Fiction as Cultural Resistance: A Study of African and Indian Fiction of the Post-Colonial Period

Thesis submitted to the University of Calicut for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English

MURALEEDHARAN. K.C.

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

UNIVERSITY OF CALICUT

2002

Dr P P Raveendran
Professor of English
Dean, Faculty of Language and Literature
School of Letters
Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled *Fiction as Cultural Resistance: A Study of African and Indian Fiction of the Post-colonial Period*, submitted to the University of Calicut for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, is a bona fide record of the research carried out by Shri Muraleedharan K C under my supervision in the Department of English, University of Calicut. No part of this thesis has been presented earlier for the award of any degree.

Priyadarsini Hills
March 21, 2002

P P Raveendran

DECLARATION

1, Muraleedharan. K.C., hereby declare that this dissertation entitled *Fiction as Cultural Resistance: A study of African and Indian Fiction of the Post-colonial Period* has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma, associateship, fellowship or other similar title or recognition.

Calicut University Campus.

Muraleedharan.K. C.

Acknowledgement

I acknowledge my deep gratitude to Dr. P.P. Raveendran, Professor of English, School of Letters, Mahatma Gandhi University for the inspiring guidance. I am grateful to Dr. Sherine Upot, Reader in English, Dept. of English, University of Calicut (currently on leave) for the constructive suggestions and help as my Co-Guide. I place on record my indebtedness to Dr. N. Ramachandran Nair, Head of the Dept of English, Calicut University. My thanks are due to the other members of the faculty also. I would like to thank the office staff as well as the library staff of the English Department for their help.

Muraleedharan. K.C.

CONTENTS

Introduction

Muraleedharan. K.C "Fiction as Cultural Resistance: A Study of African and Indian Fiction of the Post-colonial Period " Thesis. Department of English, University of Calicut, 2002

Introduction

India and Africa are two vast territories. Despite this obvious reality it would be wrong to conceive them merely in terms of their geographicality. They have another existential dimension that makes them more than mere geographical presences: existence as imaginative constructs. This extended existence as constructs has played a decisive role in shaping the destiny of the African and Indian peoples. Thinking about the India and Africa of the imagination, one is invariably reminded of the Europeans. It was they who initiated the ideological process of imagining India and Africa. In their early writings there are mentions of India as the Indies and in all these writings India is an unseen object of European desire. The European enterprise of protocolonial discovery is said to have been motivated by the eagerness to possess India. Europeans who set out in quest of the Indies happened to reach non-European territories in the Americas, Africa and Asia, including India. The quest was somewhat a pan-European project in the beginning, but soon fight for domination broke out among the powerful societies in Europe. The radical changes in the direction of capitalist economy in European societies decided the relationship among the rival nations and their attitude to the land and the people they came into contact with. Despite the struggle for supremacy, all European societies worked concertedly to subjugate the non-European peoples and took possession of their land. In this scramble for the control of the world, it was the English who emerged as the supreme power and almost three-fourths of the world came into their possession. India

and a considerable part of Africa thus became the precious possessions of the British Empire. The deployment of cultural space in this process of subjugation, as Tiffin and Lawson argue, can not be overlooked:

> Imperial relations may have been established initially by guns, guile and disease, but they were maintained in their interpellative phase largely by textuality, both institutionally, . . . and informally. Colonialism (like its counterpart racism), then, is a formation of discourse, and as an operation of discourse it interpellates colonial subjects by incorporating them in a system of representation. (3)

Imperialism and colonialism operate by constructing racial and cultural differences and imaginative literature has a significant role in this matter. The extended prose narratives produced in this process acquire paramount ideological significance. These narratives mediated the translation of India and Africa into properties of the imagination.

The process through which India and Africa are translated into a property of the European imagination should be of interest to anyone who experiences the predicament of postcolonial cultures and seeks measures to comprehend and resolve it. Edward Said has addressed these issues politically in an effort to find out how his subjectivity has been constituted by colonial discourses. As one of the scholars who has probed the question of the formation of the postcolonial subject Said has made pathbreaking studies that have allowed us to reconceptualize the Orient in a radical way. In his famous work *Orientalism* he demonstrates that the Orient as it is understood today is a literary construct. It is to Said a sign of European-Atlantic power over the Orient (7). He calls it "a

distribution of geopolitical awareness into aesthetic, scholarly, economic, sociological, historical, and philological texts . . . which express a will or intention to understand, control, manipulate, (and) even to incorporate what is a manifestly different (or alternative or novel) world" (12, emphasis in the original). The Saidian perception of Orientalism as a family of European intellectual attitudes and practices underscores the ideological relationship between knowledge and power in the context of European domination over the East. An understanding of the subtle correspondence between knowledge and power and the text and the world is inevitable for a proper negotiation of the postcolonial reality. Said's book, notes Partha Chatterjee, helped him to understand his own intellectual formation as a postcolonial historian. He recalls:

> I will long remember the day I read *Orientalism* ... For me, child of a successful anti-colonial struggle, *Orientalism* was a book which talked of things I felt I had known all along but had never found the language to formulate with clarity. Like many great books it seemed to say to me for the first time what one had always wanted to say. ("Their Own" 194)

It goes without saying that Chatterjee's experience with Said's book is in no way exceptional. Said's book teaches a person how to read literature contrapuntally. This is why Peter Barry aptly describes it as the major work that inaugurated postcolonial criticism proper (192). Said bases his observations on Foucauldian insights that are seminal to this study: that writing is an expression of power and that the literary space can be used to construct reality and thereby control the Other. Chinua Achebe is another writer who

makes use of discourse theories to expose the politics of European theorization of the Other.

This thesis applies the afore-mentioned theoretical insights to selected writings on both sides of the colonial divide in the Indian African context. The objective is to show that the Indian and African fiction in English de-scribes the empire that the English writing, particularly the novel, has consistently built up. The capture of the European fictional form and the radical reconstitution of it by the African and Indian writers are part of this ideological process. Basically, this is an attempt on the part of the postcolonial writers to interrogate the claims and assumptions of European culture, especially, of the European self-perception and its derogatory construction of the Other. The term "cultural resistance" is used to signify the cultural battle that non-European people had to wage in order to assert their identity. Fiction has mediated the battle and in India and Africa the novel has been the most important cultural artefact that both participated in the process and got itself shaped by it. A comparison of the social and political use to which the English novel in India and Africa as well in the West are put would explain the concept of cultural resistance. The English novel celebrates the triumph of "human achievement." That is, the English novel, both in its form and content, partakes of the spirit of Enlightenment humanism. Both Enlightenment and its humanism are presently being challenged for having established the humanity of the Europeans by underplaying the humanity of the rest of the world. So the European novel is implicated in the conquest of the Other in the name of humanism. Though this may not be true of each and

every work of fiction, it is largely true in the case of English fiction as a social institution. The canonical texts of English fiction are especially implicated in the ideology of humanism. In English travel writings as well as novels, the lines between fiction and fact are blurred so that fact is disguised as fiction and fiction is palmed off as fact. The postcolonial African and Indian fiction, on the other hand, endeavours to reassert the humanity of the people that Europe intentionally misrepresented as savages and subhumans. In the postcolonial rewriting of humanism also there is the Other but it is not the subhuman Other. There may be the blurring of fiction and fact but this too is not to dehumanize the European but only to de-scribe the imperial structures. So in every sense the African and Indian novel in English resists the dehumanizing impulses of the English imperial discourses. This is the theoretical perspective that allows one to conceive (post-colonial) Indian and African fiction as instruments of cultural resistance.

The thesis consists of five chapters besides an introduction and conclusion. The use of the literary space by the British writers and scholars in the seventeenth and eighteenth century in relation to India and Africa is analyzed in the first chapter. The analysis shows that writing can possess the kind of power that serves to establish cultural domination. Travel narratives have a prominent place among the writings that work toward this end. Most of the travel accounts by the British were not based on their actual experience in India or Africa. In these narratives the lines between fact and fiction are blurred but their claim to reality is stoutly maintained. In fact the British travel writing emerged from the consciousness, needs and imagination of the contemporary English

society and deployed that society's values, desires and perceptions. In the seventeenth century, with the commencement of intensive trading activities in the Indian sub-continent, Englishmen in personal as well as official capacity began to travel the length and breadth of India. Decades later the same process was repeated in African territories. The encounter with culturally different people inspired the Englishmen to produce narratives. The books thus produced also helped exploit the commercial possibilities of the colonised countries. The details about the land, its culture and the people were of crucial importance to the commercial project. So the travellers made it a point to give biased accounts about the customs, beliefs, and other cultural aspects of the different communities in India and Africa. That is, these travel accounts mediated the Indian and African reality from the Renaissance perspective and thus produced an India and Africa of the imagination defined solely by the Euro-centered notions of the Enlightenment. Henry Lord and Thomas Coryate, two Englishmen who wrote about India in the seventeenth century, looked at India deliberately through the prism of the exotic. Their gaze transformed India into a fascinating realm of the exotic, the mystical and the seductive. Lord's perception of the male Banyans as "strangely notable and notably strange ... (with) a gesture and garbe maidenly and effeminate" is an instance that shows how the British gaze changes an Indian community into strange, inferior and effeminate creatures. Both these writers used the trope of wonder to exoticize and thus denigrate India. The Englishman who came to India in the seventeenth century used narration to negotiate the Indian reality. Making use of certain Renaissance typologies they were

able to invent an India that suited their ideological needs of the time. Indian culture was constructed as negative, fantastic and stereotypical and was placed in contrast with cultural categories familiar to the Englishman. The consequence of such juxtaposition was that Europe emerged as the centre of cultural superiority while the rest of the world was condemned as culturally peripheral and hence inferior. In short, these travel writings had turned India and Africa into properties of the English imagination and, by doing so, set the ground for the establishment of cultural superiority and the later translation of it into profitable economic and political domination.

In the second half of the eighteenth century the British scholars deployed the literary space to theorize India's ancient glory and contemporary darkness more explicitly. Their cultural activism and discoveries are situated in the historical locus of the takeover of Bengal. Writings of the Orientalists like William Jones helped theorize India as a land of darkness more explicitly than the travel writings and this justified the British rule in scholarly terms. In spite of the fact that eighteenth century Orientalism carried its own baggage of incipient imperial interests, it would be less than objective to collate the Orientalist cultural productions into a single undifferentiated and unidirectional discourse. This makes the reading of Orientalist cultural gestures a complex process. One would therefore have to examine the earlier forms of the Orientalist scholarship in detail and their later reconstitution by James Mill. Some poems by Jones are analyzed to illustrate the English cultural politics of the times. The first chapter concludes with an inquiry into the assimilation of the Orientalist notions by the

discourses of modernity in tandem with the growing needs of British imperialism. Orientalism lost its Indian moorings and acquired a false universalism making it a useful and dominant framework in the conquest of Africa. In short, the eighteenth century Orientalists opened up the remote and relatively unknown territory of the Indian past to imperial gaze and thus prepared, perhaps unintentionally, the ground for the ideologues of Utilitarianism and modernity to theorize that India cries out for domination.

The second chapter examines the imperial connection of English fiction and its role in disseminating the constructed differences aesthetically. In its origin and development English fiction is inseparably tied to the process of imperialism. An examination of the evolution of this new genre points to the fact that this cultural apparatus of the English middle class has been significantly shaped by the European experiences of nationalism and imperialism. It is the cultural form that has allowed the middle classes to establish its dominance within the English society and beyond. As such English fiction becomes a surrogate space for the aesthetic dissemination of Euro-centered disciplinary knowledge. That is, fiction ensures the circulation and uncritical acceptance of stereotypical images that perpetuate imperial perceptions. Selected English novels are analyzed to see how India and Africa emerge from them and in what way such works aestheticize imperial ideology. Focussed attention is given to Kipling's *Kim* and Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. These novels are remarkable for their popularity, readability and canonical status. The ideological underside of these master texts remained

unexplored for decades when the New Critical and other ahistorical modes of interpretation prevailed. But Achebe and Said have been able to show that such texts are part of the massive discursive formation of imperialism and colonialism. These works are read back contrapuntally using the insights provided by Achebe and Said. The inquiry yields the result that the Conrad novel translates the Africans into an anonymous howling mass and Africa into a land of contagious primitivism. The Kipling novel successfully suppresses Indian nationalism by imagining an India unopposed to British rule.

The third chapter discusses the response of the postcolonial writer to such institutionalized cultural denigration. The Indian and African response to the English fictional discourse involves the capture and reconstitution of the modular form of extended prose fiction that originated in Europe. Raja Rao and Mulk Raj Anand in the 1930s adapted the European fictional form and the English language to advance the nationalist cause. They reconstituted the available fictional form to narrate the nation. Achebe and Ngugi also did the same in the Nigerian and Kenyan context respectively. The most significant question of the times was the ownership of the land and the only way to stake a claim was to articulate the identity of the nation in fictional terms. Fictional space is thus successfully deployed to contest British ownership of India and Africa. Writing fiction becomes in these cases a subversive gesture to dismantle the imperial machinery. Fiction in their practice becomes the arena where anti-colonial nationalism wages its cultural battle at internal as well as external domination. Achebe decenters the imperial perspective by creating an African

community that resists imperial expansion. He destabilizes Conrad's Africa by reconstructing African reality from the viewpoint of the victims of British imperialism. *Things Fall Apart* and *Arrow of God* are the two seminal works of fiction with which Achebe unsettles the imperial perception of Africa. These works are studied to see how Achebe offers fictional resistance to imperialism. Ngugi, Anand and Rao also write back to the imperial centre. Ngugi's earlier fictional texts, *The River Between* and *Weep Not Child*, are analyzed to see how this author resists British imperialism in Kenya. Rao's *Kanthapura* and *Serpent and the Rope*, and Anand's *Untouchable* and *Two Leaves and a Bud* are studied to examine the seminal role of fiction in fighting British imperialism in India. In the practice of these writers one sees the Indian and African novel in English being shaped as structures of cultural resistance. That is, fiction in India and Africa, whether in English or in the regional languages, is fundamentally tied to the anti-imperial struggle. Its structure of feeling is decided by the experience of resistance to imperialism and in this sense it differs from the (European) British fictional form. The episodic structure, the underlying notions of cyclic history, the presence of the community as the hero rather than the highly individualized, rational human figures, the domestication of English – all these characteristics of the postcolonial novel tend to suggest a difference from the European form. The title of the thesis emphasizes this aspect of the formation of Indian and African fiction as part of the resistance movements and independence struggles opposing imperialism and colonialism.

The fourth chapter studies the articulated national community in the afore-mentioned works of Achebe, Ngugi, Anand and Rao. The study reveals both the strength and weakness of Indian and African nationalism and the fictional representation of the same. These nationalist narratives successfully expose the indigenous conservatism that keeps the community closed and sections of it subjugated and deeply entrenched in traditional hierarchy. The depiction of the mobilization of the people and their struggle against imperialism is effectively done. The homogeneity of the nation is emphasized and its difference from the empire is sharply defined. That is, no effort is spared to project the nation as a seamless monolith. These strategies also privilege the national question by suppressing the gender and class questions. When brought within the discursive structure of the nation, certain sections in the society are made to surrender their agency and interests. Instances from the works by Achebe, Ngugi, Anand, and Rao are used to demonstrate that the Indian and African nationalist fiction, in spite of its subversive potential, marginalizes certain sections and misrepresents the woman and the subaltern. Taking the subaltern characters of *Kanthapura* and *Untouchable* as examples, the questionable construction of the depressed classes is argued out. The women characters in the earlier fictional works of Achebe, Ngugi, Anand and Rao are examined to see to what extent these texts conform to and thereby validate the nationalist norm of the woman. The analysis reveals the fact that the nationalist assimilation of the European fictional form into the cultural contexts of India and Africa is insufficient in the sense that even the new, reconstituted structures retain the ideological traces

characteristic of European imperialism and nationalism. That is, narratives of anti-colonial nationalism are also implicated in the practice of silencing gender and class questions.

The post-independence women writers of India and Africa have recognized the fact that fictional form is an ideology in its own right. So they had to rework the fictional form to make it amenable for the articulation of their self. The fifth chapter focusses on two women novelists, Kamala Markandaya and Flora Nwapa. The two are notable for their intervention into the nationalist discourse on women's condition. Markandaya's *Nectar in a Sieve* and Nwapa's *Efuru* redefine the woman in opposition to the patriarchal insistence on the passive, tractable, and silent woman. Their assertion of the gender question marks a moment in the national life when women begin to claim agency and gain the power, though in a limited way, to articulate their experience of the national reality. A remarkable shift in perception of the woman's question is seen in Achebe, Ngugi and Anand also around this time. In their later works a diachronic development regarding the depiction of women is visible. *No Longer at Ease, Man of the People* and *Anthills of the Savannah* are probed to illustrate the gradual change in Achebe's perception of the role of woman in the nation. Ngugi's women protagonists in *Devil on the Cross* and *Matigari* are also studied in relation to this. Anand's construction of Gauri is studied to highlight the perception of the women's question in independent India. The analysis reveals that in spite of conscious strategies and declared authorial preferences in favour of the liberation of the woman and other marginalized sections of the society the politics of the unconscious still undercuts the

subversiveness of fictional resistance. Another interesting factor is the overlap of postcolonialism and feminism in the Indian and African context.

New and promising writers who may be called the second-generation novelists carry on this consciousness-raising process through fiction. Writers like Manju Kapur and Buchi Emecheta keep up the subversive tradition of fiction-writing with greater emphasis on the gender issue. An overview of such writing is given in the conclusion to suggest the explicitly political direction that fictional resistance is going to take in the postcolonial societies in the coming years.

