Krishnapur in terms of an extended fictional subversion of imperial myths in the context of India, offering a 'sub-version' of the colonial experience itself. Though different codes are activated in each of the different readings, they all share the same thematic focus. As Barthes puts it, "...each code is one of the forces that can take over the text. Alongside each utterance, one might say the off-stage voices can be heard: they are the codes" (Barthes 1975:4). In short, Farrell's novels are intensely intellectual and hence their realistic descriptions have symbolic significance which require active reader participation. This fact—that Farrell's novels can be approached from a variety of angles—and the use of techniques like parody ["Parody can operate only when the awareness of the reader is at its peak" (Shlonsky in Rose 1979:45)], pastiche and intertextuality serve to link Farrell closely to the postmodernist discourse on fictional representation of reality in general and on historical fiction in particular. The second section of Chapter Ill-Beyond Realism and Anti-Realism examines this aspect from a theoretical perspective.
Thus, Chapter III Farrell and the Fictive Imagination undertakes to throw into sharp focus not only Farrell’s attempt to go beyond the narrow confines of fictional realism or anti-realism but also to show how a serious study of Fan-ell's Empire fiction helps to bring out his distinctively original theory of history and historical fiction.

Chapter IV Farrell, Parody and the Exorcism of Laughter makes an exhaustive analysis of the anti-realistic dimensions of Farrell’s fiction and places his work in a postmodernist perspective, thereby refuting the consensual dismissal of his work as instances of pure fictional realism and linking him firmly to the current discourse on postmodernist historical fiction. As Farrell's experimentalism finds its most potent expression in The Singapore Grip, the primary illustrative focus of the chapter falls on this novel. The chapter seeks to activate ‘the hermeneutic code’ in Farrell’s novels, to explore the various ways in which Farrell ridicules the rhetoric of power in an attempt to transcend its limitations and to throw light on the ideological implications of Farrell's fascination for the insights of problematical fiction through an illustration of how he makes use of subversive fictional techniques like parody, pastiche and intertextuality as tools to subvert the conventional responses to imperialism through laughter. Chapter IV concludes that Farrell's use of the techniques of postmodernist fiction is intimately bound up with his critique of imperialism.

Chapter V Conclusion: Farrell and India examines Farrell's Indian connection and presents the major conclusions drawn from the study. Farrell has had a long-standing association with India. He has visited the country twice and has written one completed novel The Siege of Krishnapur based on the Indian Mutiny, another novel entitled The Hill Station which was left sadly uncompleted following his premature death in a fishing accident and the non-fictional The Indian Diary, a collection of candid reflections on various aspects of life in India. The important fact that, of the fifty-odd novels written on the
Indian Mutiny The Siege of Krishnapur occupies a unique position in terms of technique and theme throws into bold relief the undeserved critical neglect of this great novel. Chapter- V, on the whole, examines the full implication of Farrell’s sustained engagement with India, attempts to link Farrell more firmly to the Anglo-Indian canon of literature and, through an elucidation of how Farrell fictionalises the British-India encounter from a fundamentally postmodernist perspective, concludes that The Siege of Krishnapur is the only experimental novel on the Mutiny.

(ii) Farrell and the Early Fiction

The above sketch is intended to give an idea of the main assumptions and bases of this study. The present section takes a close look at Farrell’s life and career to understand his work in a biographical and intellectual context and also to develop the relation between Farrell's early and later fiction, with a view to showing how the early novels anticipate the later Empire fiction.

(a) Farrell's Life: ‘An Interrupted Journey’

The influence of Farrell's life on his work is so powerful and consistent that there exists absolute critical consensus on this point. As Binns has remarked "Farrell was not an autobiographical novelist, yet his fiction cannot neatly be separated off from his life" (Binns 1986:30). Farrell's life has had a tremendous impact on his work. A close look at his work shows how certain treasured moments and unforgettable experiences of his own life are ingested by his artistic/creative consciousness and beautifully assimilated into the craft of fiction. Therefore, the following study attempts a biographical account of Farreir's life,
develops the relationship between his life and work and shows how his real-life experiences impinge on his fictional consciousness.

James Gordon Farrell was born on 23 January 1935 in a nursing home at 150 Moscow Drive, Liverpool. His mother Prudence Josephine Farrell (née Russell) was the daughter of an English timber-dealer. She had been born and brought up in Ireland. Farrell’s father, William Francis Farrell was the son of a wine merchant in Liverpool. Farrell’s parents had been married in Burma in 1930 and they went to live in Chittagong, East Bengal where Mr. Farrell was the manager for the Pure Cane Molasses Company. In the early years, Mr. Farrell was a produce broker’s clerk but later changed the profession and worked as an accountant abroad. Farrell, the youngest son of the family, had two brothers, Richard and Robert for both of whom his novel *A Girl in the Head* is dedicated. As Binns tells us, Farrell was noted for a precociously keen sense of observation. He had taken to reading quite early in life and his mother Jo Farrell captures the vivid memory of the boy’s shrewd comment on Walter Scott’s *Ivanhoe* (1819) as a wonderful story punctured by tediously long descriptions of scenery.

