CHAPTER : II

QUEST FOR INDIA
"India is rich in possibilities"

- Paul Scott

The 'glory that was Ind' has almost always worked as magic on many a western writer. From Aeschylus to Mrs. Mary Margaret Kaye West, India has fascinated or intrigued artists. Visited or unvisited India has captured western imagination time and again. The Quest for India seems to have been eternal, and the passage to India almost unending. It has cast a spell on conquerors, explorers, scholars and artists. Columbus on his way to India stumbled on the shores of the Atlantic and discovered a new world. The western people tried to explore the country in various ways. It is the writers and scholars who really discovered India. The Chinese scholar Huen-Tsang, Max Mueller, Thoreau, Emerson, Walt Whitman, Kipling, Forster, John Masters, Eliot and a lot of others went on exploring India, and imaged India in their works. These images are as varied as multiple.

Some of them like the lover in Andrew Marvell's Cov Mistress, who assures his beloved, "Thou by Indian Ganges side/Should rubies find" have regarded India as an exotic land of sadhus, snakes and suttees. Others like Kipling, Forster and Mark Twain have found the varied spectacle of humanity in this vast land, and the interaction between India and western
The satirical presentation of the Nabobs, the discussions in the Parliament and the great case of Lord Hastings, especially as it presented itself to the mind of Burke, show that India has become to England firstly a matter of moral and political responsibility and secondly a country of human beings with intellect, religion and imagination. (3)

Dr. Johnson also showed an interest in India as he happened to be a friend of Warren Hastings and Robert Chambers, a judge of the British Court at Calcutta.

Dr. Johnson wrote to John Taylor:

I believe corruption and oppression in India are at an enormous height but it has never appeared that they were promoted by the Directors, who, I believe, see themselves, defrauded, while the country is plundered. (4)

To Robert Chambers Dr. Johnson wrote:

You are going where there will be many opportunities of profitable wickedness but you go with good principles,... I hope to see you come back with fortune increased, and virtue grown more resolute by contest. (5)

The quest for India by Wilkins, Jones Colebrook, Wilson, James Grant Duff, Tod, Lawyers, Sir Henry Maine and Cladwell resulted in books on Sanskrit learning, Indology, Indian history, archaeology and philosophy. With the arrival of Sir William Jones in 1783 there arose Anglo-Indian literature. Through his deep oriental studies he explored the riches of India. He founded the Asiatic Society in

3 Sencourt, India in English Literature, (Simptin, Marshall, Hamelton, Kent & Co. 1925), p.283.
Calcutta in 1784. He interpreted the Indian classics to the western mind. His nine hymns addressed to Camdeo, Prakriti, Indra, Surya, Lacshmi, Narayana, Saraswaty and Ganga make a memorable contribution to Anglo-Indian literature.

Among the romantics the popularity of pantheistic ideas goes back to India through Neo-Platonism. Tom Moore in his *Lalla Rookh* and Southey in his *The Curse of Kehama* borrowed their themes from Indian legends. Southey thought of Hinduism "of all false religions, it is the most monstrous in its fables and the most fatal in effects". Even Coleridge thought India as a land of gigantic nature and dwarfish intellect.

In the last quarters of eighteenth century Charles Wilkins translated the *Gita*, *Hitopadesa*, *Sankuntala* from the *Mahabarata*. The first major English poet to respond to Wilkin's *Gita* was Coleridge. According to the researches of Munir Ahmed and A. Bose, Coleridge was immensely impressed by the *Gita*. He wrote:

We have in this book (The Wilkin's Gita) which I have now before me, an extract from the great poem of India, where pantheism has displayed its banners and waved in vactory over three hundred millions of men; and this has been published in England as a proof of sublimity beyond the excellence of Milton in the true adoration of the supreme being. It is an address to the pantheistic god.(6)

Coleridge wrote to Thelwall on October 14, 1797:

6 Coleridge, *Philosophical Lectures*, ed. Coburn, p.127,
At other times I adopt the Brahman creed and say-
It is better to sit than to stand, it is better
to lie than to sit, it is better to sleep than
to wake - but death is the best of all! I should
much wish like the Indian Vishnu to float along an
infinite ocean cradled in the flower of the Lotos
and wake once in a million years for a few minutes. (7)

Shelley's quest for India was a bit mixed. It is on record
that

he had expressed a desire to be employed politically
at the court of a native prince and I (Peacock) had
told him that such employment was restricted to the
regular service of the East India Company.