Travel writings, Orientalism, and the English Imagination

Muraleedharan. K.C "Fiction as Cultural Resistance: A Study of African and Indian Fiction of the Post-colonial Period " Thesis. Department of English, University of Calicut, 2002

CHAPTER ONE

TRAVEL WRITINGS, ORIENTALISM, AND THE ENGLISH IMAGINATION

The imaginative involvement of the English people with India began on a significant scale with the institution of the East India Company and the commencement of its trading activities in the first decade of the seventeenth century. As a result of this encounter a number of narratives came to be produced. Most of these narratives come under the genre that can be called travel writings. It is possible to read from them how the Europeans in general and the Englishmen in particular responded to cultures and peoples unfamiliar to them, and, also, how this response affected the non-European cultures like India. Seventeenth century English travel narratives are also significant for the image of India inscribed in them which, as is realized now, is very problematic in political as well as cultural terms.

Henry Lord, a Minister attached to the East India Company factory at Surat, wrote one of the remarkable travel narratives of the times. This narrative can be taken as a significant work of protocolonial discovery in the Indian context. Jyotsna G. Singh begins her reading back of colonial narratives by placing one representative passage from Lord's narrative at the head of the first chapter of her book. This passage functions in Singh's work as an epigraph that signifies the general tone of the narrative analyzed. It is a passage that displays the discovery motive in all its eloquence. This is how Henry Lord "discovers" the "Banians":

> A people presented themselues to mine eyes, cloathed in linen garments, somewhat low descending, of a gesture and garbe as I may say, maidenly and well nigh effeminate; ... whose use in the (East India) Companies affaires occasioned their presence there.
>
> Truth to say, mine eyes unacquainted with such objects, took up their wonder and gazed; and this admiration the badge of a fresh trauvailar, bred in mee the importunity of a questioner: I asked what manner of people those were, so strangely notable and notably strange? Reply was made; they were Banians, a people forraigne to the knowledge of the Christian world; their religion, Rites and customes, sparingly treated of by any. (quoted in Singh 19)

This evocative description that begins in an abrupt and dramatic way is cast in words that signify wonder of the extreme fashion. It transforms the Banians into "curios" or exotic specimen. In his attempt to define the Banians, Lord pushes them irretrievably into the terrains of exotic imagination where everything that determines their identity and fixes it in the normal course - such as sex, dress and the status of being human - are working to conspire against their established identity. For instance, the "gesture and garbe" of the Banians which in the normal situation reveals their sexual status is the very thing upon which Henry Lord builds up his notion of the "maidenly and well nigh effeminate" Banians. In other words, the narrative places the Banians, in the very moment of the discovery, at the borderland of male-female distinction. It leaves ample scope for the play of the implied reader's imagination in the direction of conceiving them as females. Banians referred to by Lord, though biologically male, emerge from the narrative as "femalish" and so funny. This is, no doubt, an instance of the

protocolonialist discourse of discovery in the Indian context. It is in every sense similar to what Louis Montrose calls in the American protocolonial context "the gendering of the New World as feminine and the sexualizing of its exploration, conquest and settlement" (78). The gendering of the male Banians as feminine may be, as Montrose reads, on the one hand, an attempt, a metaphorical one though, "to destroy their bodies and their wills, to suppress their cultures and to efface their histories" and, on the other, the articulation of the complex "relationship between the woman monarch and her masculine subjects" (179). From the funny and femalish creatures, the Banians are transformed in the immediate move of the narrative further into "such objects" that his (Lord's) "eyes (are) unacquainted with." The rapid shift from the funny "effeminate Other" to "the other as object" is executed smoothly and convincingly by evoking an atmosphere of the exotic. This not only dissolves the social identity of the Banians but also persuades the reader to take the description for granted. It is made possible, Singh observes, "by privileging the act of seeing as a mode of unmediated access to experience" (21). Henry Lord's attempt at defining the Banians in relation to the Christian world is also thought provoking. In Singh's view, instead of defining them, "he defines their strangeness in terms of their exclusion from 'the knowledge of the Christian World'" (22). An implied but well-maintained thread of Euro-centric definition runs through the passage. It comprises signifiers presented in an increasing order and dimension of otherness: "of a gesture and garbe," "maidenly and effeminate," "such objects unacquainted," "so strangely notable and notably strange," "Banians." The representational impact of

the literary strategy of this eyewitness commentary is that it robs the Banians of their identity, distorts their reality and casts aspersion on their gender and human status. It is interesting to note that the passage names the object of its fantastic evocation in a most suspense-retaining way in the end only. That is, the passage in its movement imitates verbally the explorative manoeuvres of a traveller in a supposedly exotic and mysterious territory. Moreover, the description of the Banians concludes with a statement of the immense possibilities that these people's life and culture offer as fantastic objects of narration.

In Thomas Coryate one comes across another instance of the havoc wrought by the exotic imagination of the seventeenth century English traveller in India. Thomas Coryate is a freewheeling adventurer, who in his writings gives expression to his imaginings of the sacrificial bath at the Ganges in a "spectacular" way:

> I expect an excellent opportunity . . . to goe to the famous River Ganges, whereof about foure hundred thousand people go hither . . . to bathe in the River . . . throwing into the river as a sacrifice, and doing other notable, strange Ceremonies most worth of observation, such a notable Spectacle it is, that no part of all Asia ... [is] the like to be seen; this shoe doe they make once every yeare, coming hither from places almost thousands miles off, and honour their River as their God, Creator, Saviour; Superstition and impiety most abominable ... these brutish Ethnickes, that are aliens. (quoted in Singh 23)

Coryate dramatizes the sacrificial bath at the Ganges and transforms that into something strange, spectacular and fantastic just as Lord translates the Banian community into exotic specimen, "strangely notable and notably strange." This rhetorical strategy of

the discovery narratives demands a detailed discussion. A casual reading of the passage is enough to understand that Coryate transforms the ritual bath into something spectacular and rare and thereby condemns it as superstition and impiety most abominable. It is, however, not a simple and harmless expression of the sense of wonder that one may feel at things rare and rarely. A traveller like Coryate or anyone in any other role in the non-European landscapes of the seventeenth century for that matter certainly has the right to feel and express the sense of wonder. But, to feel wonder at anything and everything, and, as Singh describes, to look at things only "through the prism of the exotic" (46) are to be reckoned as matters that are highly problematic and intensely ideological. The wonder that Coryate and travellers like him wrote into their narratives consistently and diligently has now been identified as a device that enabled them to map newly discovered lands and possess them imaginatively. Stephen Greenblatt uncovers the cultural politics of the trope of the marvellous in this manner:

> The marvellous is a central feature ... in the whole complex system of (European) representation, verbal and visual, philosophical and aesthetic, intellectual and emotional through which people in the Middle Ages and Renaissance apprehended and thence possessed or discarded the unfamiliar, the alien, the terrible, the desirable. (22)

Coryate too, as is evident from the passage quoted from his narrative, apprehends the sacrificial bath through the received notions of the exotic and discards it as superstition and impiety most abominable. A seemingly innocent and wonderstruck traveller

like Coryate, as Singh argues citing Mary Louise Pratt with approval, is a historical actor with a deeply ideological role:

> The role of the innocent, wonder-struck protagonist taken by Coryate is reminiscent of a character who emerges later in the colonial landscape: he is the "seeing man," who, according to Mary Louise Pratt, represents the act of discovery as a form of "anti-conquest," whereby the European bourgeois subject can secure his innocence in the same moment that he asserts, or, in this case, assumes European superiority. (47)

The narratives produced by the English men in their various official and personal capacities during the seventeenth century were in fact sites that enabled them to take imaginative possession of the other. To put it differently, these narratives enabled them to come to terms with an unfamiliar culture and an unknown territory that threatened to undermine their cultural moorings. Singh argues that by this process of negotiating the unfamiliar, the traveller, trader, soldier and/or the company official were giving expression to an India/Indies that became a part of their imagination:

> In different modes and degrees, these seventeenth century eyewitness accounts show "India/Indies" emerging as a geographical and cultural entity within the British imagination via the rhetorical, figurative and sometimes fictionalizing practices common to both history and ethnography. (28)

It is the usual practice of the travellers to draw explicit comparisons with the familiar. The seventeenth century traveller too is not an exception to this. Analogies with familiar categories of home abound in their travel writings. A passage on the Hindu customs put to scrutiny by Kate Teltscher shows that their basic premise was the familiar Christian ways of life and they

comprehended everything in terms and relation to it, as a discrepancy from or analogy to either Catholic or Protestant ways of life:

> They have a very strange order among them, they worshippe a cowe, and esteeme much of the cowees doung to paint the walles of their houses. They will kill nothing not so much as louse: for they hold it sinne to kill any thing.... They say if they should be buried, it were a great sinne, for of their bodies there would come many wormes and other vermine, and when their bodies were consumed, those wormes would lack sustenance, which were a sinne, therefore they will be burned. (23)

Teltscher explains clearly how the analogy, while enabling the process of inscribing India/Indies, works towards a cultural supremacy over the "other":

> Designed to disgust, this passage draws on images from the repertoire of bad jokes and graveyard humor: dung, lice, decomposing bodies and worms; but its main aim, with its absurdly tortuous explanation of Hindu cremation, is to depict Hindu belief as laughably illogical. As always with satire, readers are left with a comforting sense of their own superiority: when ridicule is cast on Hindu beliefs and logic, Protestantism appears supremely reasonable. (23)

The religious typology that these writers inherited and employed helped project Christianity as the mark of the normative. It not only helped place Christianity as superior but also provided a useful framework for the subordination of unfamiliar cultures. Singh establishes this point beyond doubt:

> Implicated in these familiar strategies of representation is a sense of certitude, a faith in the all-encompassing power of Christianity. Thus Christianity not only serves as the mark of the normative, but also

> crucially provides the moral imperative for the discovery, and later conquest, of the non-Christian, "heathen" lands. (22)

The geographical typology too is, just like the religious typology, ridden with an inbuilt Euro-bias. At the heart of it, notes Blaut, there is the idea that "the world has a permanent geographical center and a permanent periphery." The centre is undoubtedly Europe and it "eternally advances, progresses, modernizes" while the periphery or "the rest of the world advances more sluggishly, or stagnates" (1). It enabled the depiction of the non-European territories as regions fated to moral turpitude on account of the unchangeable fact of geographical distance from Europe. Singh unlocks this aspect of the ideological underpinnings of the geographical typology inherited by the seventeenth century traveller/writer by making use of the insight provided by Gillies:

> In setting such moral boundaries between the Christian Europe and the "brutish" Indians, the English narratives were simply recapitulating the Renaissance poetic geography, itself drawn from the texts of antiquity, whereby geographic distance from the European/Christian center implied a progressive degeneration and a "loss of cultural, moral and linguistic integrity." (23)

This too was, implicitly, a fillip to discovery, later conquest and rigorous measures of civilizing. Besides the inherited typologies, there are other significant factors that would influence a traveller's perception and representation of an unfamiliar culture. These factors also must be given some thinking.

A traveller generally sets out with the backing of a powerful nation or society. It sustains him/her culturally, economically, militarily and spiritually too at a distance from home. Such a

powerful society, observes Rana Kabbani, may definitely raise certain demands that the traveller is expected to fulfil:

> He (the traveller) feels compelled to note down his observations in the awareness of an audience: his fellow countrymen in general, his professional colleagues, his patron or his monarch. Awareness of this audience affects his perception and influences him to select certain kinds of information, or to stress aspects of a country that find resonance in the culture of his own nation. His social position also colors his vision, and (since he often belongs to a leisured class, which enables him to embark on voyages which are both expensive and prestigious) he usually represents the interests and systems of thought in which he was schooled. (1)

The ideological pressure that the supporting society exerts on the traveller can be illustrated in the context of seventeenth century England. What kind of an audience, readers or community existed in England at that time and what they expected from these travellers are questions that may help one illustrate the ideological atmosphere that decided the nature of their representations of non-European cultures such as that of India and Africa. The following passage from Robinson and John Leyland, though brief, not only captures the major concerns of the English community life in the first few decades of the seventeenth century but expresses it with a certainty, confidence and arrogance typical of the high time of imperialism:

> In the halls of the merchants companies, in the parlours of enterprising traders and in the chambers of students, problems of the New world, and the means of reaching its treasures, were being discussed. The genius of

> the nation for colonization was now aroused, and new lands were to be developed by men of English Blood. (4: 77)

This active discussion is a pointer to what Robin W. Winks calls a "darting sense of curiosity" (v) that the European Renaissance unleashed. It is this curiosity that prompted voyages into distant lands. The voyagers on reaching distant lands were expected to send back stories to satisfy the curiosity of the people at home who were in a sense not as mobile as these travellers. It is to such an audience that Henry Lord wanted to communicate badly and he put up a request to the Governor to help him reach the very expectant audience, many of them being prospective future travellers in various capacities. Singh captures the essential spirit of Lord's request and reports it in a very telling manner:

> To the Governor he writes, "this sect of Banians suggested unto me something novell and strange, and gave mee hopes it would bee a worthy and welcome to your (Governor's) hands." Lord wants this account to cross the "tropicks" to England, so that "together with the Transport of Commodities from a forraigne Mart, you (the Governor should) informe the home residers with the Manners and Customes of the People in transmarine kingdoms of the world." (21)

Lord places narratives in equal importance with commodities; it seems that, for him, narratives were not merely a means to information that enhanced the possibilities of trade. There is hardly any dispute about the role of narratives as resources of information in the trading activities of Europeans during the century in question as also in later centuries but as a passage from Teltscher would allow us to see, trade is unthinkable without narratives of this sort:

> All these writers were, directly or indirectly, involved in exploring trading possibilities with India. Their accounts had to convey a sense of dependable authority since they were written to indicate commercial opportunities to their employers or patrons, to function as sources of practical information. Haklyut's *Voyages*, in fact, became standard issue on all East India Company expeditions. Some of these accounts could well be termed merchant guidebooks. (17)

This passage, besides telling us about the crucial role of travel writings in promoting trade, also provides some information as to how a tradition of travel writing was being established beginning with and modelled on Haklyut's work. That a reading public schooled in the oeuvre of Haklyut would definitely look forward to reading material of that sort is not very surprising. Natural too it is for a traveller to follow the footsteps of a travel writer like Haklyut who had been celebrated by the English community as a linkman to trade and protocolonial discoveries. Writing under such ideological constraints as these even travellers who strove to be careful and objective, as Kabbani remarks in the nineteenth century Arabian context, "could not help confirming certain myths to which their countrymen had grown accustomed" (2). Thus the traveller had to prevaricate, fabricate and distort certain facts while he/she was also expected to provide authentic information regarding trading possibilities. This is the interestingly paradoxical combination of fact and fiction that one comes across in travel writings. This must be given some thought. Fitch, a traveller who gives an account of his journey through India in the last years of the sixteenth century, manages to do this in a very effective manner. Fitch presents the reader with a series of observations

remarkable for their variety. He describes the other with the suggestion of strangeness so that "the Other" in them looks "out of the ordinary." For instance, look at the following passage from Fitch's narrative:

> These Indians when they bee scorched and throwen into the water, the men swimme with their face downewards, the women with their face upwards, I thought they tied something to them to cause them to doe so: but they say no. There be very many thieves in this country, which be like to the Arabians: for they have no certaine abode, but are sometime in one place and sometime in another. Here the women bee so decked with silver and copper, that it is strange to see, they use no shooes by reason of the rings of silver and copper which they weare on their toes. (quoted in Teltscher 15)

Fitch does not merely observe the various activities and aspects of the life of a people who are strange to him. Neither does he merely suggest that their ways are different from those of his people. He, for instance, exoticizes even the act of swimming by not only "Othering" it but gendering it as well. Having presented the Indians as a haphazard and exotic community, Fitch adds to his description a list of Indian trading commodities. Teltecher reveals what the traveller achieves by finding out a way of marrying the commercial and cultural entities:

> The reader is presented with a series of apparently unrelated observations about the country through which Fitch is passing. This technique conveys a sense of verisimilitude – the indiscriminate flow of observations mimicking the flood of traveller's varied impressions. However, Fitch breaks with this haphazard arrangement to append a

> summary of Indian trading commodities, so that his account also functions as a kind of commercial reference work. (15)

What is suggested here is that the narrator establishes an authoritative text by devising one strategy for his personal observations on the unfamiliar culture and another for presenting commercially useful information. Not only that. The authoritative text may put forth an attitude of verisimilitude in the matter of observations related to the culture of the other while in matters of commercial interest the narrative chooses to be uncompromisingly straight and honest. One major reason for such a presentation of the unfamiliar culture is the kind of expectations of the community for which the narratives were produced. More than the traveller, it is the receiving end, the home readers, who decided what was to be invented or discovered by the traveller, as Winks illustrates:

> That there were black men in Africa and brown in India was strange enough, and that they followed unknown gods, muttered in incomprehensible languages, and often went naked was stranger yet. But upon closer examination they proved to be human enough, to force those who wished to report of the dangers of their adventures - which was very real in any case - or who wished to tell a good tale, to accentuate the odd and forget the explicable. Were strange men wanted, then strange men with strange customs would be found or, if not found invented. (4)

In Wink's opinion, the fantastic entered the rhetoric of invention in proportion to the degree of expectation of the alien beholder or that of his curious home reader, as the case may be:

> If the people one encountered were not really strange, then those just across the horizon, at the next landfall, would be dressed in solid gold,

> would have eyes in the middle of their foreheads, would be ruled by giant women or would be able to wrap themselves with their ears serving as blankets. (5)

As an extension of the suggestion here, it would be possible to say that the English travel writers as historical subjects were struggling to cope with the alien cultures by means of the epistemological and conceptual tools the Renaissance provided for them. In the words of Singh, they could not be looked upon as "static, allegorical figures or simply as agents of impending empire" (23) but were historical actors "caught up in the struggle for invention not representation of cultures" (29).