When World War II started in 1939, the Farrell family shifted to 'Boscobel,' an enormous rambling Victorian house in Southport which was bequeathed to Mrs Farrell by her uncle. The house had a large number of rooms which were occupied by homeless relatives and friends in no time. In 'Boscobel,' the Farrells had been living a peaceful life when suddenly in the spring of 1941, a German bomber heading for the Liverpool docks was attacked by a fighting plane and jettisoned a stick of bombs overhead. The house next door was flattened and the occupants killed. The blast hit 'Boscobel' and destroyed the house partially. Miraculously, no one in Boscobel was seriously injured. Farrell was six years at the time and *Southport Gazette* quoted boy Farrell’s shrewd remark on the incident: "This man Hitler really is a nuisance" (In Binns 1986:18). The blast remained a haunting memory throughout his life.
This partial destruction of his house ‘Boscobel’ in a bomb attack during World War II was one of the most important incidents which made an indelible impression on the mind of Farrell. ‘Boscobel,’ with its numerous bedrooms occupied by Farrell’s friends and relatives at the time of war, is reminiscent of the rambling Victorian hotel called the Majestic in Troubles where a number of Anglo-Irish people lead a leisurely life until Irish disturbances shatter their peace. Similarly, the total destruction of a familiar and loved room which rudely shakes the chief occupant of the Residency, Hopkins, the Collector, is graphically described in The Siege of Krishnapur and the description appears to be an imaginative reliving of his own real-life experience: "His shattered bedroom slowly materialised out of the darkness, the splintered wood work, the broken furniture, the wall-paper hanging in shreds form the shrapnel-pocked walls" (SK, p.226). Again, Mr. Hopkins witnesses a huge blast that bursts "with a flash that burnt itself so deeply into the Collector's brain that he reeled ... And then there was nothing but smoke, dust, debris, and a crash which dropped a picture from the wall behind him" (pp.237-8). The Singapore Grip is steeped in echoes of Farrell's real life and gives vivid descriptions of buildings and people being attacked from the air. And most interestingly, The Singapore Grip is set largely in 1941, the very year of the bomb attack on Farrell's house. Farrell attempts what could be called a close parallel between his personal tragedy and the sad plight of the Langfield family in The Singapore Grip: "The Langfields suffered a misfortune. A bomb jettisoned at random by a Japanese plane had fallen in Nassim Road, partly destroying the house. None of them had been hurt, except for a few scratches" (p.400). Shortly afterwards, the narrator tells us that Mr. Langfield "had reached the age when a person finds it hard to adjust to a sudden shock like the destruction of his house" (p.401). Again, in A Girl in the Head, the hero Boris sees "a couple of other houses (and so close that they appeared merely as a mist of pink brick) the Victorian mansion called Boscobel in which he himself lived" (p. 11). The attack on ‘Boscobel’ can be seen to have coloured Farrell’s vision of human life. The theme of a besieged community is pervasive in
Farrell. *Troubles*, *The Siege of Krishnapur* and *The Singapore Grip* deal with the idea of man in a temporary shelter which is insecure and open to attack from within and without.

In 1945, the Farrell family settled down in Ireland and lived in a place called Saval Park Road, Dalkey. Once settled, the boy Farrell wrote a number of sentimental love stories and sent them to the publishers under a pseudonym, "Dora-Park Saval". At the age of twelve, Farrell, like his two brothers, was sent as a boarder to Rossall School, Fleetwood, on the Lancashire coast. Though he was not very happy, during his six years there, Farrell initiated himself into the works of Pierre Loti whose *Pechéurd Islande* (1886) enthralled him. Farrell devoured his works. He developed a keen interest in French writing in general and in Stendhal and Collette in particular and he was gradually led into the works of the great masters of fiction like Leo Tolstoy, Albert Camus and Joseph Conrad.

At the age of 19, Farrell left Rossall School and took up a teaching job in a prep school in Dublin. Afterwards, Farrell went to Canada with the declared aim of launching himself on a writing career. But Farrell’s plans went awry. He lived in Baffin Island in the Canadian Arctic for seven months, working as labourer, fireman, and then clerk on the military Defence Early Warning Line. Later, he toured the US and returned to Ireland.

In the autumn of 1956, Farrell joined Brasenose college, Oxford, to read Law. Towards the end of his first term, he had a sudden attack of poliomyelitis which cost him the use of both the hands. It left him with severely weakened muscles from the waist up. A hefty Farrell with a "barrel-like chest" was transformed within a short period into an invalid. This was the second but by far the most traumatic shock Farrell received in his life. As Malcolm Dean tells us, despite his extreme physical disability, Farrell was fiercely independent
Though he regained the use of one arm in the course of systematic treatment, Farrell never fully recovered from this disability which might have contributed to his death since he was unable to swim when he fell into the river.

The polio attack has had a tremendous impact on Farrell’s creative consciousness. The recurrence of certain themes and images in Farrell's works would illustrate this point. Farrell's picture of human existence as frail, insecure, and temporary consistently projected in his work underscores the profound impact of continued ill-health on his fictional consciousness. Malcolm Dean speaks about two distinct Farreells, “pre-polio” and "post-polio" (1981:177). The attack of polio which left Farrell an invalid throughout his life was perhaps the most shattering experience in his career. The pre-polio Farrell was an "insensitive, unthinking, rugby-loving, public school philistine" (Ibid) while the post-polio Farrell was a cool cat, ‘a sensitive plant.’ The impact of this tragedy was so great that Farrell's second novel The Lung is a black comedy based on his experience as a polio victim. The hero Sands who lives up to the image of an 'unthinking philistine' before the polio attack turns out to be a ‘demi-skeleton’ later. Farrell never fully recovered from this trauma and consequently, was subject to infrequent fits of deep depression. Though he was incapacitated even to go through daily chores, Farrell did not lose heart. In A Man From Elsewhere, the novelist Reagan looks back on “a period when time had seemed to stand still, when the future had seemed a towering mountain-face and each new hour a breathless painful step in its ascent. In constant danger of slipping back, he had hauled himself into the future with numb and bleeding fingers” (p.110). In A Girl in the Head, the horrifying scene of a group of cripples exercising in the hospital gymnasium is described with chilling realism:

When you look at those people, you don’t see them, you see great dramas of suffering and pain and heroism and God knows what else .... But that is all nonsense, perfectly irrelevant. / expect you noticed that most of
these patients were young people paralysed in some way or other, Well, it’s merely that they have in some respect aged all of a sudden. Part of the machinery has gone out of action. And that is all there is to it. Nothing else” (p.88; Italics mine).

And the doctor’s consolatory remarks seem to echo Farrell’s own stoic resignation to his fate of a crippled life: “‘I used to be like you,’ the doctor said, vaguely looking somewhat bored. ‘All misery is invented.’ After a moment, he turned back to Boris and smiled, ‘Happiness, too, I dare say’” (Ibid).

Further, Farrell’s admiration for writers like Solzhenitsyn, Thomas Mann and Andre Gide can also be seen to be closely related to his obsessive preoccupation with disease and decay. Like Farrell, Solzhenitsyn and Mann suffered from continued ill-health in their actual life (Meyers 1985:17) and used disease imagery in their novels. Unlike these masters of disease fiction, Farrell’s protagonists are not cancerous or tubercular; nor does he use disease to highlight the difference between appearance and reality, ‘the contrast ... between the robust tanned look and the relentless inner decay’ (Meyers 1985:44). Though identical in his concern with disease, Farrell differs from Solzhenitsyn, Mann and Gide in the thematic orientation of disease imagery, in his ability to transform the clinical into the poetical; he concerns himself with the rhetorical aspects of sickness and draws on it to symbolise social pathology.