Like Coleridge Shelley might have come across books and
articles on India and he might have been fascinated by them.
Scholars have tried to find similarities between Shelley's
Hymn to Intellectual Beauty and Jones' Hymn to Narayan,
so is the case with Shelley's Hymn to Apollo and Jones'
Hymn to Surva. Indian sentiments and feelings find their
echo in Shelley's Platonism that was steeped in Orientalism
- especially in Adonais, Ode to Heaven, and The Sensitive Plant.

Keats's awareness of India is reflected in:

Great Brahma from his mystic heaven groans
And all his priesthood moans.

Even Byron could not ignore India:

Look to the East where Ganges' swarthy race
Shall shake your tyrant empire to its base.

Campbell's quest for India ended in Pleasures of Hope.

To pour redress on India's injured realm
The tenth avatar comes! At heaven's command
Shall Sarsavati wave her hallowed wand;
And Camdeo bright, Ganesa sublime
Shall bless with joy your own propitious clime.

Sir Walter Scott may be the first great British novelist to
turn to India for the theme of his novel - *The Surgeon's Daughter*. He wrote in the preface "India is a true place
for a Scot to thrive in". Sir Walter Scott is at best as a
historical novelist and a documentary artist. He does it by
presenting the best and the worst elements in the early English
adventures in India during the initial stages of East India
Company's rule through the characters of Adam Hartley and
Richard Muddle along with Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan.

Sir Edwin Arnold's Indian relationship is unique. His
search ended with himself being conquered by India. He
wrote all his best work long after his departure from
India; but his whole subsequent life and almost all
his work had the stamp of his Indian experience.
As regards his most original work *The Light of Asia*,
India may justly claim to have inspired its noblest
passages, though perhaps, she is responsible for its
exotic and sometimes cloying sweetness. (8)

In his own words Edwin Arnold was:

*the Englishman*
*That saheb I knew, lover of India*
*Too much her lover! for his heart lived there*
*How far so ever wandered thrice his feet.* (9)

He

dreamt East and West would meet
On some far day, by some fresh-opened path

8 F.E. Oaten in *The Cambridge History of Literature*,

9 Edwin Arnold, *With Sadi in the Garden* (London), 1888,
p.27.
In sisterly new truths, and strove for that. (10)

In India he felt

*wisdom's wide stream*

Nearest the fountain clearest India's air
Softer and warmer than his native skies;
And liked the gentle speech the grave reserve
The piety and quiet of the land
Its old world manners, its reverent ways
And kind simplicity of Indian homes
More than his proper people, and his tasks
He was to blame, but he loved India. (11)

In the preface to *The Light of Asia* he says:

The time may come, I hope, when this book and
my Indian song of songs, and my Indian Idylls
will preserve the memory of one who loved India
and the Indian people. (12)

In his *Dalhousie's Administration* and *India Revisited*
he has made certain generalisations about Indian people.

Many a views formulated in those generalisations about
Indian people may be due to Arnold's prejudices against
India. According to him Indian people indulged in falsehood,
lacked in courage and suffered from absence of pragmatism.