The analysis hitherto is focused on the questions of how and why the seventeenth century English traveller/writer responded to contemporary India and also how the narrative responses affected the Indian culture. The analysis yields the awareness that to many an Englishman who came to India in the seventeenth century, narratives provided a means to negotiate the Indian reality and, making use of certain inherited typologies they were able to invent an India that suited their ideological needs of the time. Regarding the ideological significance of such narratives it may be said that Indian culture was rendered as negative, fantastic and stereotypical and positioned in contrast with cultural categories familiar to the Englishman thereby underscoring European cultural supremacy. These travel writings, though it would be somewhat less than objective to designate them consciously imperial, had turned India into a property of the English imagination and, by that, set the ground for the establishment of cultural superiority and the later translation of it into profitable economic and political domination.

By way of concluding this part of the discussion it may be said that, whether invention or representation, narratives such as these shaped the nature of the cultural contacts for decades to come and also served to inscribe peculiar images of non-European cultures such as India and Africa. The invented images of India and Africa came to prevail through centuries working to the disadvantage of the peoples of these places at various stages of domination by the European powers. The stereotypical India that emerged through these travel writings became, in a way, the most authentic and singular version of seventeenth century India. So many European accounts emphasized the same point of view and thus created a semblance of authenticity. The credibility of such narratives is rather very high in a cultural atmosphere where a counter narrative, even a counter suggestion for that matter, looked simply and wholly impossible.

The Englishmen of the seventeenth century described contemporary India in terms of the spectacular and made it a property of the English imagination. The people associated with the East India Company in India in the eighteenth century set themselves to grapple imaginatively with certain concerns that dogged them since the takeover of Bengal. The conquest marked a point of time in history when the East India Company gained an edge over other mercantile forces operating in the Indian subcontinent. The takeover of Bengal was actually the beginning of a new and dominating kind of relationship between India and Britain and this crucial involvement of Britain in India manifests in the retelling of a story narrated earlier by Sir Thomas Roe. A brief recounting of the manipulation of Roe's story wouldn't be out of

place here, as it not only provides a point of entry to the discussion of the English imaginative involvement with India in the eighteenth century but also reveals the ways in which narratives were appropriated subsequently to serve colonial interests. Roe's story, given as a warning to English diplomats, concerns the misunderstanding that he thought Emperor Jahangir had when presented with a painting in which Venus, a woman in white complexion was holding a naked satyr, dark in complexion, by the nose. In Roe's version, it is not the Emperor but he himself who reads racial dominance into the paining. He even suggests that the European derision of Asians is a wilful misinterpretation, an instance of jealousy and trick of the king and his people. This was not the case with the retelling, reproduced below from Teltscher, done almost a hundred years after Roe actually wrote it:

> It happened there was among the presents, a picture of Venus leading a satyr by the nose. The Mogul when he saw this, shewed it to his courtiers, and bid them remark the action of the woman, the blackness of the Satyr's skin, and other particulars, giving them to understand, he considered it as a reflection on the people of Asia, whom he supposed to be represented by the Satyr, as being of their complexion; and the Venus leading him by the nose, denoted the great power the woman in that country have over the men. (quoted in Teltscher 110)

In the retold version by Cambridge, Roe doesn't figure at all. The Emperor is made to speak about the painting and he obviously seems to accept the painting as one symbolizing the subordination of Asian men to women. The revised version, most significantly, omits all mention of European dominance that was the central point in Roe's rendering. Teltscher argues that these significant

changes made to the original story, whether a result of conscious manipulation or not, provide clues to both the change in the historical relationship between the two countries within a hundred years and the ideological compulsions behind it:

> At the time that Cambridge is writing, East India Company forces controlled Bengal. Roe's words of diplomatic caution, that the emperor might be offended by the image of an Asian satyr 'led ...Captive' by a European Venus are, by 1761, politically irrelevant: Clive had already thwarted an attempt by the Mughal heir-apparent to reassert his rights. Cambridge has, consciously or otherwise, revised the narrative in the light of the contemporary military and political events. During this period British dominion is becoming a reality and ... writers such as Cambridge are involved in the project to explain and justify that role. (110)

The conquest of Bengal and the establishment of direct company rule in the region called for some justification and, as Teltscher rightly comments, writers like Cambridge must have been involved in the project to explain and justify that role. The involvement of the British Orientalists in this regard is far more crucial. These scholars associated with the East India Company initiated the study of India's culture, history, languages and society after the British takeover of Bengal. Romila Thapar while considering the question of history writing in relation to modern India describes the turn that the English imagination took following the possession of Bengal:

> Thus nationalism in Europe had led in the eighteenth century to a new look at the European past. It was not however in that spirit that who settled and colonized Asia and Africa, sought familiarity with the

> history of these regions. With the transformation of trading connections into colonial relations, the need to know the history of the colonies was based not merely on an intellectual curiosity but also on the exigencies of administration. If the norms, traditions and behaviour patterns of a colony were to be understood, then research into the history of the colony would have to be carried out. (3-4)

The objectivity of Thapar's observation given above originates from the understanding that intellectual curiosity was as much a factor as administrative exigencies in the Orientalist interpretations of the Indian past and tradition. Administrative exigencies of the Company, to state the obvious, made the then Governor General, Warren Hastings, to think of some important steps that would make the direct rule a success. John Keay maintains that Hastings "conceived the novel and momentous idea of doing so (ruling) with their (native) approbation" (23). In order to realize this ambitious scheme, Hastings did not hesitate to strike a cultural attitude extremely different from the one followed till then by the company authorities. A good account of the oppositional attitude to Indian culture and the shift that Hastings brought about is available in Keay for perusal:

> Little was understood of their (Indian) customs, whether Hindu or Muslim, and few thought much of their character. 'As degenerate, crafty, wicked and superstitious a people as any race in the known world,' thought a contemporary, adding, 'if not more so'. Hastings differed. He spoke Urdu, Bengali and some Persian; he could understand them and in turn respected them. If British rule in India must prosper and last, British administrators must themselves become

> partly indianized. They must learn the languages; study the customs. (23)

The shift in favor of Indian culture that Hastings wanted to bring about, he did in an exemplary way. David Kopf's noteworthy account describes how Hastings launched his dream project:

> Hastings solved the problem of language training by developing a coterie of selected aides whom he personally inspired with a love for Asian literature. He turned to the younger men recently arrived in India. Among the earliest were Charles Wilkins, who came to Bengal in 1770, and Nathaniel Halhed and Jonathan Duncan, who both began their tour of duty in 1772. William Jones, the most famous of the Orientalists, did not arrive a decade later, in 1783. (18 -19)

This change in the cultural attitude that Hastings effected was indeed an ideological move. Keay uncovers the logic behind such a sudden shift in the attitude:

> Sanskrit is the sacred language of the Hindus. Its origins were then unknown and, it was as dead as ancient Greek. But it was the medium in which the earliest religious compositions of the Aryan settlers in India had been expressed; and in the jealous possession of the priestly Brahmin caste, it had been preserved and augmented for centuries. It thus seemed to be the key to the discovery of ancient India: Whatever there might be of literary, historical and scientific merit in the pre-Islamic culture of India was composed in Sanskrit or one of its later derivations. (24)

The insight of Hastings that the mastery of Indian languages, Sanskrit in particular, is the key to the discovery of ancient India was proved true by Charles Wilkins, Halhed and Jones, to name a few Orientalists who among others did pioneering work in interpreting pristine Indian culture. Rosane Rocher sums up their

concerted literary effort and throws light on their cultural background thus:

> Many of the early aficionados of Indian culture, Halhed, Jones and Hastings among others had had a classical education. They knew from the accounts of India given in the Greek and Latin classics, of the existence in ancient times of what the Greeks called gymnosophists or naked philosophers. They knew that Indian culture had a long and distinguished tradition...Among the texts that first became accessible to them, because several existed in Persian translations, were *Puranas*, the reputed repositories of India's ancient lore. So popular were they that Hastings commissioned a compendium of them, the *Puranarthaprakasa,* which Jones called a treasure and of which Halhed prepared a translation. (225)

Besides the ones mentioned above, another ancient Indian text also captured the imagination of these pioneers of Indology in a significant way. It was the *Bhagavad-Gita,* the first text translated directly from Sanskrit into English, unlike several others which came to English through Persian. Keay's comments on this seminal work are worth mentioning here:

> All we know about Wilkins's pioneering efforts in Sanskrit is that by the time Jones arrived on the scene he had almost completed the first translation of a Sanskrit work into English. He had chosen the *Bhagavad Gita*, a long extract from that longest of epics, the *Mahabharatha.* The Gita was the best loved devotional work in India and its publication was to cause a sensation. But first Wilkins sent the work to his patron, Warren Hastings. (25)

When Warren Hastings read Wilkins's draft translation of the *Gita,* he was so impressed by the philosophy articulated in it that he bestowed on the work the greatest praise:

> I hesitate not to pronounce the *Gita* a performance of originality, of a sublimity of conception, reasoning and diction almost unequalled; and a single exception, amongst all the known religions of mankind, of a theology accurately corresponding with that of the Christian disposition, and most powerfully illustrating its fundamental doctrines... I should not fear to place, in opposition to the best French versions of the most admired passages of the Iliad, Odyssey or of the first and sixth books of our own Milton... the English translation of the *Mahabharatha*. (quoted in Keay 25)

Warren Hastings's response to the *Gita* was not confined to offering a few sentences of high praise. Though this text was not translated as part of a governmental project, Hastings was quick to see that it would serve specific political and ideological requirements of the British rulers in India and he spared no effort in promoting it. Rocher observes:

> As soon as Hastings read Wilkins's draft translation, he realized that it was an ideal propaganda tool in his battle with home administration for an orientalist form of government. The Code, which had been his first documentary proof of the high level Indian civilization had reached, had been an imperfect tool, in that it contained a number of provisions that were bound to be adversely received. No one, however, could fail to be impressed by the lofty message of the *Gita*. Thus Hastings took the extraordinary step of forwarding to England, for publication under the direct sponsorship of the East India Company, a document that had no possible application in any branch of government. (228)

Hastings's chief motive in sending the cultural document that, in his opinion, illustrated the glory of the Indian past for publication was to mobilize the support of the British public in his battle with the home administration "for an orientalist form of government" in

India (Rocher 228). Hastings could however create an awareness of the worth of Indian tradition and culture among the people at home but his advertising campaign on behalf of Indian culture, which amounted to "the selective approval of representative texts in the Indian tradition", did definitely entail what Rocher calls "the more insidious consequences of colonialism"(242). The privileging of some selected ancient texts such as the *Gita* and the philosophy of Vedanta by the British had in fact helped validate an attitude that marked ancient India as an ideal world and contemporary (that is, immediately precolonial and eighteenth century) India as a grossly corrupted version of it. Rocher mentions one specific response inspired by a reading of Charles Wilkins's translation of *Gita* and it bears testimony to this general attitude among Englishmen in India and at home:

> Reading Wilkins's manuscript translation in Banaras – a city the scenes of which have been particularly hard on European sensibilities – his fellow orientalist Halhed was prompted to voice an exemplary description of the orientalists' divided judgment of Hinduism arrayed on either side of a temporal divide: in the hallowed past, the sublime, pristine, deist Hinduism of the *Bhagavatgita* and the *Upanisads*, and now, in this cursed age, the corrupt, debased, and polytheistic practices they found repulsive. He did so in deist terms and in the vocabulary of the Enlightenment. (226)

Some of the puranic Indian texts that the Orientalists selectively approved and privileged chiefly featured a worldview that validated both the division of Indian civilization into stages of disintegration and the contrastive juxtaposition of traditional and contemporary

India as in the practice of Halhed and other Orientalists. Rocher makes this point in a telling way:

> They featured prominently a theory of the ages of the world, familiar on a lower scale and hence legitimated by ancient Greek lore, which posited the existence of a golden age (krta or satya-yuga) in a remote antiquity, and a gradual deterioration through later ages, till the present age (kali-yuga), of utmost depravity. (226)

Such an indigenous interpretive framework that divided India's history into stages of disintegration beginning with a golden age and corresponding well with the notion of European enlightenment must have been particularly inviting to the Orientalists who were definitely facing the predicament of justifying the Company rule. This framework could not only accommodate the Company rule but also justify and valorize it as a means to take India back to the glory of ancient times. Not surprisingly, as Rocher points out, the Orientalists began to confidently argue that "a renaissance, a return to pristine sources, could be stimulated from within the culture"(229).

In the express view of Teltscher, this position, somewhat well defined, was characteristic of even Jones whose name "functioned—and continues to function—as a reassuring vindication of British rule in India" (92). Most of Jones's literary works display a remarkable sensitivity towards Indian culture. But the most striking aspect of his sensitivity is that it chose to muffle the notes of cultural dissonance and sanitize whatever that offended the European convention in the process of making Indian culture available to his target reader. As Teltscher points out, in his famous rendering of the Kalidasa text Jones bypasses the

Indian dramatist's frequent mentions of Sakuntala's hips with an acceptable and rather harmless phrase 'elegant limbs' on one occasion and on another, by relocating them as graceful arms. Similarly drooping breasts in Kalidasa becomes drooping neck in Jones's version and a reference to tapering thighs meets with complete omission in the transcreation (214). Another major departure made from the source text concerns the breaking into sweat by the love-lorn Sakuntala. Jones's act of prim and proleptically Victorian censorship is undoubtedly an instance, which reveals the politics of colonial translation that involves the erasing of the cultural specifics. Susan Bassnet and others try to explain why Jones prevents the heroine from breaking into sweat. Such departures from the original in colonial translation, Bassnet suggests, are due to the lack of awareness of the subtle cultural differences on the one hand and the eagerness to go by the conventions of western aesthetic on the other. She shows that in spite of his first hand experience of the warmer climate of Culcutta he stops the heroine from breaking into sweat in violation of the source text:

> Having lived in Culcutta as a judge of the Supreme Court there since 1783 he could not but have noticed that the climate was appreciably warmer, but he still felt obliged to mitigate this essential bodily function in the interests of his western notion of the aesthetic. He would not have known, with the *Kama Sutra* yet to be 'discovered' and translated, that to sweat was traditionally known and appreciated in India also as a visible symptom of sexual interest and arousal (in contrast with England, where one sweats when one is 'hot, ill, afraid or working very hard'), nor could he have taken recourse to the English euphemism,

which probably was invented later, that while horses sweat and men perspire, women glow. (7)

It is also interesting to study how Jones transforms a certain incident in the *Mahabharata* into the mock-heroic "The Enchanted Fruit; or the Hindu Wife." Jones came to know about an incident in Draupadi's life from a letter by the Jesuit Pere Bouchet. To the priest the incident of Draupadi's revealing of a secret desire was a solid proof for the practice of confession among the Hindus, and so, a confirmation of the fact that they too were once as enlightened as the Christians. What was only the confession of a sinful thought to the Jesuit missionary is transformed by Jones into an admission that she, while reading the Vedas together, inspired the physical advance of a Brahman and let him kiss her cheeks (Teltscher 216). This admission provokes wild stares among her four other husbands while in 'Erjun' it evokes a wrathful glance. When the enchanted fruit rose to rejoin its native branch to manifest the truth of her admission the Sage enters and entertains the princely guests. At this point the received part of the story ends but the poem does not. The poem then proceeds into what can be called an extrapolation that is manifestly colonial:

Could you, ye Fair, like this black wife,
Restore us to primeval life,
And bid the apple, pluck'd for Eve
By him, who might all wives deceive,
Hang from its parent bough once more
Divine and perfect, as before,
Would you confess your little faults? (3: 230)

Jones here addresses his female readers and exhorts them to emulate the black wife. Teltscher notes that Jones inverts his Jesuit source's Christian justification of the Hindu tradition and makes Draupadi redeem Eve (217). In this juxtaposition of the black ('Indian dames of sooty hue' is another phrase that Jones employs) and the Fair there is an implied slur on the English female integrity. That is, the primacy of his culture is lost for a moment, but only for a moment, for he reestablishes it in the next stanza, as Teltscher asserts, by the impressive and daunting presentation of the awesome "martial figure of Brittania striding straight out of the Faerie Queene" and vanquishing the monster who cast aspersions on her female compatriots (218). Jones sings the finale to this encounter by bestowing on Brittania the authority to "reign at will...in British, or in Indian, air" (232). These lines voiced unambiguously in tune with the British imperial ethos in the making deserve special attention. The ideological stance that Jones maintains here proves beyond doubt that though he keeps on slipping between the Indian and European traditions, he is not for a moment willing to see the primacy of European culture and superiority under challenge but is boundlessly magnanimous, on the other hand, in offering India to British dominance. Jones utters these lines with a gay abandon and overflowing enthusiasm that is apparent. The text also, in its print version, partakes of and displays this eloquence in its italicized emphasis and undermines the initial Indian thrust of the poem. That is, the poem ultimately turns out to be one that visualizes the primacy and mastery of the English over India. Another poem that underscores the inevitable superiority and hence the redeeming role of the British intervention

in India is Jones's hymn to Lakshmi. It ends with a picture of the priest-ridden Hinduism that the British will undermine to rescue India. Javed Majeed has the following comment to offer about this attitude of Jones:

> Jones seems to be hinting here at some sort of project to redeem India, and so looks forward to what has been called 'the liberal commitment to India's emancipation'. In a letter of 1786, he also claims that the Indians 'are happier under us than they were or could have been under the Sultans of Delhi or petty Rajas. Nonetheless, he still makes plea for the Indians to be governed according to their own laws. (23)

Majeed's comment lays bare the fact that even Jones, who had often been projected as a saint among scholars, had no hesitation in endorsing the view that India needed British intervention and Indians were happily putting up with the British domination. This attitude definitely shows that the Orientalists such as Jones had been markedly influenced by the Renaissance tropes of discovery and wonder. A passage in which Keay celebrates the superb feat of Jones's memory in fact also reveals how his faculty had been significantly shaped and oriented by the Renaissance tropes of discovery and reform as embodied in *The Tempest*, one of the earliest allegories of imperial conquest and appropriation:

> Greek and Latin literature were his passions; he modelled his letters on Cicero, his speeches on Demosthenes, and spattered both with classical allusions. At Oxford he turned to modern languages and then Persian and Arabic. His first published works were typical: a Persian grammar and a translation from Persian to French. He was also a much acclaimed poet, was intensely interested in music, and had the bottomless memory so vital to any polymath; aged eleven, it is said, he

> amazed his school fellows by supplying them with the entire text of *The Tempest* out of his head. (20)

Jones and most of the Orientalists like him therefore fell in love with the ancient India that they invented and to which they intellectually belonged but they looked down upon the contemporary India with an equal passion. Their idealization of ancient India was always strongly punctuated with disparaging remarks on the immediate present. The wonder that emanates from the following remark by Jones on his discovery of the glory of ancient Hindu culture is visibly accentuated by his supposition of its present decadence: "how degenerate and abased so ever the Hindus may now appear, [it was certain] that in some early age they were splendid in arts and arms, happy in government, wise in legislation, and eminent in ... knowledge" (quoted in Kopf 39). This was necessitated by the fact that their presence in India and takeover of Bengal could be justified by such a stance only. The point to be made clear is that though some of the cultural activities of the Orientalists did not stem from administrative concerns, even cultural productions that resulted from non-governmental concerns were not free from the effort to project India as fallen from a glorious past, steeped in medieval darkness and waiting for the inevitable British intervention and its successful continuance.