In 1957, Farrell returned to Brasenose College and scrapped his Law course and took up Modern Languages. After the polio attack, Farrell decided to become a full-time writer. He started writing a novel entitled The Lung which was rejected by the publishers. After graduating in French and Spanish third class in 1960, Farrell worked as a language teacher in France for three years. During these years, he wrote another novel entitled A Man From Elsewhere (1963) which he dedicated to his parents. This novel was accepted by Hutchinson and
publishers under the New Writer's Scheme designed to encourage young and unknown novelists. A Man From Elsewhere centres round a young Communist journalist, Sayer who is sent on a defamation campaign against a dying novelist, Reagan who is about to receive a Catholic prize for his best-selling novels. The novel presents the young Farrell tinkering with stylistic techniques in his attempt to come to grips with an original mode of creative expression. Set in contemporary France, the novel contains long ideological discussions about the political problems of the time like violence in Algeria and France, the Berlin crisis and the threat of nuclear annihilation. It also shows the strong influence of existentialist writers like Sartre and Camus. The novel received some critical attention. Reviewing the book, John Holloway wrote:

I believe that the Anglo-Irish author of A Man From Elsewhere will be someone about whom a great deal will be heard in the future. Of course, there are faults in this first novel, but they are good faults: the author tries to cram too much into too little space; there are loose ends; not all the characters justify their inclusion. On the other hand, Mr. Farrell shows that not only can he handle ideas, he is a story-teller as well. Altogether, this is a most distinguished debut" (In Binns 1986:24).

Farrell once complained that as a boy the Irish always regarded him as English and in England he was always regarded as Irish. As a result, he had a depressing sense of alienation in both the countries. A Man From Elsewhere which projects the life of an eccentric hero who is 'a man from elsewhere,' alien to his surroundings, an outsider, pictures Fan-ell's life in the Rossall school when he was "a lonely schoolboy cloistered in a boarding school throughout his adolescence" (AMFE,p.46).

Farrell had a great flair for story-telling. Though he was basically a reserved and introverted character, his gift for story-telling made him gloriously
eloquent. Malcolm Dean says that he knew no other person who could tell a story so well or who would be asked so excitedly by friends to repeat a tale even though everyone round the table had heard it several times (1981:176). Farrell was later to fully capitalise on this God-given talent in his fiction.

Back in London in 1964, Farrell managed to eke out an income by teaching English to foreigners and by reading manuscripts for Hutchinson. Farrell wrote his next two novels The Lung (1965) and A Girl in the Head (1967). The Lung was more or less a revision of his rejected first novel. A more ambitious work than A Man From Elsewhere, The Lung is a black comedy about a man [named Martin Sands] in an iron lung making a desperate bid to regain his health in the company of a handful of fellow-patients and an attractive young nurse. Much of the comedy is provided by Sands’s attempts to gratify his two driving appetites of sex and drink. Sands is the narrator and everything is seen from his point of view. The novel was generously reviewed by Bernard Share: "The writing is crisp and evenly tensioned, and the description of what it feels like inside a lung has a horrible authenticity. This is a human and entertaining novel, and confirms Mr. Farrell as a man with something to say and a skilful way of saying it" (In Binns 1986:25). Farrell dedicated The Lung to his Oxford contemporary, Russell McCormmach. The third novel A Girl in the Head, originally titled The Succubus is about Count Boris Slattery, ‘a gaunt man with receding hair’ (GH, p.33) who acts out certain comic misadventures in the dull seaside resort of Maidenhair Bay. Boris is an impecunious vagabond who is shattered by the Dongeon family into which he married. A Girl in the Head was severely criticised and the hostile reviews had a demoralising effect on Farrell, particularly because it was a novel which he himself liked very much. In a letter to his friend G.M. Arthurson, Farrell said that he was shocked by the bad reviews ; "as I consider this book as by far my best. Hardly anyone, even the people who liked the book had any sympathy for Boris and his predicament. Well, apart from his appalling defects of character, pride, dishonesty, self-centredness and so on, I
could not help thinking that Boris was significant in some way" (In Spurling 1983b:146).

In 1966, Farrell went to North America on a Harkness Fellowship where he began to work on a novel set in the past. It is possible that Farrell’s shift of fictional focus had something to do with the hostile reviews A Girl in the Head received. Troubles (1970), the first volume in what came to be called Farrell’s ‘Empire trilogy’ was an instant success. It was awarded the Faber Memorial Prize and with it Farrell’s teething troubles as a writer came to an end. Set against the backdrop of the Irish troubles of 1919-1921, Troubles pictures the tragi-comic tale of Major Brendan Archer’s short stay in a decrepit hotel called the Majestic in Ireland where he fondly pursues two women one of whom meets with an untimely death and the other elopes with another man. Though the setting had shifted to the past, most of the reviews were highly appreciative of the contemporaneity of the work. Bridget O’Toole remarked that "taking into account the different historical setting, it is extraordinary how much seems relevant" (1981:59). The novelist, Elizabeth Bowen who had herself written a novel on the same theme [titled The Last September (1927)] remarked: “Troubles is not ‘a period piece’; it is yesterday reflected in today’s consciousness. The ironies, the disparities, the dismay, the sense of unavailingness are contemporary" (1970:58). Troubles, thus gave an idea of Farrell’s approach to historical fiction.

In 1970, Farrell moved to a cramped Knightsbridge flat at 16 Egerton Gardens, London. At that time, Farrell was preparing himself for the subsequent volumes to his Empire trilogy. At first, he thought of writing a novel set in Mexico in the 1860s based on the tragedy of the Austrian Archduke Maximilian and his wife, Carlota. He did intensive research on the subject and made copious notes about the historical background and later squashed the project. Then, he thought about a kind of sequel to Troubles, set in India.
In 1971, after his library researches into the Mutiny, Farrell made a tour of India the memories of which are recounted in what was later published under the title *The Indian Diary.* The Siege of Krishnapur (1973) soon appeared and won the Booker Prize. Farrell instantly shot to fame. The Siege Of Krishnapur deals with the disturbances in India which culminated in the first struggle for Indian Independence in 1857. In the Booker Prize acceptance address, Farrell took the donors of the Prize to task and accused in harsh words the multinational firm of exploiting and underpaying their black employees in the West Indies. Farrell's speech is significant for two reasons. Firstly, by taking an open political stand for the first time, Farrell received the public recognition a media-shy writer would never have got under ordinary circumstances. Secondly, it showed that he was profoundly dissatisfied with capitalist exploitation. Though he never joined a political party, he had a strong belief in the essential equality of human beings.