In spite of being a lover of India Arnold was an imperialist
and in his article entitled *Indian Viceroy* he advocated the
continuance of the empire for a century. He remarks:

The time has come when India must be regarded as an
inseparable portion of the British Empire. The task
committed by providence to the English race of repaying
the debt of the West to the East by giving good government
and profound peace to three hundred millions of Indian
people, and there by protecting the modern uprise of
Asia, is a task not merely completed, but rather demanding

11 Ibid., pp. 27-28.
This makes Edwin Arnold a forerunner of Kipling. The historian in him gave way to the priest when he wrote about the Empire and became a Kipling of the nineteenth century. Forgetting the evil deeds of Clive, Hastings and Dalehousie he gave "the British Empire a certificate of merit and all its builders certificates of good conduct".

From Plassey to Lucknow there have been just men in the councils, our capital and under the tents of our armies, for whose sake the state has prospered, and the armies have triumphed. If wars are ever defensible, those that secure the blessings of peace are so; and Indian rulers have mainly striven for these neither selfishly nor in vain.

In Victorian poetry there are references to India. G.W. Russel's Krishna, E.G. Holmes' Nirvana, Lowell's Mehmood, Whitlter's The Brewing of Soma, Meredith's Chilianwallah and Tennyson's The Defence of Lucknow are related to India. Tennyson liked the "fervent and faultless" Gita-Govindam. Matthew Arnold suggested the reading of the Gita to Clough.

Meadows Tylor in his novels tried the theme of cultural synthesis of the East and the West. He interpreted India and her people. While reading the novels of Tylor one feels that the writer might be an Indian. He loved India, and Indians loved him and people in India called him 'Mahadev Baba'. According to T.O. Dunn, Tylor was

the greatest English novelist whose themes are exclusively Indian. No other writer has depicted Indian life in its varied phases with greater

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Through his novels one learns more of Afzool, Tipoo, Plassey and the Mutiny than an ordinary text book of history. Through his novels Tylor laid a tradition for writers like Kipling, Forster, Paul Scott and Kaye West.

The experiences of Sir Alfred Lyall were quite contrary to that of Tylor. As he found India "as the land of regrets, a land that puts as under those whom God joined", Sir Henry Cunningham's opinion about India is also not dissimilar. His quest ended with the declaration:

the India of sentiment and nonsense that Burke flooded with bombast and Mecaulay with antithesis never was and never will be.

With the close of the 19th century India ceased to be an exotic country. Mrs. Flora Annie Steel in her quest of India fell in love with the country. She expected her readers "to find and love India as I do". In her own way as a lover of India, as an interpreter of the Indian mind to the western reader, she is notable. In her novels one gets a complete picture of India of her time in all its aspects.

So rich and varied is this picture of India as mirrored in the novels and short stories of Mrs. Steel that it is difficult to put it in a few paragraphs. She is famous for her unforgettable pictures of the Indian scene during great commotions from the conflict between the rulers and the
ruled (1857), the portraits of the ex-royalty and the
descriptions of the natural background. Her Indian novels
are *On the Face of the Waters*, *The Host of the Lord*, *The
Flowers of Forgiveness*, *Voice in the Night*, Miss Stuart's
*Legacy*, *The Law of the Threshold*, and *A Book of Mortals*.

Quest for India in the New world was intellectual.
Harvard University gave a lead in the matter. From the
writings of Thoreau it can be presumed that he had read
*The Laws of Manu* and some other translations of Indian books.
In 1855 he wrote in his *Journal*:

*This evening I received Cholmondeley's gift of Indian
books, forty four volumes in all ...* (15)

It appears that Thoreau had already read some of them from
Emerson or Harvard University Library. His remarks on *Laws
of Manu* make an interesting reading:

>The sublime sentences of Manu carry us back to a time
when purification and sacrifice and self-devotion had
a place in the faith of men, and were not as now a
superstition. They contain a subtle and refined
philosophy also, such as in these times is not
accompanied with so lofty and pure devotion.(16)

But Thoreau failed to understand the central idea of
*The Geeta*. He disliked the book due to his misconception
that it was "a defence of the institution of caste". But
still be admired Indians and remarked:

>The Hindoos are more serenely and thoughtfully
religious than the Hebrews. They have perhaps a
purer, more independent and impersonal knowledge of
God ... The calmness and gentleness with which the

15 Thoreau, *The Writings of Henry David Thoreau*,
(Boston and New York : Houghton Mifflin & Co.,1906),

16 Ibid., Vol. VII, p.280.
Hindoo philosophers approach and discourse on forbidden themes is admirable. (17)

Thoreau's quest for India is reflected in his writings:

If I am not a modern Hindoo, we are near neighbours - and by the vehicle of common sense we quench our thirst and cool our lips at the same well. (18)

"American Transcendentalism might be called the offspring of a German father and a Hindu mother". (19) Under this spirit Emerson wrote *Brahma* and Whitman wrote *Passage to India*. The image of India in this poem creates the sensation of sunrise, a dream-world flowering in the poet's consciousness:

Passage 0 soul to India!

... ...

The far-darting beams of the spirit, the unloos'd dreams
The deep diving bibles and legends,
The daring plots of the poets, the elder religions;
O you temples fairer than lilies pour'd
over by the rising sun!
O you fables spurning the known, eluding
the hold of the known,mounting to heaven!
You lofty and dazzling towers, pinnacled, red, as roses, burnish'd with gold!
Towers of fables immortal fashion'd from mortal dreams!

Whitman celebrates his passages to India with boundless joy, a land of his heart's desire, a passage that eventually launches him on an endless spiritual odyssey.

Mark Twain visited India in quest of money. In 1896, he visited India to entertain the public and to make quick money in the process. He put his experience in *Following Equator*. He found that people are a kindly people...

The face and the bearing that

indicate a bad heart seem to me ... rare among Indians. (20)

But his images of India tend to be also ambivalent. The dreamy and colourful side of the country fascinated him much:

This is indeed India: The land of dreams and romance of fabulous wealth and fabulous poverty, of splendour and rags, of palaces and hovels of famine and pestilence, of genii and giants and Aladdin lamp, of tigers and elephants, the cobra and the jungle, the country of a hundred tongues, of a thousand religions and two million gods, cradle of human race, birth place of human speech, mother of history, grand mother of legend, great grand mother of tradition, whose yesterday bear date with the moulding antiquities of the rest of the nation - the one sole country under the sun that is endowed with an imperishable interest for alien prince and alien peasant, for lettered and ignorant, wise and fool, rich and poor, bond and free, that one land that all men desire to see, and having seen once, by even a glimpse for the shows of all the rest of the globe combined. (21)

Mark Twain made a hurricane tour of the country but he failed to comprehend (with all his good intentions) in its entirety the interminable, infinite variety of India which bedazzled him.

Kipling's birth and stay in India put him in a better position to know and understand India. He knew India very well and in a number of short stories and Kim he has depicted India in a beautiful way. He wrote and sang in praise of British India. He is a great chronicler of the Raj. His admiration was for the entire rank and file of the devoted

20 Mark Twain, Following the Equator. Vol., II, p.130.
21 Ibid., p.16.
servants of the Raj. In his view the British people brought a beneficient rule to India. He exhorted his countrymen to

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\begin{align*}
&\text{Take up the White Man's burden} \\
&\text{Send forth the best ye breed -} \\
&\text{Go bind your sons to exile} \\
&\text{To serve your captives' need;} \\
&\text{To wait in heavy harness} \\
&\text{On fluttered folk and wild -} \\
&\text{Your new caught, sullen peoples,} \\
&\text{Half devil and half child.}
\end{align*}
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The misgivings about Kipling have grown due to half quoted or misquoted generalisations e.g:

East is East and West is West, and
never the twain shall meet;

But there is neither East nor West,
border nor breed nor birth.
When two strongmen stand face to face,
though they come from the ends of earth!