That the Orientalists belong in a peculiar way both to Indian culture (as the first enthusiastic and appreciative English interpreters of ancient Indian culture) and to that culture which was seeking ways to dominate India (as more or less facilitators, inadvertently sometimes,) make it really difficult either to brand them as confirmed imperialists or to view them as disinterested and

apolitical scholars. Singh describes the space they occupy within the spectrum of European discourse on India as one that is marked by "the dissonant relationship between administrative and academic, or disciplinary, aspects of Orientalism." The dissonance and the schism in the Orientalist discourse of the time brought in a "pervasive instability in British colonial discourse in the eighteenth century" (71). This schism in the discourse of Orientalism, according to Rocher, points to the fact that "knowledge and governmental objectives were often, but not always, related and their relationship was not unidirectional" (240-41). Rocher supports his observation citing Bruce King's words that

> with a totalizing theoretical discourse of superstructures, representational systems, mediation and methodological attitudes, everything is bound to become incriminating evidence of complicity and hegemonic activity if you assume it is. (240)

The instability and schism revealed, in Singh's view,

> not so much the confusion or the insufficiencies in attitudes of the individual civil servants serving in India, but rather, the confusions about Britain's changing role in India, with all its attendant moral and social dilemmas. (71)

She looks at the coming and activities of enlightened civil servants like Jones as "necessary ideological adjustments" and "self-corrective" measures administered by colonialism "whereby the British public could justify colonial rule, without directly confronting the social and economic displacements caused by the influx of colonial/mercantile capital into Britain" (71).

The persuasive arguments of Rocher and Singh reveal the fact that Orientalist discourse is a very complex territory. According to

the former, Orientalist discourse should not be disposed of by "sweeping and passionate indictment" of the Saidian kind "as part and parcel of an imperialist subjugating enterprise" (215). Singh, on the other hand, equally persuasively suggests that in spite of cracks in the Orientalist discourse there is as the binding factor "a vision of the eighteenth century India as the decadent and fallen east in need of western civilization" (72). The complexity of the Orientalist discourse warrants disagreements and disputes but this should not prevent one from overlooking the thrust of the whole discourse. Accepting Rocher's objection to reductive reading and his precautionary remarks about the attendant defect of neglecting the conflict between the intellectual and governmental concerns, one should, however, agree with the finding of Singh that:

> Acquiring historical and linguistic knowledge of India's classical past was not simply a disciplinary activity, but also an administrative imperative of colonial rulers mapping and securing a new political and cultural terrain. (Singh 70)

The analysis of the Orientalist discourse shows that the Orientalists secured entry to the closely guarded and until then remote territory of Indian culture and constructed it as an object of Western Knowledge. This opening up of a cultural terrain that was until then unknown to the English imagination in a way served various ideological functions. The most important of these functions was that it helped to justify the British rule. The new cultural discoveries were employed not only to validate British intervention and presence but also to articulate possibilities of its expansion and permanence with Indian concurrence. Cultural artifacts and strategies were employed to create the impression that

a return to the glorious past could be initiated under British governance. When interpreted in the vocabularies of the Enlightenment, the ancient Indian culture appeared glorious in comparison to the contemporary state of it which according to most of the Orientalists was one steeped in medieval darkness and infested with detestable superstitions. That is, the Orientalist cultural gestures glorified, perhaps unintentionally, the Indian past in comparison to its contemporary condition and in consequence the latter looked detestable and begging for reform. This to a certain extent created a congenial atmosphere for the smooth operation of the Utilitarian spokesmen like James Mill as well as the vociferous Anglicists. That is, the Utilitarians as well as Anglicists validated their agenda of cultural conquest of India on the strength of the Orientalist depiction of contemporary India as degenerate. Thus the Orientalists who never advocated cultural subordination facilitated the Utilitarian and Anglicist cultural conquest on a significant scale. In short, the Orientalist idealization of the ancient Indian culture by negatively constructing the immediate present became a very convenient base for both the Utilitarians and the Anglicists to launch their rhetoric. So, this idealization also, like all idealizations of the native (savage), as Spurr comments, "simply constitutes one more use that can be made of the savage in the realm of Western cultural production" (128).

The discovery and the opening up of this new cultural territory created unforeseen responses in England in the nineteenth century The most prominent and of far-reaching consequence was the response of James Mill, one of the most

influential Utilitarian ideologues, in the second decade of that century. He began appropriating Orientalism by emphasizing the Orientalist notion of eighteenth century India but rejecting, for the lack of historical authenticity, the Orientalist conception of the glorious Indian past. The smooth continuity and transition from Orientalist discourse to the Utilitarian one regarding this aspect is brought to light by K.N. Panikkar:

> That the eighteenth century was a 'dark age' for India has been a view held by several European administrator historians and contemporary observers, by Henry Beveridge, James Mill and John Marshman among others. The precolonial political anarchy, intellectual stagnation and cultural backwardness in contrast to the 'progress' under British benevolence, were to some an explanation and to others a justification for the conquest of India. (34)

Though Mill subscribed to the Orientalist view that eighteenth century India was in darkness, his attitude to ancient Indian culture was outrageously oppositional and challenging. He intervened in the debate on Indian condition attacking the Orientalist and Romanticist glorification of Indian culture. Naming Mill as one of the influential voices that spoke in opposite tones about Indian culture, J.J.Clarke identifies not only the different factors that contributed to the drastic change of attitude that came about after Orientalist and Romanticist engagement with Indian culture but also the major narrative that inaugurated such a polemic:

> This change of attitude could be ascribed to a number of factors, including the decline of Romantic metaphysical enthusiasms and the countervailing rise of positivist and materialist philosophies, along with

> the growing ascendancy of the idea of progress. It undoubtedly reflects as well the steady growth of European political and commercial ascendancy over the Orient: the waning of interest in Hindu philosophy and the rise of anti-Indian sentiment was, not surprisingly, most evident in Britain which became the dominant colonial power in South Asia in that period. The negative tone was set early on in the century by James Mill in his *History of British India* (1817), a work which offered a highly critical account of Indian religion and culture, proclaiming that 'there is a universal agreement respecting the meanness, the absurdity, the folly of the endless ceremonies, in which the practical part of Hindu religion consists.' (72)

Mill's hegemonic work, in the words of Susie Tharu and K. Lalita, appropriated earlier Orientalism by telling a "three volume story of Indian civilization" (48). It was, as Ronald Inden rightly points out, a model explanatory text of Utilitarian reductionism, pre-Darwinian evolutionism and a prime example of imperial knowledge (45). Not very surprisingly therefore Mill's language was aggressive, objectionable and outrightly Euro-biased when he wrote off Indian culture as rude, primitive, immoral and miserably wanting in reason. In Mill's description, Indian imagination was wild and ungoverned and "the inhabitants of Hindustan ranked much lower in the scale of civilization than the nations of Europe"(24-32). He challenged the early Orientalists, especially Jones, in refutation of whose ideas he wrote the major part of *The History of British India* (Inden 45). In his work Mill challenged the Orientalists by asserting that the cultural documents on which they based their findings were themselves not beyond suspicion:

> It is a most suspicious circumstance, in the pretended records of a nation, when we find positive statements for a regular and immense series of years, in the remote abyss of time, but are entirely deserted by them when we descend to the ages more nearly approaching our own... After Vikramaditya who is said to have extended widely his conquests and dominion even fiction is silent. We hear no more of the Hindus and their transactions, till the era of Mohammedan conquest. (26)

The ancient Indian documents, as far as Mill was concerned, hardly came within his conception of what was historical. He voices his doubt about the genuineness of the available ancient documents on the ground that none of such documents were available for the period from Vikramaditya to the era of Mohammedan conquest. Building up his arguments in this way in the vocabularies of Enlightenment rationality Mill could most convincingly conclude that the "wildness and inconsistency of the Hindu statements evidently place them beyond the sober limits of truth and history" (27). Mill's branding of ancient Indian documents as sites of irrationality was, in David Ludden's view, a result of his awareness that "the study of history and law were founded on rational philosophical principles" (264) and his major intention in taking up such a study was to bring India and Britain to the template of universal rationality where, as Javed Majeed argues, "Britain and India could be criticized and reformed" (212). But Ranajit Guha finds nothing "there in the logic of that work which requires the insertion of the denunciatory chapters on Hinduism" (286). He calls it a "massive digression" and argues that it serves the avowedly didactic purpose announced by Mill at the outset. That

is, to create a tabula rasa which he needed to inscribe his "principles of legislation." Guha observes:

> Yet, in the second decade of the nineteenth century, he could no longer hope to proceed, like his precursor of fifty years ago (Pattullo), on the innocent assumption that Indian reform was simply a matter of filling an Eastern void by 'important experiments' of Western invention. It was imperative, therefore, for Utilitarian discourse to create a void, since none was given. Accordingly, the author's textual strategy required that the ancient indigenous culture of the colonized should be demolished on intellectual and moral ground, so that he could then go on to posit his own system into that vacancy. (288)

From the template of Euro-centered rationality that Mill put India and Britain for critique and reform, Indian culture emerged as inferior. The ancient Hindu cultural documents that the Orientalists and the Romanticists discovered and interpreted as records of a once glorious civilization instantly became in Mill markers of a low stage of society:

> Figurative and inflated style which has been supposed to be mark of oriental composition, and is, in reality, a mark of only a low stage of society uniformly discovered in the language of a rude people: Asians, Arabians and other Eastern nations. (371)

His demolition of the Orientalist glorification of the Indian civilization crosses the limits of all civil, political and cultural justice when he advances the argument that subjugation served to bring about cultural and civilizational progress in some parts of India:

> Those, who affirms the high state of civilization among the Hindus previous to their subjugation to foreigners do so lucidly in opposition to

> evidence, wherever the Hindus have been always exempt from the dominion of the foreigners, there they are uniformly in a state of civilization inferior to those who have long been the subjects of Mahomedan throne. (478)

Such statements that Mill and other Utilitarian spokesmen of the times made, whether in response to the early Orientalism or, as Majeed argues, in their effort to fashion the new political language of Utilitarianism (222), assumed scientific tones and validity and it was really fatal in a political atmosphere of incipient imperialism. It is evident from Mill's observations on India that he initiated the project of repositioning India in contradistinction to Europe. When Mill juxtaposed India as Europe's other, he was reformulating Orientalism into what Said calls a "dominating framework" (*Orientalism* 40). His demolition in this context becomes, as Guha asserts, "an act of spiritual violence" that "amounts to robbing people of their past which is one of the principal means of their self-identification" (288). Mill's painstaking interrogation of the different aspects of Indian culture and his use of the assumptions and logic of the upper class British commonsense of his times in great detail served well not only in the construction of a coherently specular model of India which, in Susie Tharu's words, "reaffirmed the primacy of the world that Mill shared with his readers" (2: 48) but also in the propagation of the same with a stamp of scientific authority. Because of all this, Mill's *History of British India* appealed to the modern English imagination. The text was a sort of companion to almost every Englishman on his trip to India. Thornton testifies to the influence of this work on the English travellers to the East. According to him this

> six-volume bible which every aspiring Company cadet took with him on his first ship out, describes the natives of India, and the Chinese for good measure, as dissembling, treacherous, mendacious, cowardly, unfeeling, conceited, and unclean, the victims of despotism and witchcraft. (172)

Such coherently designed narratives as the one by James Mill had tremendously influenced the English imagination and shaped it to see the people of the East as its derogatory "other." Ranajit Guha describes how these narratives constructed the subjectivities of these cultures by defining them in opposition to European cultures:

> It investigated, recorded and wrote up the Indian past in a vast corpus which, worked by many hands during the seventy years between Mill's *History of India* (1812) and Hunter's *Indian Empire* (1881) came to constitute a new kind of knowledge... Indian history assimilated to the history of Great Britain would henceforth be used as a comprehensive measure of difference of the peoples of these countries. Politically the difference was spelt out as one between the rulers and the ruled, ethnically between a white Herrenvolk and blacks, materially between a prosperous western power and its poor Asian subjects, culturally between higher and lower levels of civilization, between the superior religion of Christianity and the indigenous belief systems made up of superstition and barbarism- all adding up to an irreconcilable difference between the colonizer and the colonized. (211-212)

Ludden observes that in the seventy years that Guha marks out as a decisive period in the construction of the binary opposites, "shipments of colonial knowledge back to Britain were continuously reconstituted and reauthorized by European political discourse"(264). The availability of empirical data and factualized statements about India along with befitting venues such as the

Parliament, the Universities and the media to disseminate and reproduce the knowledge of the orient in fact decided the further course of Orientalism as a body of knowledge. David Ludden provides remarkable insight into the process in which Orientalism was shaped further by forces having little to do with India:

> Orientalism became a versatile component of political discourse in Europe, as political disputes about India in relation to Britain shaped understandings of both India and Europe. Jones and Mill informed Hegel's study of India. Parliamentary evidence for the Company charter renewal and news dispatches from India informed Marx's reports for the *New York Tribune* and his sketch for an Asiatic mode of production. Weber's later work drew on a huge body of orientalist scholarship. (265)

In the practice of Hegel, Marx and Weber in whose legacy modern social sciences were developing, Orientalism, especially Mill's version of it, lost its specific and original moorings and evolved into a dominating framework of universal applicability. In other words, Orientalism got integrated theoretically into the modern discourse through the significant philosophical discourses of these prominent ideologues of modernity and it became, as Ludden points out, "the template for knowing an oriental other in contradistinction to European capitalism, rationality, historicity, modernity and powers of self-transformation" (265).

The transformation of Orientalism described above corresponds to the changing discursive needs of imperialism as it advanced and took possession of the African territories in the latter half of the nineteenth century. The analytical categories and the dominating frameworks provided by the Indian experience of

European modernity had in fact been "universalized" for the systematic intellectual subordination of other cultures including the African culture. It is possible to locate in the formation and development of modern discourses this process of psuedo-universalization of analytic categories and dominating frameworks evolved from Orientalism according to the changing needs of imperialism. Edward Said emphasizes this point when he observes that modern disciplines like colonial economics, anthropology, history and sociology were built on certain basic assumptions:

> Statements like 'The Hindu is inherently untruthful and lacks moral courage' were expressions of wisdom from which very few, least of all the governors of Bengal, dissented; similarly, when a historian of India, such as Sir H.M.Elliot, planned his work, central to it was the notion of Indian barbarity. Climate and geography dictated certain character traits in the Indian; Orientals according to Lord Cromer, one of their most redoubtable rulers, could not learn to walk on pavements, could not tell the truth, could not use logic; the Malaysian native was essentially lazy, just as the north European was essentially energetic and resourceful. (*Culture* 182)

The integration of this kind of alterity that has an irreversible Eurobias into the functional and analytical categories has really put constraints on the much-proclaimed universality of modern discourses. That is, though theoretically projected as universal, modern discourses in actual practice maintained a parochiality that served imperial interests. The informed parochiality of modern discourses betrays its presence as the Eurocentric logic that both justifies the conquest of non-European peoples and prescribes European domination over them as the only means of progress.