The Siege of Krishnapur received rave reviews. An anonymous reviewer called it "an utterly accomplished novel, a work of unusual and grateful intensity" (In Binns 1986:35). Sissman could see the myriad possibilities of a great creative genius in the making. "The Siege of Krishnapur is a winning and readable novel and it suggests that its author who is not yet forty is a man to watch" (1974:54). Julian Symons was all praise for the novel because ‘the story was told with extraordinary verve and freshness....' (1978:1110). Mary McCarthy wrote: "What a book! It has everything you could expect to find in a big old-fashioned novel or several of them—characters, suspense, military action, romantic attachments, satire, wit, tenderness, philosophy. In my family, nobody from the age of eighteen to over sixty, could put it down" (1978:44). Altogether, in this novel, Farrell showed brilliantly how fact could be assimilated into fiction.

Farrell started thinking in terms of a thematically connected third novel and in 1975 toured Singapore and the Far East. He also visited the besieged city of Saigon. The debacle of Singapore caught his fancy and he said in an interview
that "it was an episode of British history largely left alone by historians, perhaps... because it was a defeat, not a victory" (Moorehead 1978:34). When the third volume in the so-called trilogy appeared in 1978 under the title The Singapore Grip, there was a consensual breakdown among critics of Farrell as to which one of his last three novels should be considered his masterpiece. In Binns's view, The Singapore Grip is undoubtedly the best. Margaret Drabble said that it was "a fine piece of work, solid, informative, funny, tragic, one of those novels that present a whole world for the reader" (1981:152). Timothy Mo said that "[T]he novel may be Farrell's private attempt at War and Peace" (1978:337). Commenting on the documentary veracity of this imaginative tour de force, Christopher Porterfield wrote that "it is a rich and poignant chronicle and Farrell has researched it down to the last palm-oil statistic" (1979:70). Mo was perhaps the only critic who commended the political dimension of the novel:

The account of the big Far Eastern commercial houses, the rubber business, the way native small-holders were systematically ruined, the unholy alliance of Indian money-lenders and Western capital which destroyed the old communities and created a pool of plantation and mining labour, the rise of Japanese imperialism—all this could be the work of a professional left-wing academic. May be it is. Farrell lists 50 reference books (1979:70).

Set in Singapore immediately before the Japanese invasion of it during World War II, Singapore Grip looks at the collapse of Britain's imperial supremacy from an economic standpoint and the trilogy, on the whole, deals with the jolts that British imperial pride received from three of its formidable colonies.

Farrell was a serious researcher and he used to spend more than a year researching for a novel in the British Museum. Farrell appended an explanatory half-page at the end of The Siege of Krishnapur which said that "many
incidents are taken from the mass of diaries, letters and memoirs written by eye-witnesses, in some cases the words of the witness only slightly modified* (SK, p.345) and a full bibliography of sources to his most ambitious novelistic project, The Singapore Grip. He studied long-forgotten economics text books as part of his background reading for this novel where he treats of the economics of imperialism. Thus, by drawing extensively on documents, Farrell assimilated the historical facts into his fiction in a seamlessly beautiful manner. Once his research is finished, he never suffered the 'writer's block' and went ahead with the work like a 'writing machine' (Dean 1986:176).

Farrell returned to Ireland in April 1979 and set to work on his next novel which was intended to be a sequel of sorts to The Siege of Krishnapur. But, before he completed the novel in August 1979, Farrell died at the early age of forty four. He was fishing from some rocks on the beach near his farmhouse when he either slipped or was washed away by a huge wave into the sea and drowned. A picnicking family saw the incident but they were too far away to help. His body was swept ashore later the same month and he was buried in the graveyard of St. James Church, Durrus, Ireland.

The unfinished novel was edited by his friend and dramatist John Spurling and posthumously published under the title The Hill Station (1981) to which was appended The Indian Diary. With the publication of The Hill Station, Farrell again grabbed the active literary limelight and he was hailed as "one of the outstanding novelists of his generation" (Wilson, 1981:21). The Indian Diary is a record of Farrell’s impressions of the various cities and villages he travelled and the fact that it contains critical evaluations of works by Paul Scott and Conrad makes it all the more significant. His descriptions of the cities of Bombay and Delhi are highly evocative.
Most of the obituaries of Farrell referred to an obvious paradox in Farrell's attitude towards social relations. Basically a solitary man with a strong drive to have a wide circle of friends, Francis King described Farrell as "the loner who loved company" (1979:1). Malcolm Dean was of the view that the two sides were more complementary than they might seem: "While he needed his friends as a break from the solitude, he needed the solitude to recharge the emotional energy required in maintaining links with so many close friends" (1981:183). Farrell's death came as a terrible blow both to his friends and to literature. Pinpointing the uniqueness of Farrell's personality, Dean remarked: "Most people remind you of other people you know! Jim just reminded you of Jim" (Ibid). Considering the dazzling brilliancy of his fictional output at such an early age, one is tempted to wonder, like the poet, Derek Mahon: "Who knows what magnificence he might have given us?" (1979:313).

(b) From Fiction to Historical Fiction

The corpus of what may be called Farrell’s early fiction consists of three novels namely, A Man From Elsewhere, A Girl in the Head and The Lung which are instances of pure fiction with contemporary settings. The sharp break with the early fiction which Troubles, the first of the Empire novels, represents are both in terms of theme and technique. The first three novels are set against contemporary backgrounds while in the later novels, Farrell turned to historical settings. In other words, unlike the historical novels of the later phase of Farrell’s career, the early fiction treats exclusively of the living present. But, despite these marked differences between the early and later fiction, it is important to note that novels of both these phases maintain more than just a tenuous link with each other. While the early novels are not thematically identical with the Empire fiction, there are elements of consequence in them like Farrell's
distinctive tropology, his treatment of the theme of disease, death and decay and his absurdist and anti-heroic angle of vision which link them to the Empire novels and allow us to see Farrell’s work as a whole. Though the early fiction is basically realistic in its mode of fictional representation of life, there is an undeniable consistency of theme in the totality of his work. John Spurling speaks about the strong connection between Fan-ell's early and later fiction: "From the first page of his first novel, he [Farrell] was aware of the long perspective" (1981b:141). Binns too has pinpointed certain recurring thematic elements in the entire body of Farrell’s fiction. As he puts it, "Sayer, Sands, Boris, the Major, Fleury and Matthew Webb—central characters in Farrell’s first six novels—each leave a familiar world behind and find themselves plunged, sometimes comically, often in heroic isolation, into unknown and threatening circumstances" (1986:36). Therefore, an attempt is made in the following pages to examine Farrell’s early fiction vis-à-vis the Empire fiction.