His poem The White Man's Burden is very akin to the Gita's nishkama karm, the burden is noblesse oblige, service without any hope of reward. He knew and understood India, but kept his writings limited to the civil lines, cantonments, barracks and jungles inhabited by animals and holy men.

The picture of India that he gives in Kim and The Miracle of Puran Bhagat is remarkable. In Kim the reader comes across

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"the great and beautiful land", ... "a fair land - the most beautiful land is this of Hind and the land of the Five Rivers is fairer than all" ... "A great and wonderful land" ... "The kindly East". As Kipling was a great writer his shadow looms over the literature related to the Raj, that was produced over the entire late Victorian and early modern period.

The most recurrent image of Indians that emerged from Anglo-Indian literature is that of a child, or rather 'half devil and half child' as Kipling puts it. As a corollary of this image, the native is seen as a creature of impulse or emotion lacking in self-discipline. The Indian, Kipling declares, 'is as incapable as a child of understanding what authority means, or where is the danger of disobeying it'... This image of a child - like race fitted nicely with the British self-image of a mature, rational, strong-willed leader or father figure who was needed to take care of the child. The task of looking after the child, in an age moulded by the public-school spirit, could not be performed without the help of the rod; hence the rationale for the use of force in keeping India within the Empire. The logical conclusion of this child-parent or child-guardian relationship was that, however unpleasant, the Englishman had the god-given duty to protect, lead and govern the Indians.(23)

On the whole it is Kipling and later E.M. Forster, who give depth and respectability to literature of the Raj. E.M. Forster visited India twice and stayed here for some time. After the first visit he wrote A Passage to India. In this novel he reflects the doubts and fears of English intelligentsia of the period. The novel is the quintessence of the attitude of many of his contemporaries. He defined the limits of his approach to his novels: "only to connect". It means that the psychological atmosphere of the society in which he grew up.

limited the scope of his inquiry. In this novel he presents India of cities and high places. He could easily understand the attitudes of the British people in India, but when the question comes to the understanding India and Indians, Forster failed. For him India was a mystery or a muddle and in the process the novel itself becomes a puzzle. On the realistic plane he successfully presents the contrasting and conflicting attitudes of the rulers and the ruled, and Hindus and Muslims. But on the symbolic plane muddles and mysteries of India remain unexplained and the real India eludes him:

A Passage to India is thick with symbols, images, and thematic patterns which defy simplistic interpretation. At the deepest level, Forster is here concerned with building a passage to India in a philosophic sense; he is concerned with understanding the metaphysical entity called India. His vision of India, as symbolised by the Marabar caves, comes close to that of Kipling: it is essentially a journey into an area of darkness, the realm of nada, and hence, as he himself acknowledges incomprehensible. It is thus small wonder that empirical explorations are unreliable. What finally emerges in the novel is an indeterminate, shapeless India with a hundred faces suggestive of a microcosm of reality or rather the complexity of reality. (24)

The novel’s anticolonialism riled many. British civil servants sailing out to India threw the book overboard. Some of Forster’s acid observations on the Raj were effectively challenged. It sang with the poetry of its Indian settings with the hope that British and Indians could only connect. Its echoing conclusion from the earth and the sky: the time for union of two races was "not yet" and the place "not there". In that way the novel proved a prophetic one.

24 Shamsul Islam, Chronicles of the Raj, p.42.
A few years later Meyers shifted the quest in the realm of romance and metaphysics. In his preface to The Root and the Flower he declared:

This is not a historical novel, although the action is placed in the time of Akbar the Great Mogul (who was a contemporary of Queen Elizabeth), nor is an attempt to portray Oriental modes of living and thinking. I have done what I liked with history and geography as well as with manners and customs. Facts have been used when they were useful and ignored and distorted when they were inconvenient. Few of my characters bear the names of real persons, and of these the only person drawn with any regard for historical truth is the Emperor.