Ludden uses the examples of three prominent figures in whose legacy social sciences evolved and flourished to substantiate this:

> Beginning with Hegel, Europe's dynamism and historicity expressed Europe's primacy as a force in world history and India's at best secondary stature. For Marx and Weber, capitalism revealed and contextualized India's stagnant backwardness, which they explained using facts about traditional village economy, despotic governance, religiously based social life, and sacred caste divisions. The facts behind their theoretical formulations about India were not questioned. Established as facts by colonial knowledge and by their conventional authority in European political discourse, they were there as truths for theorists to use in making sense of the world. (265)

Until the nineteenth century, many of the imaginings and notions about the East, such as the concept of Oriental Despotism remained, as Romila Thapar points out, "vague in its application and ambiguous in its definition." Thapar's comment on the formalization of this concept is worth recalling for its precise perception of what really happened:

> He [Marx] projected a static society of village communities totally subject to the king. Others writing on the village community had mitigated the evils by suggesting that these communities enjoyed a degree of political autonomy. Certain notions of the village community emerged from the romanticism relating to early societies and it was seen as the initial phase in the evolution of society. But, as it has been recently said, Marx shifted the emphasis from political autonomy to economic autarchy. (12)

The tremendous intellectual activity spearheaded by the ideologues of modernity and centered upon the Knowledge of the Asian states, economies and polities, remarks Inden, was not simply a matter of

curiosity. Such knowledge was essential to accomplish the crucial task—"the removal of human agency from the autonomous Others of the East and placing it in the hands of the scholars and leaders of the West" (Inden 52). So it follows that modern discourses inherently valorized European culture as superior to those it dominated and wanted to dominate and in the process rationalized popular European notions of the non-European world, its peoples and cultures by the theoretical projection of alterity. Metcalf sees this alterity as the creation of doubleness that is an integral part of the Enlightenment project:

> [A]s Europeans constructed a sense of self for themselves apart from the old order of Christendom, they had of necessity to create a notion of an 'other' beyond the seas. To describe oneself as 'enlightened' meant that someone else had to be shown as 'savage' or 'vicious'. To describe oneself as 'modern', or as 'progressive', meant that those who were not included in that definition had to be described as 'primitive' or 'backward'. Such alterity, what one might call the creation of doubleness, was an integral part of the Enlightenment project. (6)

Metcalf suggests that the discourses and structures of modernity are inescapably Euro-centered as these deeply ideological structures evolved and developed in the process of "creating a notion of an other beyond the seas." The theorization of alterity involved the construction and naturalization of certain stereotypical images from which the once colonized non-European cultures long-suffered and are still suffering in the immediate context of late capitalism. What appears fundamental to modern European perception of other cultures and its self-perception is the fact that Europeans could not only conceptualize alterity but also

reconstitute successfully the ideological apparatuses that enabled the translation of the conceptual categories of artificial difference to the status of acceptable, manageable and seemingly true statements and images. All forms and fields of modern knowledge can be seen to have participated in the theorization of the imagined alterity and dissemination of the same as acceptable and seemingly true entities. For instance, even the social sciences in the practice of its scrupulous pioneers like Marx who theorized European progress and non-European backwardness ended up justifying imperial conquest, at least in a limited sense, by interpreting it as historically inevitable and so desirable. As discernible from the detailed discussions hitherto, on passing from the seventeenth century travel narratives to eighteenth century Orientalist constructions of India and then to Mill's polemic and the so called secularization of Orientalism in the nineteenth century by the chief ideologues of modernity, it becomes more and more difficult and even impossible to accept complacently that the advancement of science considerably destabilized European prejudices and misrepresentations of other cultures. In reality, as Ania Loomba illustrates using the case of the scientific discussions of race, advancement of science in a way provided all the paraphernalia to extend and develop racial prejudices into fixed and permanent conditions:

> [S]cientific discussions of race, rather than challenging earlier negative stereotypes of savagery, barbarism, and excessive sexuality, extended and developed these by attributing racial characteristics to biological differences such as skull and brain sizes, or facial angles, or genes, and by insisting on the connection between these factors and social and

> cultural attributes, science turned 'savagery' and 'civilization' into fixed and permanent conditions. (117)

The result of such a scientific validation of racist assumptions by social Darwinists was that imperial observations acquired an acceptability that can be described without exaggeration as unprecedented in the period between 1870 and 1920. It is the intellectual support of Euro-centered social and biological sciences that enabled Winston Churchill, a correspondent for the *Daily Telegraph* in 1897, to make a proposition, regarding an Indian tribe of the Northwest frontier, that is marked by racial arrogance and brutality:

> Their habits are filthy; their morals cannot be alluded to. With every feeling of respect for that wide sentiment of human sympathy which characterises a Christian civilization, I find it impossible to come to any other conclusion than that, in proportion as these valleys are purged from the pernicious vermin that infest them, so will the happiness of humanity will be increased, and the progress of mankind accelerated. (quoted in Spurr 82)

Awareness of Eurocentrism in modern disciplines in an atmosphere of sharply accentuated political consciousness of the non-European world has initiated studies to comprehend what constitutes Eurocentrism and how to overcome the Eurocentric heritage. As a result of this the inbuilt logic of Eurocentrism operating in the modern fields of knowledge has become visible to a certain extent. Social science has been said to be Eurocentric in its historiography, the parochiality of its universalism, its assumptions about (Western) civilization, its Orientalism, and in its attempt to impose the theory of progress.

If imperial ideology could operate so successfully in this manner even within the premises and structures of social and other variety of sciences which are usually projected as and generally believed to be committed without compromise to the real and the objective, it goes without saying that the same ideology would all the more easily and substantially have found expression through the imaginative and other prominently subjective modes of self-expression. For instance, we have seen how seventeenth century English travel writings blended fact and fiction, recirculated received notions of India and its culture and also provided new ways of promoting commercial interests and relationships. That is, travel writing functioned in the seventeenth century as a mode for describing the other in a peculiar way to valorize the European culture and to mark the areas for commercial exploitation in India and other colonies. In the century that followed, travel writing gradually evolved into a genre of seminal importance within the practice of evolving nationalism and colonial enterprise which evidently involved travel, exploration and migration of all kinds within and without the incipient and imagined national boundaries. It is about this period and in the context of European expeditions to other lands that the novel of adventure comes into being. The novels of adventure shared some features of travel narratives. The travel writings along with the novel of adventure dealing with Indian and African territories flourished during the whole of the nineteenth and the first few decades of the twentieth century. The close correspondence between the travel narrative and the novel of adventure in the new found worlds demands some attention. The association of the two

in the period that covers the second half of the nineteenth century and the first two decades of the twentieth century is so intimate that Sarah Cole finds the boundaries separating these two types of sensational explorative texts often blurred, as fictional narratives come laden with maps, tables, and layers of truth claims, while travel tales often utilize fictional tropes and stories to increase their popular appeal (253). In fact the close association that Cole locates between the travel narrative and the novel is visible at different points before and after the period that Cole mentions. In the eighteenth century, for instance, when the English novel was just emerging such an intimate correspondence is visible. It persuades one to believe that the English novel in its colonial beginnings partook of several significant aspects of the travel narrative. Harry Blamiers in his discussion of the origin of the English novel not only highlights this connection but even names a travel book as the precursor of the novel: Nashe's *The Unfortunate Traveller* (1594). The subtitle of this work is *The Life of Jack Wilton* and it introduces an autobiographical record of travel. Blamiers mentions this work as the precursor of Defoe's stories and of the picaresque novel (184). This is a significant suggestion because *Robinson Crusoe*, the first English novel, would easily pass for a travel narrative from which it is unidentifiable in many respects. Any way, the travel narrative and the novel were closely bound together in the mind of the Englishmen, as Green argues, ever since England started its conquest of other continents:

> . . . the adventure tales that formed the light reading of the Englishmen for two hundred years and more after Robinson Crusoe were, the energizing myth of English imperialism. They were, collectively, the

> story England told itself as it went to sleep at night; and, in the form of its dreams, they charged England's will with the energy to go out into the world and explore, conquer, and rule. (Green 3)

The prominent role and popularity of the travel narrative, a genre the Englishman employed to imaginatively possess the other and its culture in the centuries that witnessed the expansion of Europe into far and outlying geographical and cultural terrains, is an accepted fact. At the same time the more than matching and even tremendous advance made by the only other genre – the novel – over the same period cannot however be discounted. This growth of the English novel into a formidable ideological institution cannot be fully explained in isolation from the historical movements that modern Europe is known for: nationalism, colonialism and imperialism. This ideological relationship between the English novel and imperialism in the Indian and African context is explored in the coming chapter.

Africa, India and the Imperial Imagination

Muraleedharan. K.C “Fiction as Cultural Resistance: A Study of African and Indian Fiction of the Post-colonial Period ” Thesis. Department of English, University of Calicut, 2002

Chapter Two

Africa, India and the Imperial Imagination

The creative faculty of the British is remarkable for the fact that it sought to reorganize the longer form of the fictional narrative to articulate the national and imperial ambitions and experiences of their society. The novel of formal realism is so an ideologically reconstituted form. The formal characteristics of the novel are shaped by the social and political needs of the British middle classes within and beyond their home country. Within the home society the elite sought to establish its control over other social groups. Outside Britain, the chief ideological intention was to establish the dominance of the white male over other races. These processes were interrelated acts of social and political conquest and the novel as the cultural artefact of the middle classes mediated both the processes and grew into what Said calls a formidable social institution. The two ideological formations, nation and the empire, could not be realized without the support of a cultural apparatus. The novel turned into the highly amenable space the English imagination badly needed to authoritatively validate its self-perception as well as its perception of the Other. The British novel as it evolved became an institution that was unparalleled in many ways. Said illustrates this singularity of the British novel thus:

> It is not entirely coincidental that Britain also produced and sustained a novelistic institution with no European competitor or equivalent. France had more highly developed intellectual institutions – academies,

> universities, institutes, journals, and so on – for at least the first half of the nineteenth century, as a host of British intellectuals, including Arnold, Carlyle, Mill, and George Eliot, noted and lamented. But the extraordinary compensation for this discrepancy came in the steady rise and gradually undisputed dominance of the British novel. (*Culture* 84-85)

The observation that the British novel steadily and gradually attained undisputed dominance and more than compensated for the rather unenviable performance of Britain's other intellectual institutions throws light on the deeply ideological role of this form of the narrative since the eighteenth century. Though all forms of modernity can be said to have participated in the making of modern European identity, it is the romance and the novel or in a general sense the longer form of the fictional prose narrative that has fundamentally tied itself to the imagining of the nation. Said's assertion that the (English) "novel contributed significantly to" the imperial feelings, attitudes, and references and "became a main element in the consolidated vision, or departmental cultural view, of the globe" (88) pinpoints the fundamentally ideological role of the English novel. Said assumes that the novel could play a key role in the narration of the empire as well as the nation by providing considerable space for the sophisticated and aesthetic diffusion of the imperial knowledge. Rationalism being the intellectual shaping force of the nineteenth century, both the nation and the empire were looked upon as cultural concepts to be realized through narratives. Timothy Brennan is surely substantiating this aspect of the rise of the modern nation-state in Europe when he underscores the role of the imaginative literature in the whole process:

> The rise of the modern nation-state in Europe in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries is inseparable from the forms and subjects of imaginative literature. On the one hand, the political tasks of modern nationalism directed the course of literature, leading through the Romantic concepts of 'folk character' and 'national language' to the (largely illusory) divisions of literature into distinct 'national literatures'. On the other hand, and just as fundamentally, literature participated in the formation of nations through the creation of 'national print media'- the newspaper and the novel. (48)

Brennan observes that the rise of European nationalism coincides especially with one particular form of literature, the novel. That is, the novel helped forge the Englishman's self-identity as well as the English national identity. Both these identities were forged in terms of certain constructed differences between the English culture and the cultures of the peoples the Englishman came into contact with. Fundamental to these constructions is the notion of English superiority and non-European inferiority. That is, the English nationalist novels worked to establish cultural and political dominance by the construction, propagation and naturalization of certain imperial myths about other cultures. The eighteenth-century novel, according to Brennan, discards the ancient notion of levels of style and mixes the "high" and the "low" within a national framework thereby simulating a national constituency. This, in Brennan's view, was accomplished for "specific national reasons" including the reproduction of British nationalist and imperialist sentiments (52). For Brennan, the novel is "a naturally cosmopolitan form that empire has allowed to play a national role in an international arena" (56).

Peter Hulme is another writer who has pointed out the significance of colonial and imperial moorings of the British novel. In his convincing argument, *Robinson Crusoe*, the work that inaugurated the novel in Britain, is an eloquent allegory of colonialism in its beginnings. He marks Crusoe as the prototype of the British colonist who was really maneuvering towards a position of dominance in non-European territories at the time when the novel was being conceived, written, published and read. Both Brennan and Hulme problematize the realistic mode of narration and the attention to details that is evidently a characteristic of the realist novel tradition. Brennan seems to suggest that fictional realism caters to colonial as well as anti-colonial nationalisms. Hulme is of the view that realism especially in the early British fiction transforms colonialism and imperialism into something more palatable. Needless to say, both these writers behold the realist novel form and its contemporary usage as highly problematic on the ground of the novel's complicity in the aesthetic diffusion of imperial and colonial ideology for a long time.

Acknowledging the fact that he also derives pleasure from the admirable works of art and learning of European origin, Said successfully connects the English novels of the period "with the imperial process of which they were manifestly and unconcealedly a part" (*Culture* xv). He finds it significant that "the novel is inaugurated in England by *Robinson Crusoe*, a work whose protagonist is the founder of a new world, which he rules and reclaims for Christianity and England" (83). The great spaces of *Clarissa* or *Tom Jones*, according to Said, operate both as "a domestic accompaniment to the imperial project for presence and

control abroad and a practical narrative about expanding and moving about in space that must be actively inhabited and enjoyed before its discipline or limits can be accepted" (83-84).

Firdous Azim who researched the colonial rise of the English novel with special reference to feminist texts also substantiates the major arguments of Said, Brennan and Hulme. She identifies the novel as an imperialist project "based on the forceful eradication and obliteration of the Other" (37). In her study of the English feminist novelistic discourses Firdous Azim shows that they function by "deliberately ignoring other subject-positions" (37). "The very fact that the narrative voices were female," argues Azim, "has detracted critical attention from the imperialist and oppressive factors within the genre [i.e., novel]" (88). She finds that Bronte's fictional work *Jane Eyre* celebrated for its anti-patriarchal stance does function as an intrinsic tool of other, larger demands imposed by the discourses of imperialism and colonialism. Analyzing the African element of this feminist text she concludes that "the main theme running through Charlotte Bronte's juvenilia had been the establishment and consolidation of an English colony in West Africa" (147). Azim successfully reads back Bronte's *Jane Eyre* to demonstrate the ways in which English feminist fiction fails to extend itself to certain type of Otherness:

> Jane's protest at Rochester's comparison of herself with Turkish harem inmates, pointing to a hesitant and diffident recognition of the sexual oppression of all women and of the need for protest against such oppression, nonetheless places the educated Englishwoman in a position superior to her more unfortunate sisters, who are seen to need her

> guidance and to be infused with her recognition of their human status. (182)

What is stated in short is that the English novel right from its origin is inextricably tied to both nationalism and imperialism. It is an ideological formation that not only mediated the conquest of the English society by the dominant middle classes but also facilitated its own domination over far-lying non-European cultures like India and Africa. That is, the English novel is deeply inscribed with certain characteristics of race, class and ideology of the society it emerged from.

The characteristics that Brennan reads as particular to the novel and describes as enabling the mimicking of the structure of the nation undoubtedly illustrate certain ideological traits the novel assumed in the process of writing the nation:

> It was the *novel* that historically accompanied the rise of nations by objectifying the 'one, yet many' of national life, and by mimicking the structure of the nation, a clearly bordered jumble of languages and styles. Socially, the novel joined the newspaper as the major vehicle of the national print media, helping to standardize language, encourage literacy, and remove mutual incomprehensibility. But it did more than that. Its manner of presentation allowed people to imagine the special community that was the nation. (49)

But writing the nation in the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century English social and political context, as mentioned earlier, was unimaginable and practically impossible without making profitable references, consciously or otherwise, to what the Englishmen overseas were doing. So when the English novel took up the "condition-of-England" question by the second

half of the nineteenth century it manifestly dealt with the categories "home" and "abroad" in such a way that homeland was "surveyed, evaluated, made known, whereas abroad was only referred to or shown briefly without the kind of presence or immediacy lavished on London, the countryside, or northern industrial centers such as Manchester or Birmingham" (Said, *Culture* 85). If the derogatory marginalization of abroad and the idealized centralization of home are the two issues that make Said suspicious of these narratives of modernity, what provokes Terry Eagleton is their politics of exclusion:

> [T]he modernist work brackets off the referent or real historical world, thickens its textures and deranges its forms to forestall instant consumability, and draws its own language protectively around it to become a mysteriously autotelic object, free of all contaminating truck with the real. ("Capitalism" 96)

Eagleton's contention is that the esoteric narrative of modernism excluded the proletariat of England from its imaginative territory. Eagleton's suspicion of the modernist cultural forms would be most valid in the case of the novel, the most significant site of humanism. This inevitably shows that the novel is equally problematic in the national context and, also, by implication, substantiates Said's evaluation of the English novel and its imperial moorings. The structural peculiarities that enabled the novel to imagine the nation and the empire strategically marginalizing certain categories and/or misrepresenting them, the considerable influence this form had in terms of readership and, most importantly, the claim that it is reality itself in concrete and only accessible form —all these undoubtedly provoke an

interrogative study of its role in the context of the English conquest of India and Africa. Also, as a means of mediating reality where certain aspects of the social science such as universality and historiographic style of narration are once considered fundamental and inherent, the English novel may be one discursive form that needs to be analyzed in particular. Being an institutionalized field of knowledge and in practice a surrogate to other fields of knowledge, the interdisciplinary character of the English novel calls for interrogative and critical attention more than any single and relatively independent discipline. Paying such attention would not only be useful but essential also. It is useful in the sense that it would help explain the ideological rise of postcolonial fiction in India and Africa in opposition to the European fictional discourse. It is essential because without a prefatory account of English novelistic discourse it is hardly possible to chart and establish the historicity and primary orientation of the early Indian and African novelistic discourse as a socially symbolic response to imperialism. Moreover, the English novel mixes fact and fiction not in the same manner and not for the same purpose that the postcolonial Indian and African novel does it. So a prefatory account will invariably show how fiction was deployed to construct and valorize derogatory images of India and Africa and with what consequences.