A Man From Elsewhere, Farrell's first novel, tells the story of a dying novelist named Sinclair Reagan who is about to receive 'the Catholic Prize for World Peace' for his best-selling novels. Once a die-hard Communist, Reagan turns a staunch individualist. Gerhardt, one of Reagan's old comrades sends a young journalist Sayer to Reagan's house with the mission of digging up unpleasant facts about Reagan and defaming him. But a variety of factors makes it impossible for Sayer to successfully carry out the defamation campaign which is undertaken in the interests of international Communism.

Set in contemporary France, A Man From Elsewhere throws some light on Farrell's fascination for political history which is to find its fullest expression in the Empire fiction. A Man From Elsewhere is steeped in echoes of the torture in Algeria, plastic bomb atrocities in France, the anxieties about the atom bomb, Cold War and the Berlin crisis. Another important thematic link between A Man From Elsewhere and the later Empire fiction is the characters'
existentialist leanings and the very title bears some resemblance to Camus's *The Outsider* (1942). As Spurling points out, "Sayer is more of an existentialist model than a person" (1981b:146). Disgusted with the growing trend of selfish individualism, Sayer wondered how on earth a society managed to keep going when it was held together only with rotten people who were obsessed with their personal comforts. People who differed meaninglessly from day-to-day, selling one another goods they did not need as if a human being was made to do just that and nothing else. They were slimy and disgusting like white worms one might look beneath a stone *(AMFE, p.32).*

The young English actor Simon Bowman holds a similar worldview: "Take any moderately sensitive person of my age in a world without values and you’ll find he’s really up against it. It’s hard to carry on when you simply don’t believe in anything, when you know the next war will be the last and that there’s sure to be a war" *(AMFE, p.57).* Luc is even more cynical in his attitude to life: "God might have cared, but God’s dead; he died the other day of bronchitis complicated by illusions of grandeur. So nobody cares, you see" *(AMFE, p.77).* This gloomy view of the world was later to become a central feature of the main characters in the Empire fiction.

The theme of disease and death occupies an important place in this *first* novel itself. Reagan, the novelist in extremis is almost elevated to the rank of a protagonist. Throughout the novel, death hangs in the air, a fact which perhaps made Binns call *A Man From Elsewhere* "a bleak cheerless book with a bleak cheerless ending" (1986:38). The novel contains excellent passages of profound reflections on death. The powerful metaphorical invocations of death in this novel may be said to have led to Fan-ell’s profuse use of parodic techniques in describing death in the Empire novels. Reagan is described as a man who would
use death “as some distant ancestor of the human race had used fire, overcoming his fear of it” (p.84), and “every moment he could feel it [death] in his stomach expanding cruelly towards infinity, edging remorselessly back from the future into the present, a massive weight to which he was chained and about to drop through the universe, snaking after it through timelessness” (Ibid). Gretchen, the dying Reagan's daughter visualises her father's death in a manner that is darkly humorous and, for the same reason, quintessentially Farrellesque:

All that remained was the sordid, daylight horror of the man dying over her head. And he was dying importantly with a disgusting animal growing in the filth of his body, eternally with a death as hard as the rocky shadows in the room. His death was something she would always carry about with her and show to people ... her friends would take it from her hands and look at it, turning it upside down and shaking it, sniffing it and telling her that it smelled like she did herself, or dropping it curiously on the floor to see if it bounced before handing it back to her with their compliments. There would be photographs of it in all the papers because it was an important death. There would be sermons about it because it was an exemplary death. There would be lectures about it because it was an intellectual death and posed certain philosophical problems. Above all, there would be official mourning over it because this death was a grievous loss to humanity (AMFE, pp.34-5).

Here, Farrell is actually experimenting with a technique which is to be developed fully in the Empire fiction. A brief comparison of the above description of death with the one in Troubles throws into bold relief the difference between a conscious realism and a purely parodic narrative:

Gone to the angels....And now Angela had gone to join the ancient pre-Raphaelite poets and the steady-eyed explorers who had shed their earthly envelopes (as the saying goes). She had gone to join the dead rowing
blues (they were most probably among those blurred chaps on Edward’s War Memorial) who had quaffed pre-war champagne out of her slippers. She had gone to the place where all the famous people go, and the obscure ones too for that matter (T, p.94).

In the former, the description is couched in a solemn idiom with a latent suggestion of dark humour whereas in the latter, the narrative turns overtly parodic because in stripping death of all its traditional glory, it suggests the evident obsolescence of previous styles of describing death.

The Lung, Farrell’s second novel, is a dark comedy about a young polio victim named Martin Sands in an iron lung. Before the sudden attack of poliomyelitis, Sands is an energetic youngster whose driving appetites are drink and sex and much of the black humour arises out of situations where Sands attempts to gratify his appetites in the restricted atmosphere of the hospital, in the company of a handful of eccentric fellow-patients and an attractive nurse. In one sense, Sands too is an outsider like Sayer, exiled to "the kingdom of the ill." The Lung presents a world which is basically melancholy and threatening, and therefore, reminiscent of the world of Farrell’s Empire fiction.

Spurling is all praise for the descriptive power of Farrell’s prose in The Lung and concludes that "close attention to detail, which starting soberly in fact can later be made to yield episodes of pure surrealism, is brought to a fine art in the historical novels. One thinks of the overgrown conservatory in Troubles, of what happens to the Residency furniture in The Siege of Krishnapur, of the orang-utan and the naked girl doing her keep-fit exercises in The Singapore Grip” (1981b: 145). This exceptional talent for manipulating facts to fit in with the demands of ‘his fiction is masterfully utilised in the Empire fiction.
One of the remarkable things about The Lung is that it introduces on a massive scale a basic theme which was to underline almost all his subsequent fiction, namely that of disease and decay. Though all the three early novels use the images of death and disease, it is The Lung which begins to explore the symbolic potentials of disease and makes it underscore the vulnerability and frailty of the human body and, by extension, of human life itself. Obsessed with an acute sense of physical disability, Sands embraces a pessimistic world-view:

Most intelligent people end up by becoming an expert on something, but what I can't understand is how they manage to persuade themselves in the first place that these things are important. Once persuaded, once you've managed to slink over the barrier of absurdity, I see, of course, that they become an agreeable way of passing the time but ...What have they to do with being alive?(L, p.166).