In choosing sixteenth century India as a setting, my object was to carry the reader out of our familiar world into one where I could - without doing violence to his sense of reality - give prominence to certain aspects of human life, and illustrate their significance. It has certainly not been my intention to set aside the social and ethical problems that force themselves upon us at the present time. On the contrary my hope has been that we might view them better from the distant vantage ground of an imaginary world. (25)

You see, I imagine, a vague picture of emperors and elephants, white marble palaces, palm trees and so on - nothing very precise but plenty of fine confused colouring for a background. And that is what I want, your comfortable, normal ignorance is what I count upon. It supplies all what is necessary; the rest is my affair. (26)

After reading The Root and the Flower and The Pool of Vishnu it may be concluded that Meyers took liberty in presenting Indian climate, culture and history. He is only a bit of a historical novelist in presenting the personality of Akbar. He used India as a backdrop to present his humanistic

philosophy. And his quest for India was superficial.

Next in line was Somerset Maugham who was fascinated by Indian mysticism. In his _Writers Notebook_ there are references of Indian sadhus, swamis, fakirs, and sufis. Like a mystic he found Benares as a moving, a wonderfully thrilling, seething spectacle; the bustle, the noise, the coming and going give a seething sense of vitality; and those still figures of men in contemplation by contrast seem to be more silent, more still, more aloof from human intercourse. (27)

In Madura to him "the gods seem to be near and living". Maugham's _The Razor's Edge_ has a bit of Indian mysticism. In the course of his Indian journey Maugham came across the machinery of the Raj. His acid comments on the Raj are sharp:

Wellington is supposed to have said that the battle of Waterloo was won on the playing fields of Eton. It may be the historians of the future will say that India was lost in the public schools of England. (28)

He also notes his experiences of racialism at the Bengal Club and Royal Yacht Club Bombay where the natives were not admitted.

T.S. Eliot's quest for India brought him close to rich traditions of Indian myths and Sanskrit literature. Many Indian mythological references are found in the poems of T.S. Eliot. He even concludes his famous _Waste Land_ with a loaded reference from the _Upanishads_ and to top it all he quotes the original Sanskrit words in his poem. His _Four Quartets_ has

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28 Ibid., p. 246.
close parallels with Bhagvad Gita and thus it reflects unmistakably, though obliquely, some spiritual images of India. This is something that is rarely found excepting in works of persons such as Paul Brunton (vide Search in Secret India).

In the twilight period of the Raj Parr Cooper wrote three novels Ayah, Uninvited Guest, and The Gesture Comes First. In these novels he faithfully depicts India in its totality - its social, religious customs, its poverty, dirt, disease, heat, dust, snakes, scorpions and mosquitoes. Cooper's novels are considered as landmarks in the history of Indo-British relations, as Anglo-India looms large in the background of his novels. Political questions are a part of the framework of the novels. Parr Cooper did not have the blinkers to blur his vision. For the first time one comes across a British novelist who saw things Indian in a true perspective. Parr Cooper had the guts to understand, and the heart to sympathise with things Indian. He exposes the British habit of clinging to the Raj in spite of the fact that change was necessary.

It appears that the British people gave up the John Bull attitude in the twilight hour of the Raj. Rumer Godden represents this attitude. She shows the conflict as well as cross cultural fertilization of the two cultures in India - the western and Indian. In Black Narcissus she depicts the onslaught and degeneration of the Christian missions in India. In Kingfisher Catch Fire she shows the presence of a British lady in an
Indian village disturbing the harmonious life of the villagers.
In the same novel she shows the failure of the British ladies
in understanding India. Rumer Godden's descriptions are
vivid and authentic. In her novels she had delved the past
history of the country. Her 'Gulbadan' is a recent historical
novel depicting 16th century India.