If imperialism refers to the authority and power assumed by one state over another territory and if narratives play a crucial role in exploring, charting and bringing under control such territories and the peoples who inhabit it, the European travel writing and literature during the period of European mercantile expansion and colonization from about 1500 to 1940 can undoubtedly be called

imperial in a rather general sense. This however does not mean that all the narratives and all the genres participated in this process in the same way and are imperial in the same sense. It may also be admitted that in India during the initial period of domination there were remarkable attempts by the British at a symbiosis of the different cultures constituting the Indian nation. For instance, the writings on India in the early period of the British Company rule did partake, at least to some extent, of the culturally symbiotic attitude that Ashis Nandi points to:

> But while British rule had already been established, British culture in India was still not politically dominant, and race based evolutionism was still inconspicuous in the ruling culture. Most Britons in India lived like Indians at home and in the office, wore Indian dress, and observed Indian customs and religious practices. A number of them married Indian women, and offered puja to Indian gods and goddesses, and lived in fear and awe of the magical power of the Brahmans. The first two governor-generals, renowned for their rapaciousness, were also known for their commitment to things Indian. Under them, the traditional Indian life style dominated the culture of British Indian politics. Even the British Indian army occasionally had to pay respect to Indian gods and goddesses and there was at least one instance when the army made money from the revenues of a temple. (5)

But this situation underwent a drastic change in the case of Britain by the late Victorian period since when it pursued what is commonly understood as the consciously and outrightly imperial policies. Hobson gives a detailed account of the historical reasons for such a drastic change in his critique of English imperialism. According to him the possible loss of manufacturing and trading

supremacy regarding certain important classes of goods enjoyed by England in the world market on account of the stiff competition from other European trading powers is the main reason for such a shift. The sudden demand for foreign markets for manufactures and for investments also urged England to seek the safest means of securing and developing such markets "by establishing protectorates" or by "annexation." These new markets of their interest were what they chose to call the undeveloped countries, chiefly of the tropics, where lived vast populations with growing economic needs that English manufacturers and merchants could supply. Every improvement of methods of production, every concentration of ownership and control, Hobson observes, tended to accentuate the imperial tendency. Thus, as a result of the openly aggressive cultural policies adopted in the last few decades of the nineteenth century, some three and three-quarter million square miles were added to the British Empire, making it nearly one hundred times larger than the mother country, with some fifty colonies across the globe (Hobson 23). The two territories of seminal importance during these days of scramble and greed among colonial powers, as Said recognizes, were India and Africa:

> Central to this task (to uphold and maintain the empire and to protect it from disintegration) was India, which acquired a status of astonishing durability in 'departmental thought.' After 1870 (Schumpeter cites Disraeli's Crystal Palace speech in 1872 as the hallmark of aggressive imperialism, "the catch phrase of domestic policy") protecting India against other competing powers, e.g., Russia, necessitated British imperial expansion in Africa, and the Middle and Far East. (*Culture* 72-73)

The former was almost a possession in every sense of the term while the latter was gradually being politically and culturally subjugated. The fictional narratives produced in the last decades of the nineteenth and the early decades of the twentieth century on India and Africa therefore acquire special importance as the typical products of the high imperialism that contributed to stabilize and expand British empire into a fully global and political reality. The use of the related and adjacent cultural space, the novel, to articulate and elaborate the imperial power is manifest in certain individual works that Said mentions in his comparative account of nineteenth century novelists:

> The colonial territories are realms of possibility, and they have always been associated with realistic novel. Robinson Crusoe is virtually unthinkable without the colonizing mission that permits him to create a new world of his own in the distant reaches of African, Pacific, and Atlantic wilderness. But most of the nineteenth-century novelists are less assertive about colonial rule and possessions than either Defoe or late writers like Conrad and Kipling, during whose time great electoral reform and mass participation in politics meant that imperial competition became a more intrusive domestic topic. (*Culture* 64)

The two authors that Said recognizes as of consequence among the writers of high imperial times are Joseph Conrad and Rudyard Kipling and one need not ponder much to understand that he has in mind the two most celebrated works of fiction in English written by them: Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and Kipling's *Kim*. The story of the former imagined as taking place in Africa and that of the latter portrayed as happening in India are received widely and read mainly as truly humanitarian and remarkably realistic accounts of

the African and Indian condition. These two works are in particular regarded as the masterly expressions of the first hand knowledge of these authors about the people, history, land and culture of the two territories, as the introduction to the Wordsworth edition of *Kim* makes clear:

> *Kim* (1901) is widely regarded as Rudyard Kipling's finest work, combining *his first-hand knowledge of India and the Indians* with his graphic and acute observation of human interaction and *his flair for historical context*. (Emphasis added)

Since the publication of these texts of fiction, critical appreciations and interpretations published on them have established a firm reputation for them and they have become canonical. In terms of canonicity, *Kim* and *Heart of Darkness* enjoy a status comparable to that of Mill's massive *History of British India* in the heyday of imperial progress. Perhaps it would be possible to describe these texts as substitutes in disguise that disseminate aesthetically the images, values, attitudes and ideology that inform the work by Mill and other ideologues of Eurocentric perception. Peter Mwikisa highlights the complicity of the Conrad text in perpetuating a racist attitude to Africa:

> The young journalists on their first tour of duty to Africa, be it in Somalia, Liberia, South Africa or the Democratic Republic of Congo still look at Africa, not only as the Dark Continent, but continue the practice of seeing Africans as Conrad's Marlow sees them - "they howled and leaped, and spun, and made horrid faces and are not quite human." It would not be surprising at all if at his or her first assignment to Africa each intrepid reporter and diplomat to various parts of Africa

> were given a copy of Heart of Darkness as part of their orientation for the tasks ahead of them. (par. 9)

The canonical position of these texts is so unshakeable that ahistorical interpretations of them are also elevated to unquestionable sacredness. Once these interpretations and the point of view they popularized became canonical through a century long Euro-centered critical practice any reading that sets out to challenge them comes to be looked upon as a deliberate misreading. The very attempt to read from a different but more valid sociological and historical point of view is considered nothing short of sacrilege. Regarding Conrad and Kipling, the critical scenario was precisely this in the last decades of the twentieth century till Chinua Achebe and Edward Said came up with their postcolonial readings. Their interpretations open up an entirely new way of looking at these texts and thereby demonstrate how imaginative literature, the novel in particular, becomes a fertile site for the construction and propagation of negative images of India and Africa. The negative images of India and Africa when posited with the image of Europe as a land of light and culture tended to valorize the political and cultural conquest that was underway in those times. How these texts of fiction enable the construction, dissemination and popularization of certain myths about India and Africa is best exposed by the readings of Achebe and Said. It is in the entrenched critical positions that they set out to confront that we can see these myths in circulation.

The hallmark of entrenched critical positions on *Heart of Darkness* is that they are hopelessly ahistorical. They overlook the simple fact that the novel is about Africa or, the thrust being the

same, prefer to regard Africa as merely the incidental setting in which Conrad portrays the slow and shocking disintegration of a European soul in wilderness. The exponents of such positions read the image of Africa that Conrad provides as a metaphor for the innermost and unexplored regions of the European soul. When the novel is read this way the most pertinent questions regarding the politics of representation and the imperial character of the imagination that worked to produce the text are never in focus. Such readings in the main disallow, may be unwittingly, the perception from the standpoint of the peoples who suffered and are still suffering from the geographical and cultural incursions of Europe of which Conrad himself was an undeniable part. Bypassing the vibrant historical reality from which the work emanated, readings of the kind that F.R.Leavis practised and advocated celebrate the masterly evocation of the "sinister and fantastic" atmosphere and bemoan the exasperating intrusion of overworked words such as "inscrutable", "inconceivable", and "unspeakable" as "adjectival insistence" that "muffles ...the actual effect"(Leavis 204-205). The very fact that even an "eagle-eyed English critic" such as Leavis, as Achebe observes, notes only the use of such words in all permutations and combinations merely as a stylistic lapse or excess but never bothers about what it really makes of Africa. This shows how deep-rooted and, so, taken for granted was the European fictions of the mystery and barbarity of Africa. Apart from the readings that sought to analyze style from a disappointingly aesthetic and ahistoric perspective, there have been readings of this work that defend it as an indictment of imperial cruelties in the Belgian Congo in particular and the African context

in general. Zins for instance reads this work of Conrad as a harsh indictment of the cruel practices of imperial authorities in the Belgian Congo (115). Commendable though some of these critical perceptions are for their non-European evaluations, they too, unfortunately, see Africans as the objects of the debate, not subjects. Remarkable among the interpreters who attempted to expose the racial intolerance and imperial imagery in Conrad's work is Achebe, the Nigerian novelist and critic. Achebe's observations on the novel helps one to understand the dominant image of Africa in the western imagination and the ideological purposes it served during and after the imperial conquest of that continent.

Through his postcolonial reading Achebe exposes the imperial imagery and narrative techniques employed in the novel, challenges the established ways of reading it, and thereby asserts that the very basis of canonicity in English fiction is decisively pro-imperial. He in fact begins his polemic with an attack on the canonical status of Conrad and *Heart of Darkness*:

> Conrad, on the other hand, is undoubtedly one of the greatest stylists of modern fiction and a good storyteller in the bargain. His contribution, therefore, falls automatically into a different class – permanent literature – read and taught and permanently evaluated by serious academics. *Heart of Darkness* is indeed so secure today that a leading Conrad scholar has numbered it "among the half-dozen greatest short novels in the English language."(*Image* 3-4)

Proceeding with the analysis he takes up the question of Conrad's famed evocation of the African atmosphere and lays bare its intellectual mechanics in an outstanding manner:

> In the final consideration it amounts to no more than a steady, ponderous, fake-ritualistic repetition of two sentences, one about silence and other about frenzy. We can inspect samples of this on pages 103 and 105 of the New American Library edition: (1) It was the stillness of an implacable force brooding over an inscrutable intention, and (2) The steamer toiled along slowly on the edge of a black and incomprehensible frenzy. Of course there is judicious change of adjective from time to time, so that instead of inscrutable, for example, you might have unspeakable, etc, etc. (3)

The author's rather unwholesome and irritating insistence on certain carefully chosen and insinuating adjectives (that Leavis also notes, but characterizes them as unjustifiable stylistic lapses) provokes Achebe to venture further and not to dismiss it lightly:

> That insistence must not be dismissed lightly, as many Conrad critics had tended to do, as a mere stylistic flaw. For it raises serious questions of artistic good faith. When a writer while pretending to record scenes, incidents, and their impact is in reality engaged in inducing hypnotic stupor in his readers through a bombardment of emotive words and other forms of trickery, much more has to be at stake than stylistic felicity. (4)

What is at stake is, as Achebe himself demonstrates later in his essay, not simply style, but something more precious than that—the very humanity of the peoples of Africa and it seems that Achebe is revolting not only at Conrad's kind of imaginative involvement with Africa but the later English critical enterprise too for endorsing and validating the point of view of the novel. Conrad manages this by choosing a subject that "was guaranteed not to put him in conflict with the psychological predisposition of his readers or raise

the need for him to contend with their resistance." With this choice Conrad reduces himself to the "role of purveyor of comforting myths" (4) and in consequence the Europeans ivory hunting and trading in Congo become "pilgrims" in and victims of African wilderness while the Africans are transformed into a weird and monstrous mass:

> We could have fancied ourselves as the first of men taking possession of an accursed inheritance, to be subdued at the cost of profound anguish and of excessive toil. But suddenly, as we struggled around a bend, there would be glimpse of rush walls, of peaked grass-roofs, a burst of yells, a whirl of black limbs, a mass of hands clapping, of feet stamping, of bodies swaying, of eyes rolling, under the droop of heavy and motionless foliage. The steamer toiled on along slowly on the edge of a black and incomprehensible frenzy...No, they were not inhuman... but what thrilled you was just the thought of their humanity – like yours – the thought of your remote kinship with this wild and passionate uproar. Ugly. (Conrad, 56-57)

What Conrad does when he depicts Africans as a frenzied and monstrous mass and why he does so are two significant questions that beg answers. Achebe argues that Conrad projects Africa as the derogatory other of Europe and calls into question the very humanity of the black people. In the narrative Africa is "the other world, the antithesis of Europe and therefore of civilization, a place where man's vaunted intelligence and refinement are finally mocked by triumphant bestiality" (*Image* 3). So it follows that the acclaimed evocation of the African atmosphere and the rather tenacious insistence on adjectives in the story are strategies of dehumanizing the African people and demonizing and mystifying

the territory. The inevitable outcome of such an evocation is that Africa emerges "as a metaphysical battlefield devoid of all recognizable humanity into which the wandering European enters at his peril" (9).

This kind of juxtaposition of essentialist categories is part of the subtle imperial cultural politics and it ensures the primacy and centrality of Europe and its culture. Even rivers are not simply rivers but antithetical categories with ideological underpinnings according to whether they belong to Europe or not. The river Thames in the narrative is a peaceful river that nourishes a healthy civilization. In Conrad's parlance "it is the interminable waterway" (15) which is venerable for the "ages of good service done to the race that peopled its banks" (16). It had served, the narrator remembers with gratitude and emphasis, the heroes of the nation such as Sir John Franklin. The great knights-errant of the sea and other voyagers whom Conrad makes Marlow recall are the people who pioneered the protocolonial discovery and conquest of the far-lying non-European lands. The river Thames emerges worthy of veneration because it is the waterway to conquest and it nourished "the dreams of (English) men, the seed of commonwealths, the germs of empires" (Conrad, *Heart* 15-17). This river at the imperial centre is thus proclaimed sacred. The river Congo in Conrad's fiction is precisely the antithesis of the sanctified Thames. A journey up Congo takes one to the heart of darkness and "to the earliest beginnings of the world" (54). The ground for conceiving Congo as the derogatory other of Thames is set immediately after the grand acclamation of Thames and the civilization that it sustains. The antithetical design regarding the two rivers and the

peoples associated with them comes into play at the instant Marlow ends his eulogy of Thames and suddenly realizes that the world around Thames too had once been one of the darkest places of the earth (17). As the narration moves forward to Marlow's boyhood passion for maps and glories of exploration, river Congo though not named as such but meant so, for the first time in the novel, is given a rendering that is problematic by way of its telling serpentine imagery:

> But there was in it one river especially, a mighty big river, that you could see on the map, resembling an immense snake uncoiled, with its head in the sea, its body at rest curving afar over a vast country, and its tail lost in the depths of the land. (21)

The serpentine imagery considered in isolation from the historical context of the novel and the European perception of Africa may appear to be aesthetically appropriate as one that evokes the vivid sense of a huge river meandering through a vast territory. It would be all the more acceptable when read as a figment of the young schoolboy's imagination. But the image attains dense ideological significance when situated in the imperial context and also, when contrasted with the description of the English counterpart of the river Congo in the novel. An ordinary, popular, seemingly non-objectionable and so, readily acceptable comparison it is at the point of contact. But this image of Africa as a vast landmass with a mighty snake measuring its body against the size of the land appeals to the imagination of the reader and persuades him/her to conceive the continent in terms of animality. That is, this image accentuates the overall structure of feeling the novel generates. It stands out as an icon for what the European imagination in general

and Conrad's novel in particular reduced Africa to: a land of triumphant bestiality.