The large number of ailing characters in The Lung clearly points to Farrell's profound interest in disease which later led to Farrell's use of disease as a major rhetorical device in his critique of imperialism in the Empire fiction.

The hero of Fan-ell's third novel, A Girl in the Head in an emotional couple named Count Boris Slattery whose farcical misadventures provide much of the dark humour in the novel. With a beautiful girl named Inez 'in the head,’ Boris lives out his weary life in the dull, provincial seaside resort of Maidenhair Bay, "the cemetery of all initiative and endeavour’ (GH, p.5). Both Spurling and Binns have pointed to the characteristic features that Sands and Boris have in common:

Like Sands, he [Boris] is haunted by thoughts of death and consumed by a sense of the absurdity and worthlessness of existence. Boris, like Sands, also suffers from ill-health and the novel begins with his suffering a mild heart-attack" (Binns 1986:41).
A unique aspect of A Girl in the Head is that it has two significant features in common with the Empire fiction. In the first place, it is in this novel that Farrell’s fictional experimentalism surfaces for the first time. Techniques like typographical trickery and a conscious attempt to foreground the fictionality of his fiction by directly addressing his readers ['It is now my duty to push him [Boris] before the horrified eyes of the reader' (p. 117)] anticipate Farrell’s masterful use of the insights of problematical fiction in the Empire novels. In order to drive home the idea that life never goes on a predictable straight line, Farrell makes typography imitate life’s wayward movement by blatantly flouting the simple rules of punctuation and line-breaks in a manner which is reminiscent of Kurt Vonnegut’s postmodernist novel, Breakfast of Champions.

In the second place, A Girl in the Head shows Farrell attempting to locate the strong but hidden nexus between physical disease and external reality:

This girl whom he had never met, the transience of life, the passing of summer without her, the sudden collapse of his own health—all these things gradually melted into each other and fused in his mind as if they had some direct though concealed link (GH, p.8).

It is this vague feeling which ultimately leads to the unmistakable realisation of Dr. McNab in The Hill Station "that everything was connected, that an illness was merely one of many fruits of an underground plant in the community as a whole. The illnesses propped up, here and there like mushrooms, apparently individual growths but all in fact the fruit of the same plant (SH, p.61).

The Pussycat Who Fell in Love with the Suitcase, the only short story published by Farrell, centres round a cat named Rameses, a shop-steward in a peppermint factory who falls hopelessly in love with a suitcase which he happens
to find in his bedroom one day. As the suitcase maintains an attitude of frosty indifference towards its love, the broken cat stops going to the factory as a result of which a lot of problems crop up in the factory and the town. The Mayor of the town soon solves the problem by hiding a tape-recorder in the suitcase which would tell Rameses at an interval of every five minutes that it loves him and the way in which Farrell rounds off the short narrative is significantly indicative of how his early fiction prepares his readers for the technical brilliance of the Empire fiction:

The next day Rameses was back at the peppermint factory and soon everything was running smoothly again in our town. How pleased all the townspeople were that they no longer had to eat raw peppermints. And Rameses seemed quite happy too. Pretty soon he was leading exactly the same life as he had before. After a few weeks, he was to be seen back in the pub drinking peppermint beer as he always had done and, one evening he told one of his friends that he was not as much in love with the suitcase as everybody thought. Although, of course, he agreed that the suitcase had a beautiful body, he explained to his friends, she was inclined to be clinging and frank, was not all that interesting to talk to. But then you can't have everything you want, can you?

One of these days the Mayor will forget to change the batteries and the suitcase will stop telling Rameses that it loves him. But I doubt if Rameses will ever notice. He is quite affectionate towards the suitcase, however, and I'm quite sure they will both live happily ever after, the way people do (P, p10).

This short piece of comic fantasy which reads almost like a parody of the so-called immortal lovestories anticipates not only the parodic mode which is perfected in the Empire fiction but also the ironic treatment given to love-relationships in the Empire novels.
As pointed out earlier, Farrell’s early fiction gives a foretaste of what is to come in his mature fiction of later years. The themes of disease, death and decay and of the pointlessness of human life with which the early novels deal are germane to the Empire fiction as well while the characters of the early fiction very strongly anticipate the immortal figures of the later fiction. In A Man From Elsewhere, the dying Reagan *could feel it [death] in his stomach’ as *a massive weight to which he was chained' (p.84), Gretchen believes that hers ‘is a generation of morons' (p.86) and for Luc ‘God’s dead' (p.77). In The Lung, Sands does not manage ‘to sink over the barrier of absurdity' (p.166) and the drunken clergyman Exmoore 'didn't give a damn about God' (p.206). In A Girl in the Head, Boris keeps saying that 'death is an in-built characteristic of all living things' and that human beings 'ultimately consisted entirely of chemicals' (p.46) and Dr. Cohen believes that human beings are nothing more than machines and that misery and happiness are equally unreal (p.89). In Troubles, the Major reflects that ‘Death is the only peace on earth' (p.340) and Dr. Ryan disseminates the gospel of death: "People are insubstantial... They are with us for a while and then they disappear and there is nothing to be done about it” (p. 154). In The Siege of Krishnapur, Fleury sadly reflects that "the higher his spirit soared, the more his face, neck and armpit seeped ... but such is man's estate" (p.118) and in The Singapore Grip, Dupingy opines that "People are like bubbles ... they drift about for a little while and then they burst" (p.463) and Ehrendorf believes that “the human situation, in general or in particular, is slightly worse ... at any given moment than at any preceding moment” (p.284). Thus, the characters of Farrell’s early fiction serve to underscore a thematic continuity with the melancholy view of human life most powerfully expressed by the Empire fiction.

Further, Farrell's fascination for bizarre metaphors has been quite evident right from the early novels on. Reagan is described as a man who
would use death "as some distant ancestor of the human race had used fire, overcoming his fear of it" (AMFE, p.84). Farrell describes writers as "the outriders of a slow-moving cavalcade in uncharted territory whose duty was to warn of danger and command, where necessary, a change of direction" (AMFE, p. 107). Again in the same novel, Gretchen's description of sexual intercourse as 'a sort of eight-limbed Australian crawl' (p.59) echoes Vera Chiang's reflections on the *Western manner* of love-making in The Singapore Grip—as *a pair of drunken rikshaw coolies colliding briefly at some foggy cross-roads at the dead of night* (p.293). In A Girl in the Head, the protagonist's mind is compared to a ‘vacuum-cleaner,’ ‘collecting random and meaningless objects’ (p.29). Boris's scarlet riding-cloak floating beautifully in the air is compared to 'the rapids of a blood-stained river' (p. 12). These far-fetched images in the early fiction anticipate the fabulatory metaphors of the Empire fiction.