In the thirties, like Kipling at the turn of the century
E.J. Thompson (1886-1946) was considered an expert on India
and his views had an influence on British public opinion:

Thompson was a versatile writer - he tried his hand at
almost everything - poetry, fiction, drama, biography,
history, expository prose. Although his fiction has
only minor artistic worth, it remains valuable as a
testimony of India, of India's social and political
history. Among his novels, An Indian Day (1927),
A Farewell to India (1931), and An End of the Hours,
(1938) form a trilogy of which A Farewell to India is
the best known. The historical and expository works of
particular relevance to this study are A History of
India (1927), A Letter from India (1932), Rise and
Fulfilment of British Rule in India (1934), and
Enlist India for Freedom1. (1940). (29)

To know about Thompson's attitude to India it would be
appropriate to quote Shamsul Islam:

The conflicting views about India and the Raj in his
fiction and non-fiction make it difficult to pass a
final judgement on Thompson's stand on the issue. If
we go by chronology, it is quite clear that in the end
he opposed the continuation of the Raj though he never
suggested the complete severance of all ties with India.
His fiction presents an opposing, a more emotional view,
I tend to believe that the point of view that emerges
in his novels is a better guide to Thompson's innermost
feelings rather than the logical deduction that he
arrives at in his historical or political prose. He
remains a good example of what most honest, sensitive,
and sincere Englishmen felt about the Empire in those
twilight days of the Raj - a division of sympathies.(30)

30 Ibid., p.62.
George Orwell had a first-hand experience of India. His experiences of India are contained in *Burmese Days* (1934). It is considered as "one of the best post-Kipling treatments of the Raj." (31) India seems to have made an impact upon him. For him India was a tragedy of the half educated. He did not feel comfortable in the imperial atmosphere. Though he had praised Kipling yet he broke loose from the tradition of Kipling. He believed that civilized men did not move away from centres of civilization and a few able men went East of Suez. And invariably he was one of them. He disowned the Raj as well as the European community in India. He felt that "the empire is a despotism with theft as its final object." He considered it as a "dirty work" - "living a whole lie the whole time, the lie that we're here to uplift our poor black brothers". On the other hand he also gave vent to his dislike for "the cow and spinning wheel paradise of Indian revivalism" as well as "the uncritical preference for everything oriental and hatred for west".

With the end of British rule and after Indian independence the quest for India by British writers took a new turn. Beverley Nicholas' *Verdict on India* and Campbell's *Heart of India* show a new attitude. But John Masters has been quite a master in depicting India in various phases of its history.

Among the writers who have Indian themes in the novels, Masters may rank with Kipling, Forster, Paul Scott, J.G. Farrell, Mary Margaret Kaye West and R.P. Jhabvala. His *Night Runners of Bengal* is an exciting colourful dramatic novel about Indian mutiny. It is a full blooded novel about the people involved in the Indian Mutiny. In this novel he shows an intuitive sense of history. The *Deceivers* is a vivid account of the discovery, tracking down and final disbanding of the thugs. The exotic background and the atmosphere of the period are beautifully conveyed. In this novel Masters evokes the beauty, the pity, the strangeness, and the splendour of India. In his *Coromandal* he depicts 17th century India. His fourth novel *Bhowani Junction* tells an enthralling story of India at the time of partition.

*Nine Days to Rama* centering round the crisis of partition that eventually led to the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi presents rather an uncharitable image of India. But like other writers from the west he has skipped real India and it is Anglo India or the Eurasians.

In our time J.G. Farrell has done the same as his predecessors did. Kaye West's India is the rose tinted bauble of British Raj - a world of polo matches and shikar parties, of fancy dress balls and paper chases - far removed from real India. J.G. Farrell in *The Siege of Krishnapur* (1973) visualised the beseiged Englishmen and women in Krishnapur (for Kanpur) during the Mutiny. But modern India
eluded him also.

The above survey bears out Mulk Raj Anand's contention that "English novels are ... about the little England in India". Further the quest for India would not end with Paul Scott or Kaye West and it would continue in future also. Recently Gore Vidal has written *Kalki*.