There are various instances of such juxtapositions along derogatory lines of which one is particularly notable: the narrator of *Heart of Darkness* describes in minute detail the "wild and gorgeous apparition of a woman" on the Congo:

> She walked with measured steps, draped in striped and fringed cloths, trading the earth proudly, with a slight jingle and flash of barbarous ornaments. She carried her head high; her hair was done in the shape of a helmet; she had brass leggings to her knees, brass wire gauntlets to the elbow, a crimson spot on her tawny neck; bizarre things, charms, gifts of witch men, that hung about her, glittered and trembled at every step. She must have had the value of several elephant tusks upon her. She was savage and superb, wild-eyed and magnificent; there was something ominous and stately in her deliberate progress. (Conrad 88-89)

Though the description is not devoid of sympathy entirely, since the stereotypical adjectives/images (barbarous, bizarre, savage) are drawn uncritically from Victorian discourses, fictional and non-fictional, the ultimate effect is one that nullifies Conrad's proclaimed sympathy to the victims of colonial subjugation; it in fact reinforces the imperial perspective especially when posited with the image of the European woman (Kurtz's Intended) – imagined as the victim of the inscrutable heart of darkness which robbed her of the loved one, the "remarkable" Kurtz as the narrator patronizingly remembers him:

> I noticed she was not very young – I mean not girlish. She had a mature capacity for fidelity, for belief, for suffering...This fair hair, this

> pale visage, this pure brow, seemed surrounded by an ashy halo from which the dark eyes looked at me. Their glance was guileless, profound, confident, and trustful. She carried her sorrowful head as though she were proud of that sorrow, as though she would say, I – I alone know how to mourn for him as he deserves. But while we were still shaking hands, such a look of awful desolation came upon her face that I perceived she was one of those creatures that are not the playthings of Time. (105)

The presentation of the two female figures in a strategic manner valorizes the European perception of modern culture and the imagined barbarity of Africa. The woman on the Congo is speechless, primitive, inscrutable and irrational but her European counterpart is very articulate, modern, fairly understandable and, of course, rational. In a recent reading of the description of the woman on the shore of the Congo, Ania Loomba finds that the (native) female body, as in sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth century European representations of the other, becomes in Conrad too a site to articulate the promise and the fear of the colonial land:

> The long pictorial tradition in which the four continents were represented as women now generated images of America or Africa that positioned these continents as available for plunder, possession, discovery and conquest. Conversely, native women and their bodies are described in terms of the promise and the fear of the colonial land, as in the much later description of 'a wild and gorgeous apparition of a woman' whom the narrator in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* encounters on the shores of the Congo. (151)

Though Conrad renders the Amazon speechless and withholds human expression from her while bestowing both in ample

measure on her counterpart, he "lavishes a whole page quite unexpectedly on the woman," observes Achebe, for two specific reasons:

> This Amazon is drawn in considerable detail, albeit of a predictable nature, for two reasons. First, she is in her place and so can win Conrad's special brand of approval, and, second, she fulfils a structural requirement of the story: a savage counterpart to the to the refined, European woman with whom the story will end. (*Image* 6)

Conrad departs from the usual practice of withholding speech to the rudimentary souls of Africa on two occasions. But when he confers speech on the savage subjects of his on the first of these occasions the thrust is exclusively on cannibalism:

> " Catch 'im," he snapped, with a bloodshot widening of his eyes and a flash of sharp white teeth –"catch 'im. Give 'im to us." "To you, eh?" I asked; "what would you do with them?" "Eat 'im!" he said, curtly, and, leaning his elbow on the rail, looked out into the fog in a dignified and profoundly pensive attitude. I would no doubt have been properly horrified, had it not occurred to me that he his chaps must be very hungry: that they must have been growing increasingly hungry for at least this month past. (62-63)

Mentioning that such an instance might be mistaken as an unexpected act of generosity from Conrad, Achebe unveils the racial and imperial politics that underpins this sudden and unexpected bestowal of speech:

> In reality they constitute some of his best assaults. In the case of the cannibals the incomprehensible grunts that had thus far served them for speech suddenly proved inadequate for Conrad's purpose of letting the European glimpse the unspeakable craving of their hearts. Weighing

> the necessity for consistency in the portrayal of dumb brutes against the sensational advantages of securing their conviction by clear, unambiguous evidence issuing out of their own mouth, Conrad chose the latter. (*Image* 7)

Achebe's criticism may sound as a personal attack on Conrad for the rhetorical devices (the racist imagery being one) and the ideological burden associated with it, as critics like Henryk Zins argued (122). It may be to clarify his position against such a possible charge of personal attack and at the same time to fix the role of Conrad as a writer through whom the imperial ideology functioned successfully that Achebe rightly qualifies his critical utterances with the statement that Conrad did not originate the image of Africa but merely brought the peculiar gifts of his own mind to bear on the dominant image of Africa in the Western imagination (13). Achebe further modifies his use of the word "willful" in relation to the West's view of Africa saying that what was happening may be a reflex action rather than calculated malice (14). Achebe's qualifications and modifications can be recognized as the means with which he tries to tone down his harsh critique of Conrad as a thorough going racist and the novel as hopelessly imperialist. Immediately after the branding of Conrad as a bloody racist he absolves the Conrad critics for glossing over the manifestations of racism. The point of Achebe's argument here is that White racism against Africa being the then normal way of thinking it was likely that Conrad's racism in the novel also happened to go completely unremarked. The pains that Achebe takes to save his critique from excesses are present in the concluding paragraphs of the essay as qualifications and

modifications. They point up not only Achebe's sensitivity as a critic but also certain very complex situations that he must have encountered in his against-the-grain reading of Conrad's rhetoric on Africa and Europe's imperial incursions there. One such complexity definitely concerns the tackling of the voice of dissent that at times come out from Marlow the narrator of the story. The narrative voice that undertakes the harsh critique of the imperial enslavement of Africans in the trading center at Congo for instance could not so easily be sidelined as Marlow's hollow and pretentious liberalism that sidesteps the fundamental question of human brotherhood. The incisive irony in defining imperialism as taking away the land from those who have a different complexion or slightly flatter noses (Conrad 19-20) is a remarkable instance of strong critical awareness of an inhuman system and its worldview that Conrad himself belonged to. It is for the sake of some such scattered but powerful expression of moral indignation at imperialism and racism that Ngugi is willing to put up with this novel in spite of his conviction that the narrative celebrates the European myth of the inherent savagery of Africa and the Africans and peddles the objectionable notion that the best minds and hearts of Europe were in danger of being contaminated (*Writers* 13). Edward Said also looks upon this work with an attitude that resembles Ngugi's. Though the total impact of the novel is one that endorses the European notions of Africa, it is a fact that the novel has succeeded in disturbing the Western conscience. One can even say that the moments of dissent in the novel though kept at bay by the overall imagery and structure of feeling do not fail to provide a glimpse into the rather brutal ways of imperial conquest and the

hollowness of its civilizing rhetoric. Though Conrad was critiquing only the inefficiency of imperialism rather than the very idea of imperialism, it was in the times of high-imperialism a voice of dissent to a certain extent. Accepting this much about the novel regarding its anti-imperialism is, however, not to concede that Conrad's racial imagery should be overlooked because he merely used conventional images of his day, unaware of its ideological repercussions. When as radical a writer as Ngugi does accept that much, it would be illogical and grossly reductive not to acknowledge the spirit in which those dissenting statements in the novel are made. Achebe's reading may be somewhat reductive from that angle but the outstanding merit of it resides in the exhaustive analysis which illustrates the uncritical acceptance of the Victorian prejudices of Africa and its aesthetic recirculation in Conrad's fiction. Achebe more than succeeds in laying bare the ideological underside of European imaginings of Africa as a land of primordial, contagious barbarity and Africans as hopeless, dark, inscrutable and speechless rudimentary creatures waiting for the Europeans to come and rescue them from the diabolic darkness at heart:

> For reasons which can certainly use close psychological inquiry the West seems to suffer deep anxieties about the precariousness of its civilization and to have a need for constant reassurance by comparison with Africa. If Europe, advancing in civilization, could cast a backward glance periodically at Africa trapped in primordial barbarity it could say with faith and feeling: There go I but for the grace of God. Africa is to Europe as the picture is to Dorian Gray -- a carrier onto whom the

> master unloads his physical and moral deformities so that he may go forward, erect and immaculate. (*Image* 13)

Besides what Achebe says in his observation cited above, imperialism also wanted to negatively stereotype the people of other continents in order to take away their land and put them in subjection in the guise of civilizing them. Colour difference and cultural dissonance came handy enough for them to theorize alterity with an inherent Euro-centeredness that prompted conquest and domination. Conrad's fiction in fact aesthetically disseminates the Euro-centered alterity and endorses the imperial attitude that cultures other than European are inferior and therefore warrants domination.

Nineteenth century and early twentieth century English narratives on India, unlike those about Africa, never attempted to portray Indians as speechless rudimentary souls given to cannibalism. This does not, however, mean that the nineteenth century English imagination played fair to India and its people. Neither does it mean that the English men and women who wrote about India were free from the imperial blinders and the vocabularies of Othering. Cultural denigration was indeed the face mark of their writing about India, though it was not so ruthless as in the case of Africa. British narratives in the context of India since the second half of the nineteenth century devoted all the vigour to establish the British ownership of India and to demonstrate the insufficiency of Indians for self-rule. In the wake of the post-mutiny inflammatory xenophobia the image of India and Indians that British fiction managed to uncritically draw from

earlier discourses and recirculate served to underscore the claims for continued domination.

Benita Parry's work on British imagination probes fictional texts from this angle and some of her findings would serve as a preface for further discussion. In her pioneering study of British imperial imagination she comes up with insightful instances that substantiate the negative stereotyping of India. Parry devotes one chapter to study the novelettes by five lady novelists written at the turn of the last century. She concludes her estimation of their works with the following comment:

> What is more interesting is that the fictional India compounded of banal guesses and clichés, of inaccuracies and half-truths which the romancers fashioned won them an avid readership. Their fantasies met with and satisfied the reader's needs, their distortions served as valid insights. (98)

In the following chapter she takes up the works of Flora Annie Steel to see how they functioned in the politically volatile Indian context. *The Law of the Threshold,* which Parry calls Steel's most lurid novel, addresses the political movements of India in the wake of the last century. In this novel Steel dismisses the possibility of political grievances, nationalist aspirations or revolutionary theory as irrelevant to the Indian psyche driven by blood-lust and religious fanaticism. Her rhetoric rejects the claim of Indian self-rule on the ground of British governmental expertise:

> Consider the question quite calmly. Someone must govern India, that vast category of races, creeds, customs. On the one hand we have, say, a quarter of a million of Europeans, frankly alien, and a quarter of million of educated natives quite as alien to the mass of people—more

> so in some ways. Now to govern India as it should be governed postulates a *force majeure* behind that government. Which of the two claimants - as they stand today, mark you, not as they or ought to stand in the future – has this backing? Surely the frankly alien; a race accustomed to Government for centuries, a race with capital, prestige, personnel at its command. It must govern and what is more it must – it is bound by the very fact of its existence – govern strongly – almost relentlessly. (quoted in Parry 126)

Parry notes that Steel's later writings show a greater surrender to wild fantasies about Indians but what is a regular presence throughout her fictional narratives is her tenacious insistence on the sexual promiscuity of Indian women (112). Concluding her account on Steel's narratives Parry illustrates how the author redefines knowledge and love within the imperial paradigms:

> The British are chided for their ignorance about India, India is then unveiled to show the odd, the grotesque and gruesome, ignorance then becomes defensible and knowing India is redefined as essential and useful knowledge to facilitate permanent British rule. The separation between British and Indian is shown as a clear and necessary division and so minutely concerned is she with defining the differences the two distinct emotional scales are introduced— Eastern love is a scorching and all consuming experience which involves only the body and a surrender to man's baser instincts, whereas Western love is that sentiment that engages the finer feelings. (129)

The difference in nature between the Westerner and the Easterner is worked out neatly within the ruler/ruled dichotomy in Steel's fiction. Non-fictional works also must have played a crucial role in defining the native as incorrigibly wayward and constantly

requiring supervision. The following extract from a non-fictional work jointly authored by Grace Gardiner and Steel substantiates this point:

> The Indian servant, it is true, learns more readily . . . but a few days of absence or neglect on the part of the mistress results in the servants falling into their old habits with the inherited conservatism of dirt. This is of course disheartening, but it has to be faced as a necessary condition of life, until a few generations of training shall have started the Indian servant on a new inheritance of habit. It must never be forgotten that at present those mistresses who aim at anything beyond keeping a good table arte in the minority, and that pioneering is always arduous work. (quoted in Mills 2)

It is needless to say that the thrust of the passage is on constant vigilance required on the part of the British woman to tackle the inherent laziness of the Indian servant. In short, British fiction and non-fiction produced in the tumultuous years immediately before and after the first war of Indian independence constructed the Indian as hopelessly incapable of a civilized existence in the absence of the British. Kipling fiction appears to have strengthened this imperial tradition and valorized the colonial perspective of native insufficiency to self-rule and the need for British controlling presence in an unprecedented way.

Though Kipling did not author "a mutiny tale" proper, unlike so many of his predecessors and contemporaries like Meadows Taylor, Flora Annie Steel and G.A. Henty, he was the foremost of the celebrated British fiction writers who imagined India through various fictional modes including the allegorical mode. The affirmative manner in which he rendered the imperial story in his

works persuades one to believe that his fiction tends to stabilize imperial historical accounts and by that stake a claim for the continued possession of India in the context of anti-imperialist struggles of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The insightful study conducted by Don Randall on the Mowgli tales of *The Jungle Books* illustrates that Kipling renders the imperial life story affirmatively yet allegorically by imagining a feral boy who grows into the master of the jungle. His gradual but inevitable ascension to mastery over the jungle, as Randall reads it, is Kipling's way of producing a narrative of successful counter-insurgency to resolve the enduring anxieties and tensions informing the history and discourse of British imperialism in India (101). The absolute absence of European character in *The Jungle Books* in fact encourages an unsuspicious acceptance of the tale as a simple fable but to Randall such an absence signifies densely ideological imperial tactics:

> The English are a matter of rare allusion, a distant, vaguely understood presence that never intrudes upon the little world of jungle and village. Imperialism, however, is always already there in the Indian scene even in the absence of the imperialist; it is inscribed in advance as the beginning and the end of the narrative process. The Mowgli saga, as detailed in *The Jungle Books*, allegorizes an imperialist world view in the nearly absolute absence of an imperial subject, inscribing and 'naturalizing' imperial codes and values without immediate recourse to imperial agency and presence. (106)

Randall identifies the India articulated by Western Indology as the principal referent of Mowgli's little world. When so identified, Kipling's use of the jungle as the principal setting of his tales

signifies the specification of India as a jungle rather than the elimination specific cultural traces (107). Kipling's village, a subordinate space to the overall jungle adventures of Mowgli, figures forth as the ancient Indian social structure not only defined by an imperial knowledge system but pledged to destruction by the forces of modernity. That is, these fictive spaces are crucial and highly specific Indological and imperial constructs for the imaginative ordering of colonial India (Randall 110).

Kipling's engagement with the major themes of imperialism is more direct and powerful in his *Kim*, a fictional work where he chooses to employ the non-allegorical mode of articulation. Accordingly the protagonist here is more elevated than the feral-Indian hybrid. He fixes on a different sort of hybrid – a racial hybrid boy – half Indian and half Irish. This Kipling story is an outstanding example of an Orientalized India of the imagination absolutely free of the elements hostile to the perpetualization of British rule. As Said says, fabric of this narrative is dotted with a scattering of editorial asides on the irrevocable differences between the Oriental and the White worlds:

> Thus, for example, 'Kim would lie like an Oriental,' or, a bit later, 'all hours of the twenty-four are alike to the Orientals,'or, when Kim pays for train tickets with the lama's money he keeps one anna for rupee for himself, which, Kipling says, is 'the immemorial commission of Asia,' later still Kipling refers to 'the huckster instinct of the East,' at a train platform, Mahbub's retainers 'being natives' have not unloaded the trucks which they should have; Kim's ability to sleep as the trains roar is an instance of 'the Oriental's indifference to mere noise,' as the camp breaks up, Kipling says it is done 'swiftly—as Orientals understand

> speed—with long explanations, with abuse and windy talk, carelessly, amid a hundred checks for little things forgotten.' (*Culture* 181)

As an artist of enormous powers, Kipling too, like Conrad, succeeds in adding phrases and concepts to the language. Both of them stand unequalled in their capacity to, to quote Said on Kipling, "elaborate ideas that would have had far less permanence, for all their vulgarity, without the art" (*Culture* 182). Fictional strategies lend the vulgar and otherwise fragile ideas ready uncritical acceptance, permanence, and universality. This Kipling fiction on India transmits imperial myths in an artistically consumable form and thus endows such fragile and vulgar notions stability and permanence. Besides those pointed out by Said, there are several instances scattered throughout the text where the authorial voice pops up to render validity to the imperial myths about India and the Indians. Even random picks from *Kim* put together make a long list: Kimball O'Hara "died as poor whites die in India" (1); "Asiatics do not wink when they have out-manoeuvred an enemy" (26); "Kim dived into the happy Asiatic disorder" (69); the ethnologist Colonel Creighton asserts that "the more one knows about natives the less can one say what they will or won't do" (118); Kim at St. Xavier's is said to have "learned to wash himself with the Levitical scrupulosity of the native-born" (131); Kim, in order to thwart the attempt on Mahbub Ali's life, "raised himself suddenly with the terrible, bubbling, meaningless yell of the Asiatic roused by nightmare" (147); the old lady speaks about "the depredations of leopards and the eccentricities of love Asiatic"(241).

Kipling is famous mainly as an author who influenced the image of India in a powerful and long lasting way. The statements

and observations about India and Indians of which the random collection above is a more or less representative specimen enabled him to become a voice of authority on India. The English critical tradition acclaimed him as the great one who experienced and rendered India in a most realistic way. The assessment of his greatness often drew validity from the "accuracy" of the image of India he constructed and the firsthand experience of India that enabled him to imagine it so precisely. In fact Kipling was only rearticulating artistically and in full consistency and conformity the dominant images of India and Indians in earlier and contemporary English narratives. A passage on Indians and India from George Trevelyan's work, *The Competition Wallah*, for instance, may tell us by the identical nature of the attitudes, depiction and even phrasing of the two the strong presence of a governing tradition that controls the English rhetoric on India. This passage in reference is part of the letter V111 of the book. It is a long letter on the Hindu character that embodies Trevelyan's most cherished ambition to induce Englishmen at home to take a lively and effective interest in the native population of their eastern dominions and the passage referred to demands reproduction by the very destructive force of its negative eloquence:

> A native, on the contrary, must be watched from morning till night. He has no sense of shame in the matter of laziness, and considers himself horribly ill used if he is kept to his duty. I learned this fact during my first night on the shores. After half an hour's sleep, I began to dream that I was Dante, and that I was paying a visit to infernal realms under the guidance of Martin Tupper (143).

This appears to be a passage that puts at least some of the racist utterances to shame by its revolting cultural chauvinism and equally disparaging, arrogant and aggressive rhetoric. In the face of this blunt and unsophisticated racist discourse, Kipling's seems to be more palatable though he too says the same thing. For instance, when he comments on the laziness of Mahbub Ali's retainers, Kipling is also rearticulating the myth of the lazy native but the fictional context and the device of characterization disguises this ideological maxim of colonial capitalism into something readily acceptable and agreeable. The secret of its seeming harmlessness lies in the artistic strategies that buttress imperial ideology and at the same time give it an enticing structure of feeling. Both utterances draw their force from the colonial notion that "tropical conditions induce sloth, indolence, etc., in everyone, and thus the need for control-at-a-distance from temperate-climate civilizations" (Blaut 70).