A Girl in the Head marks a crucial stage in Farrell’s writing career in that it is the last novel which is set against a contemporary background. Apart from the story *The Pussycat Who Fell in Love with the Suitcase* (1973), Farrell wrote nothing which dealt with the living present; in other words, Farrell moved away from pure fiction to historical fiction and historiographic metafiction. A variety of factors contributed to this rather sudden shift of thematic focus. According to Spurling, this shift was mainly due to the fact that "the passage of time puts inverted commas around issues which once seemed of vital importance and allows the novelist to observe human behaviour more coolly and clearly, from a seat in the gods" (1981b:141). Another possible reason behind the historical orientation could be the increasing awareness on the part of Farrell that recording of the life of the present was a largely futile exercise, best left to the journalists. As Farrell himself put it: “Another reason why I preferred to use the past is that, as a rule People have already made up their mind [as to] what they think about the
present. About the past they are more susceptible to clarity of *vision*" (In Vinson 1972:399). This idea is clearly summed up in *A Man From Elsewhere* where the protagonist Sayer reflects sadly over his achievements as a journalist: "Looking back over his work, he suspected that he had done nothing more than express his own confusion and the confusion of his own time" (*AMFE*, p.107). Fictionalising the present, perhaps Farrell too thought, like Sayer that "he had been unable to respond to the modern nomad moving restlessly over his desert of cement" (Ibid) and felt [again as Sayer did] like a soldier who "had gone to the final trench armed with a bayonet and machine-gun merely to discover that what he needed most was a gas-mask" (Ibid). Further, the fact that *A Girl in the Head* which was Farrell’s favourite among the early works, was very severely criticised probably made him think in terms of a thematic shift.

In conclusion, the Empire fiction actually represents a happy fruition of the hopes and expectations stirred up by his early fiction. In other words, the early fiction vividly charts out Farrell’s evolution as a novelist along the continuum from pure fiction to historical fiction to historiographic metafiction.

Chapter 1—Introduction comprises two main sections titled *Aim, Scope and Significance of the Study* and *Farrell and the Early Fiction*. Both the main sections are divided into two sub-sections each namely, *Comprehensive Treatment of a Facet of History* and *Fictional Experimentation*, *Farrell’s Life: ‘An Interrupted Journey’* and *From Fiction to Historical Fiction*. *Introduction*, on the whole, states the basic aims, scope and significance of the study and presents a brief account of the social circumstances in which Farrell wrote his novels, of the existing criticism on Farrell, of his life and career and finally, of the ways in which his early fiction is a preparation for the mature Empire fiction.
Notes

1. Saraiya devotes just a few lines to Farrell’s *The Siege of Krishnapur* (1994:34-5).

2. Of these three writers, Massie’s omission of Farrell’s work is the most glaring because the prime criterion which governed his selection of novelists makes anyone look for Farrell in his book. He writes: "This survey excludes fiction written in foreign languages and novels first published in the United States. What should properly come within its scope is a difficult question. The Booker-McConnell Prize, which was established in 1969 and which has contributed to a public interest in fiction, is open to novels written by citizens of the United Kingdom, the Commonwealth and the Republics of South Africa, Ireland and Pakistan, if written in English and first published in the United Kingdom. Of the eighty different novelists short-listed for the prize since its inception, at least a quarter are not British citizens. The prize is imperial in conception; eligibility is conferred by citizenship of any country which was within the British Empire a hundred years ago. On the whole I have found it convenient to adhere to this liberal, if illogical criterion" (1991:1). And quite ‘illogically,’ Massie gives "inadequate consideration" (p.70) to Indians like Anita Desai, Australians like Thomas Keneally and Peter Carey, and Canadians like Robertson Davies and Margaret Atwood. If, as he says, “their work seemed especially relevant to the theme of a particular chapter”, one wonders why in his section on the contemporary historical novel (p.39-42) [where even the American historical novelist, Gore Vidal recieves a passing reference] Farrell is totally ignored. Interestingly, Massie's description of the special features of the historical novel ["it [historical]novel"] allows the writer to consider permanent qualities of mind and character simply by setting a distance of time between the novelist and his material; it
frees him from the tyranny of the here and now" (p.39) echoes Farrell's view of the same: "Another reason why I preferred to use the past is that, as a rule people have already made up their mind what they think about the present. About the past they are more susceptible to clarity of vision" (In Vinson 1972:399).

3. Benita Parry subscribes to this view for a slightly different reason: In an era when overseas possessions were a status symbol and Empire was acquiring a mystique, India manifested Britain's position as a European power and a great nation. India's more tangible importance was in providing the territorial and military base for Britain's far and Middle Eastern policies, and in serving as a satellite of the home economy" (1972:9).

4. Brantlinger defines imperialism as "an evolving but pervasive set of attitudes and ideas towards the rest of the world" (1988:8).

5. In Pax Britannica: The Climax of an Empire, Morris gives an exhaustive and highly readable account of the extent of the Empire at its climax with its shipping routes, mails, cables and so on.

6. Seeley declared: "We in Europe ... are pretty well agreed that the treasure of truth which forms the nucleus of the civilisation of the West is incomparably more sterling not only than the Brahmanic mysticism with which it has to contend, but even than the Roman enlightenment which the old Empire transmitted to the nations of Europe" (1883:193).

7. Sarvepalli Gopal describes how the British economic policy crippled India: "The British had given an impetus to the destruction of the old economy but did not permit the rise in its place of one more suited to the modern age. India
was made to serve as the supplier of raw materials to Britain's new industries and as the market for her manufactured goods" (1967:7).

8. As Suhash Chakravarty has aptly put it: "the Raj continued to create its myths and legends. It sparked off its various imperial stereotypes" (1989:vii).

9. In her book Delusions and Discoveries, Benita Parry writes: "The historical context cannot explain why British literature about India can claim only two important writers and a single masterpiece" (1974:5).

10. A substantial number of works have been written on this theme: James Morris (1978), Benita Parry (1974), Patrik Brantlinger (1988) and Martin Green (1988), just to name a few.

11. In a letter to his friend, Rider Haggard, Kipling wrote: "Any nation save ourselves, with such a fleet as we have at present, could go out swiftly to trample the guts out of the world and the fact that we do not seem to show that even if we aren't very civilised, we're about the one power with a glimmering of civilisation in us" (In Brantlinger 1988:245).