These writers - some of them were only birds of passage and some did not even visit India - have tried to understand and explore the mysteries of India. But Ruth Prawer Jhabvala stands apart. She has succeeded where others even did not try. Her *Heat and Dust* is superb. From the pages of this novel the reader feels the smell of real India - modern India. *Heat and Dust* is set in India and there is an exploration of Imperial India as well as modern India. The two run parallel to one another. The heat and dust, and the squalor of Sitapur is felt by the reader. She has also exposed the soul ends of a fascinating and compelling India. She is authentic in every detail. The *Guardian* described it as a "novel of great Indian melting pot since *Kim*". It is profound and moving. So is the case with the other writings of Jhabvala. Her *New Dominion* is also an inspiring work.

A natural transit from the work of novelists to accounts of contemporary India is provided by V.S. Naipaul who has launched a scathing attack on the role of Indian tradition in modern Indian life in his two books *An Area of Darkness* (1964)

Larry Collins and Dominique Lapierre's *Freedom at Midnight* (1975) is a superb piece of popularized history in which the characters and events move as if in a novel and for the ordinary reader this must be the outstanding book from which to learn the story of the last days of British India. And the final work is *The Transfer of Power in India* (1947-47, HMSO). The impressions a reader forms from the last two and the novels of Paul Scott are not dissimilar. *Freedom at Midnight* seems to provide a documentary narrative of the impressions formed after reading Paul Scott as it were. Paul Scott's novels are a most distinguished contribution to the understanding of India and of the British relationship with India. Against the background of the dramatic events of 1942-47 the diverse characters struggle to understand the nature of the relationship between Britain and India which is breaking up before their eyes. The author's mastery of the subject and medium place him in the forefront of modern novelists and his unfolding of the character of the policeman, Merrick is a triumph. No other novelist on the theme reaches the heights attained by Paul Scott.

Paul Scott's quest for India is neither to distort, nor debunk, nor glorify. His depiction is without malice, and without worship. India has been a perennial object of universal curiosity and interest. As it has been seen its quest has been
a long chequered history. It had its dark and bright ages, its joys and sorrows, victories and defeats, ups and downs.

Generally the people who came in quest for India fall into two categories: (a) Those who came to India in quest of India in a romantic mood - in search of the glory and greatness of India and its spiritual heritage and its books of knowledge. It includes people like Walt Whitman, Max Mueller, Edwin Arnold and others. (b) The people mightily disappointed and disgrunted with India, failing to notice anything remarkable in an area of darkness. It includes Miss Mayo, V.S. Naipaul and others.

Paul Scott keeps away from the polarities of these approaches. He is not having a derogatory view. Like a true artist his quest is a quest of reality and succeeds in steering away from prejudice or partisan love and explores India with neutrality having an objectivity of a historian.

Since Paul Scott is not a historian he does not go back into the remote past of India, history, nor does he dabble into the fantasies of a dreamer. He is a novelist and tries to mirror India in his fiction - India caught in its most critical and crucial moment in its recent history, India transiting from bondage into freedom and getting mutilated in the process; it is India caught in this transition in time, and reflected in the novels of Paul Scott. It is the image of India aesthetically constructed
and historically verified - verified in the sense of truth.
The image of India that emerges from the novels of Paul Scott has veracity of history and beauty of authenticity and reality of art.

Thus in the long line of the eminent foreigners Paul Scott is the most outstanding among our contemporaries. He has explored the country and its history through the medium of art. In his quest he visited India many times and wrote thirteen novels out of which nine are completely focussed on India around the Raj. Although on the surface it might seem to be the imperial theme, Paul Scott's novels are profound human documents. And hence the image of India as reflected in his novels is as fascinating as interesting. For in Paul Scott, we have the image of India on one hand free from the romantic and idealized approaches like that of Walt Whitman and Max Mueller and on the other free from the debunking approaches of persons like Miss Mayo and V.S. Naipaul. His approach is characterized by authenticity and sincerity. The chapters that follow explore Paul Scott's quest for India.