12. Kipling's poetic exhortation has achieved the status of a proverbial adage.

   Take up the white Man's burden
   Send forth ye breed
   Unbind your sons to exile
   To serve your captives' need,
   To wait in heavy harness
   On fluttered folk and wild-
   Your new caught, sullen peoples,
   Half-devil and half-child.
13. The 'Law' which is the central theme in Kipling's works signifies a principle of order on both internal and external levels and imperialism is seen as a means of spreading the 'Law.'

14. However, it should be made clear that Kipling was not a jingo-imperialist. Writers like Benita Parry, H.G. Weils (1911), C.E. Carrington (1940), and T.S. Eliot (1941) have come forward to vindicate Kipling from the charge of racism. The gist of Eliot's argument is that though Kipling dwelt on 'the glory of the Empire,' he was quite critical of the faults of imperial rule. In Eliot's view, Kipling thought that the British had a greater aptitude for ruling, that they were supremely gifted to organise, control and administrate but he espoused no formal 'doctrine of race superiority.' Kipling championed the imperial cause out of a sense of the moral responsibility of the Empire-builder. He wanted to see the fruition of the declared intent of the English rulers—to protect, lead and govern the Indians. But the chasm between rhetoric and reality, myths and facts, theory and practice went on widening.

15. In his work, McLury writes: "Kipling was invited to place the ultimate responsibility for his suffering on humanity's innate depravity and the need to control foreign savages. Conrad was invited to blame his sufferings largely on the aggressive intrusion of a foreign state into a coherent community. Kipling was educated to believe that imperialism ultimately reduced suffering, Conrad, to believe that it needlessly augmented it" (1981:91). In an essay entitled Geography and Some Explorers, Conrad described imperialism as 'the vilest scramble for loot that ever disfigured the history of human conscience and geographical exploration' (1926:17).

16. Farrell had serious reservations about Nostromo. Though 'quite a good read,' Farrell believed that Nostromo was "basically so unreal and fatuous" (1981:203). Edward Said also speaks of the "crucial limitations in [Conrad's]
17. Again, in the opening pages of *The Heart of Darkness*, we find an assertive glorification of imperialism. Conrad writes that the river Thames "had known and served all the men of whom the nation is proud—from Sir Francis Drake to Sir John Franklin, knights all, titled and untitled—the knights-errant of the sea. It had borne all the ships whose names are like jewels flashing in the night of time...*Hunters* for gold or pursuers of fame, they had gone out on that stream, bearing the sword, and often the torch, messengers of the night within the land, bearers of a spark from the sacred fire. What greatness had not floated on the ebb of that river into the mystery of an unknown earth. The dreams of men, the seed of commonwealths, the germs of empire" (p.2).

18. Frances. B. Singh expresses a similar view. She writes: "Ambivalent, in fact, is probably the most accurate way to sum up Conrad's attitude toward colonialism. In 1899, he wrote both that "England alone sends out men... with... a transparent sincerity of feeling" and that "intentions will no doubt count for something (i.e., when colonising nations have to face the Day of Judgement), though, of course, every nation's conquests are paved with good intentions...". If a writer is to be called truly anti-colonial then such ambivalence is not permissible, for it compromises the position. The compromises that *Marlow* makes... stem from Conrad's own inability to face unflinchingly the nature of colonialism" (1988:279). Three years later, Said wrote: "Conrad's tragic limitation is that even though he could see clearly that on one level imperialism was essentially pure dominance and land-grabbing, he could not then conclude that imperialism had to end so that 'natives' could lead lives free from European domination. As a creature of his time, Conrad could not grant the natives their freedom, despite his severe critique of the imperialism that enslaved them" (1991:34). Alan Sandison views Conrad's
compromise from a different angle. He analyses the relation between Conrad's inner struggle and his concept of imperialism and concludes that for Conrad, the empire was an objectification of his desire to dismantle the barriers of *otherness*: "The embarkation of the self on its rapacious cognitive conquest to overcome the world's 'otherness' thus finds an equivalent expression in the imperial idea" (1967:62).


20. In a letter to a friend, Scott wrote: "No one had yet the courage to say that Divide and Rule has come full circle... All this is in my book" (In Spurling 1990:308).

21. Farrell thought that Division of the Spoils was a work of 'dubious' quality (1981:195).

22. Brantlinger makes a similar division of imperial regime into three periods, namely "Dawn", "Noon" and "Dusk" (1988:11).

23. Novelists who have written on the imperial theme have mostly resorted to the realist mode of fictional representation. John Fowles who leaps into mind as an obvious exception is more of a historical rather than an imperial novelist. Though Doris Lessing's The Golden Notebook (1974) is essentially postmodernist in technique, the novel marks a departure from the imperial theme and concentrates on the current polemics on sex, gender, feminine writing etc. And E.M.Forster's Passage to India, though admittedly a masterpiece of realism and symbolism, is more of a fictional discourse on the possibility of forging personal relationships between the coloniser and the colonised.

25. Solzhenitsyn’s The Cancer Ward, Mann's The Magic Mountain and Gide's The Immoralist [which is often called a 'sick novel'] are masterpieces of disease fiction.

26. It may be noted here that, like Mann in The Magic Mountain, Farrell too exploits the rhetorical as well as the physical dimensions of cholera in The Siege of Krishnapur. Moreover, Hans, the hero of The Magic Mountain resembles Sands in The Lung in that both are continually haunted by love and disease.

27. Farrell considered The Last September (1927) a ‘splendid’ book (ID, p.204) and Bowen admired Farrell’s Troubles so greatly that she gave it a glowing review entitled Ireland Agonistes (1970).

28. In all his novels, Farrell expresses his aversion to dogs. The dog Sidney in A Man From Elsewhere always likes to lick Sayer in his face and is kicked. In A Girl in the Head, the dog Bonzo has a weak bladder which it tended to relax when shown affection. Troubles is full of dogs, cats and rats. The dog Chloe in The Siege of Krishnapur is shot while eating human flesh and the dog named 'The Human Condition' is 'decrepit,' 'hideous' and 'internally rotting.'

29. In an attempt to explain certain phenomena of life, Vonnegut resorts to drawing of pictures in the text of his novel, Breakfast of Champions.
30. In a similar vein, Dr. Cohen describes "the act of sex ... as the automatic coupling of machines" (*GH*, p.31).