There is no doubt that the India and Indians Kipling imagined gained popularity among both the British and the Indian readers. It would be worthwhile to know how Kipling's image of India and Indians could pass as an accurate and authentic representation of the land and its people. The success of this narrative lies primarily in the conception of the central figures, the ideas that activate them and the narrative strategies that give a ring of credibility and conviction to what they say and do. The protagonist of the story Kim is an artistically and politically correct choice in the late nineteenth century Indian context of imperialism. Kipling sets the tone of the novel in favour of the English and at the same time assumes the right to speak automatically about India, his

authority coming from the fact that he is one who has gone (half) native. How the novel appropriates hybridity to the advantage of the empire is interesting to look at. As Tim Watson argues, "it is specifically his Irishness that allows him to be a 'native' without being an Indian, and to be a 'Sahib' without being English" (110). The figures of the rebel and the ruler collapsed into the hybrid Irish, Watson elaborates, finesse some of the problems facing the British writers on India at the turn of the century:

> The emergence of a British educated elite with proto-nationalist tendencies; the desire to maintain full British control over all aspects of the administration versus recognizing the need to include Indians in the running of their own affairs; the necessity for a modern, centralized bureaucracy, versus the benefits of quasi-feudal local structures of power. (11)

Kim contains all these problems, as Watson concludes, by "proposing a new fictive unity for the Empire, one that includes even the king's rebel subjects" (111).

The narrative voice is particularly assertive and appreciative of the essential, dominant but not so easily betrayed European pedigree of the boy and the privileges that go with it right at the beginning of the narrative where he comes to life as a character:

> There was some justification for Kim, - he had kicked Lala Dinanath's boy off the trunnions, - since the English held the Punjab and Kim was English. Though he was burned black as any native; though he spoke the vernacular by preference, and his mother-tongue in a clipped uncertain sing-song; though he consorted on terms of perfect equality with the small boys of the bazaar; Kim was white – a poor white of the very poorest. (Kipling 1)

In fact the author never lets the reader forget the European inheritance of the boy and the result is that Kim as a construct in the hands of Kipling is a site to discourse on the undesirable Asiatic deviations from the normal, manly, rational and so, superior English or European culture that forms the redeeming part of Kim. For instance, the narrative nothing less than celebrates Kim's daring and preparedness by assuming the native as inherently lacking in initiative, tired and given to submissiveness: "Where a native would have lain down, Kim's *white blood* (emphasis added) set him upon his feet" (49). Kim as a character, however, is never made to take up India and Indian bashing. The reductive maxims on India and the Asiatic are not voiced through Kim but they are subtly interspersed into the narrative mesh that animates Kim. On the other hand, his sarcastic tongue voices, rarely but mercilessly, his indifference to the civilizing measures practiced on him once the Mavericks catch him. This in fact prompts the reader to accept Kim and, along with him, the imperial myths on the Asiatic also without much resistance and often with a feeling of misplaced confidence. But in the final reckoning Kim's critique of the European culture turns out to be a reflection of the inherent irrationality and disorder of the native half in him and consequently, the editorial observations on India and the Asiatic become the authentic and redeeming aspects of his European inheritance.

The rational, manly and scientific figure one often encounters in nineteenth and early twentieth century English fiction on India and Africa also serves certain ideological purposes. Such figures in Said's view are usually a means to cite academically regulated

discourses about the contested terrain and culture (*Culture* 118). The creation of Colonel Creighton in *Kim* is one such instance. Creighton is an ethnographer–scholar–soldier, a three-in–one imperial authority who signifies the logical alliance between western science and political power at work in the colonies (184). In the narrative Creighton is manly, rational and scientific but the lama is imagined as passive, dependent and feminized to suit the contrastive stereotyping of the eastern people. Another foil against whom Creighton is conceived and perfected is the Western-educated British agent Hurree Chunder Mookerjee. It is through him that the rising Indian nationalism in its Bengali pioneers is suppressed. The babu is shown as narrating to the French and Russian enemies of the British "tales of oppression and wrong" that the British practice on the Indians. He does this with incomparable hypocrisy and melodrama for ingratiating them first and then trapping them to help the British cause. The visible contradiction between what he says and what he actually intends works as a strategy that transforms the Bengali attempts at resistance to the Empire as mere doubletalk that will ultimately serve the interests of the Empire. Hurree babu appears in the fictional landscape that Kipling calls into existence at a time when his much more likely nationalist counterparts take upon themselves the work of undermining the British Empire.

Characters like Creighton convert the fictional space into an ideological site where different discourses freely mingle in such a way that their disciplinary outfit, unfamiliar terminology and formal couching metamorphose into pleasure giving structures. Creighton's comments on the native behaviour, for instance on

Kim's or lama's actions, carry anthropological overtones that suit imperial designs. Said elaborates this point in relation to some authors including Conrad and Kipling:

> Late nineteenth century figures like Kipling and Conrad and mid-century figures like Gerome and Flaubert, do not merely reproduce the outlying territories: they work them out, or animate them using narrative technique and historical and explanatory attitude and positive ideas provided by thinkers like Max Muller, Renan, Charles Temple, Darwin, Benchamin Kidd, Emer de Mattel. (*Culture* 120)

Kipling wishes away the anti-imperial feeling gaining ground in India by visualizing characters like Kim, Hurree babu and Creighton and activating them with the positive ideas of Western thinkers. There is also a very conscious attempt to explain away the first war of independence against the British in 1857 in terms of the abnormalities supposed to be inherent in the Indian psyche. An Indian soldier in the narrative is given this work of reducing the badly organized but patriotic outburst against the British rule into madness and evil. Kipling plants him in the narrative with this intention and the old soldier is grateful, passionate, and proud of the British victory. All these emotions overwhelm the veteran Indian soldier of Kipling. He responds to Kim's query regarding what was to the British "the 1857 madness" with a rhetoric notable for the shocking lack of the feeling of patriotism and discontentment at British rule that was stirring India to action at the time the novel came to be written:

> The Gods, who sent it for a plague, alone know. A madness ate into all the army, and they turned against their officers. That was the first evil, but not past remedy if they had then held their hands. But they chose to

> kill the Sahib's wives and children. Then came the Sahibs from over the sea and called them to most strict account. (Kipling 56)

This old Indian soldier claims to be one among the three who stood fast to their salt in a cavalry regiment of six hundred and eighty. He, unlike the revolting Indians, does the exemplary act of protecting an English mem-sahib and her babe. He rides seventy miles carrying them on an English horse to place them in safety and comes back and reports to his officer. The soldier's daring and accomplishments are described in graphic detail:

> In nineteen pitched battles was I; in six-and-forty skirmishes of horse; and in small affairs without number. Nine wounds I bear; a medal and four clasps and the medal of an order, for my captains, who are now generals, remembered when the Kaiser-I-Hind had accomplished fifty years of her reign, and all the land rejoiced. (57)

He was awarded with the "order of Berettish India" for defending the empire. But his community cast him out then. This alienation is compensated by further rewards of (land) holdings and continued consideration by the British:

> I have also my *jagbir* (holding) from the hands of the State – a free gift to me and mine. The men of the old days – they are now commissioners – come riding to me through the crops, - high upon horses so that all the village sees, - and we talk out the old skirmishes, one dead man's name leading to another. (57)

This account of the rebellion recalled from Kipling's novel is hardly distinguishable in tone and content from the account of the mutiny rendered by British historians. Kipling compresses the entire British perspective of the rebellion into a few passages and validates it through the Indian soldier. Despite compression, he is

able to retain not only the alignment of the course of events and the structure of feeling characteristic of British fictional and historical accounts of the mutiny. Edward Thompson when he observes that British writings on mutiny demonized Indians is calling attention precisely to the concerted manner in which both fictional narratives such as *Kim* and historical discourses pushed the same imperial agenda:

> Our histories and our novels have proceeded on certain clearly marked lines. There is the Indian, 'half-devil and half-child,' docile, patient, capable of a doglike devotion, given to mysticism and brooding contemplation, yet with all these good qualities liable to perversion into a treacherous seditionist or blood-thirsty fanatic; there is the Englishman, silent, efficient, inflexibly just, dispensing to each of his deserts. (29)

Thompson's observation makes it clear that in both British fiction and history Indians are imagined as cold-blooded and congenital murderers of helpless English women and children. For Kipling too they are savages who murdered the English women and children without provocation. Nationalism and patriotism and the desire for self-rule are conspicuously absent in Kipling's India and in the India the writers of such a tradition imagined. But the Englishmen Kipling imagines act solely out of patriotism and nationalism. The suppression of the mutiny and the "Great Game" they play are part of that project. Indian characters in such narratives are subservient to imperialism and they smugly enjoy European tutelage. Thompson senses the uneasiness of Indians in having to put up with such narratives that distort history and makes out why Indians rarely challenge the British perspective of mutiny:

> It is not strange that Indians should be restive under such a portrayal, or that even Kipling's magnificent work should be read with feelings of pain and humiliation. The interpretations of our history books, in the case of many events, they challenge. But in one case they rarely challenge them openly, because the deeds are too recent and too bitterly felt by both sides, and because the English interpretation of them is too firmly established for easy displacement. This case, unfortunately, is that of the one episode when we really were guilty of the cruellest injustice on the greatest scale. (29)

That the British perspective of the mutiny was firmly established largely through fiction is an undeniable fact. Between 1859 and 1964 almost fifty novels were written with mutiny as the theme and twenty-six of them were written within fifty years of the mutiny. Invariably, English people with imperial connections wrote all these novels justifying British brutality as military action against savages. As in the African context, this was also made to look like pacification of violent savages. It is this denial of historical truth that made Thompson confess about what he describes "the cruellest injustice on the greatest scale" done to Indians in his non-fictional work *The Other Side of the Medal.* In the preface to the book he hints at the imperial ethos that delayed its publication:

> This book has long been suppressed. To friends who urged that its publications would stir up bitter feelings, I point out that the deeds of which it speaks were done, and men's minds securely hold the smouldering memory. Other friends, among them some of the names most honoured in contemporary literature, have urged that risk be taken. (5)

Thompson in his non-fictional narrative takes the risk of confessing about the British atrocities during the mutiny. But his lone voice of dissent, that too long suppressed, could not unhinge either the official British view of the mutiny or the British attitude to India. It is true that Kipling, Thompson or Conrad cannot be held personally responsible for the large-scale dissemination of imperial attitudes. But it is equally true that the huge body of pro-imperial writings in which Kipling's works have a significant and decisive role even now largely defines Indians and influences the attitude of people, including that of Indians, to India. Conrad's work also functions likewise in shaping attitudes to Africa.

The analysis of the English fictional discourse in the years of high imperialism conducted with special reference to the most popular fictional texts in which Conrad and Kipling dealt with Africa and India amply substantiates the fact that the English novel is a densely ideological site that not only facilitated the derogatory representation of the other cultures, lands and peoples but also ensured the sophisticated and aesthetic dissemination of these constructs. This terrain of English imagination opened itself up for other academically regulated discourses of imperial modernity. That is, the English novel functioned as a surrogate space for pseudo-anthropological and pseudo-historical evaluations favoring the realignment of colonial and imperial policies, fantasies, ideologies and tropes. Some fictional narratives like *Heart of Darkness* and *Kim* acquired canonicity within a few years of the first half of the twentieth century and the imperial myths that they aesthetically promoted and popularized became part of the modern European awareness of Africa and India.

In brief, the English intervention in India and Africa as revealed in the scientific and subjective modes of expression, was a terribly depriving and culturally annihilating process, as Alastair Pennycook rightly points out:

> Colonized people were seen as lacking history, culture, religion and intelligence and thus it became clear that it was a European duty to fill this void. It was Europe's role to bring history (both in terms of writing histories of colonies and helping those countries to start on the path of 'development' that was history as Europe saw it), culture (introducing better ways of understanding the world, especially through Europe's great store of literature), religion (introducing true belief in the European god [appropriated from the Jews] rather than superstition) and intelligence (European education could bring these peoples at least closer to the level of European intellect). (56)

It is against such terribly unsettling and denigrating discourses of English imperial modernity in its progressing phases that the cultural figures of India and Africa had to begin their efforts to decolonize themselves and their nations. Decolonization is an excruciatingly complex process and the pertinent question that needs to be addressed now is how Indian and African writers responded to the symbolically constructed and derogatory alterity and the concomitant political and cultural domination by the English so as to initiate the process of decolonization.

Fictional Resistance: A Look from the Inside

Muraleedharan. K.C "Fiction as Cultural Resistance: A Study of African and Indian Fiction of the Post-colonial Period " Thesis. Department of English, University of Calicut, 2002

Chapter Three

Fictional Resistance: A Look from the Inside

The capacity to make representations and produce narratives often determines the power that a community or nation can assume over another community or nation. What appears to be fundamental to the English imaginative appropriation of Indian and African cultures, is "the capacity to represent, portray, characterize and depict" (Said, *Culture* 95). The modern western culture, as Said understands it, is distinct in the sense that it could make representations of alien cultures and master or control them (120). This implies that narratives and the power to narrate are crucial to domination. The same logic applies for liberation from domination too. It is all the more so, as Said asserts, in the case of imperial domination and the struggle for emancipation from it:

> The main battle in imperialism is over land, of course, but when it came to who owned the land, who had the right to settle and work on it, who kept it going, who won it back and who now plans its future – these issues were reflected, contested and even for a time decided in the narrative. (*Culture* xiii)

The observation signifies the crucial role of narratives and representation in the life of any community, particularly a community that has been subjected to cultural and political domination of the imperial and colonial kind. It is a fact clearly manifest in the history of humanity that every community

possesses a fund of narratives. These narratives in some cases may be oral, in some other cases written and in still other cases both. They are part of what is generally classified as culture and they, like other cultural artefacts, are produced when the community negotiates the realities and contradictions of life. The Indian and African communities are no exception to this. They too have produced narratives. But at a certain point of their existence, colonialism intervened and initiated a significant confrontation of cultures. Colonial interventions reduced Indians and Africans to monstrosities in cultural terms, subservient and marginal in political terms, and, most importantly, to peoples without land in a material and physical sense. Caught within these contradictions of the subjugated existence and recognizing the necessity to resolve them, the resourceful Indians and Africans sought ways to realize their ideological wish. The advent of print culture and the spread of English education towards the later half of the nineteenth century in the case of India, and a century later in the case of Africa, enabled the educated Indians to be familiar with what Chinweizu calls "the extended fictional prose narrative treating a bourgeois reality"(279). Being new to Indian and African narrative cultures and also because it was the most privileged cultural artefact of the English ruling class, this narrative form, as Panikkar also notes, had greatly appealed to the Indian imagination in the later decades of the nineteenth century (130). In the case of the African imagination also the attraction to it was manifest in the second half of the twentieth century. Though drawn to it out of "intellectual needs and aesthetic sensibility," in Panikkar's words (131), the nineteenth century Indian middleclass intelligentsia

could not straight away make use of this modular narrative form available with the English. Most of the writers of Indian languages who experimented with the available modular form of the extended fictional narrative in English in order to make the genre carry the burden of local experience and expression began their endeavour by such renderings of English fiction that Srinivasa Iyengar calls "adaptation, abridgement, translation and even the Bottomian kinds of transformation" (314). One of the pioneers of the novel in Malayalam, Chandu Menon, before he took to writing used to orally translate English fiction into Malayalam for his circle of intimates. When one of his admirers showed a great interest in Lord Beaconfield's *Henrietta Temple*, he decided to translate it. He began the translation work but could not move on with it. The author himself states that soon he gave it up "as an impossible task." George Irumpayam views Menon's act of leaving the translation unfinished as a result of his conviction that translating an English novel is futile (69). Whether it is the impossibility of the task or the futility of it, it is a fact that Chandu Menon had to give up the translation and undertake the cultural project of writing a narrative in his mother tongue after the style of the extended fictional prose narrative in English. Menon's experience with the extended form of the fictional prose narrative in English was not an isolated one. Bankim Chandra Chatterjee after having written his first extended fictional work in English turned to writing fiction in his mother tongue Bengali. What can be called Bankim Chandra's rejection of English in favour of Bengali reflects the same concerns that inform Menon's abrupt break with the project of translation for writing a novel in Malayalam: a deep engagement with the available

English modular form of the novel and an equally strong ideological desire to radically reconstitute the narrative cultures of their respective languages. Menon when he says in his preface to *Indulekha* in the English translation of Dumurgue that his intention was to create a taste among his Malayalam readers not conversant with English for that class of literature represented in the English language by novels is literally and unambiguously stating his ideological intentions.

Gubbi Murigaradhya, a pioneer of the Kannada novel, also had a strikingly similar experience with the English novel form:

> At first I thought of translating an English 'novel' into Kannada. But when I examined one or two works closely with this intention in mind, I realized some of the matters they treat of went against Hindu Maryade (self-respect) and therefore abandoned my enterprise. Then I thought of turning into prose one of our famous old histories available in verse; but even this did not appeal to me, since this would have meant neglecting the self-respect of the English 'novel'. So I decided to retain Hindu self-respect with regard to content, follow the style of the English 'novel' and write an entirely new kind of narrative. (quoted in Padikkal 227)

Both Menon and Murigaradhya, as well as Bankim Chandra in a different way, left their enterprise incomplete, wrote in their mother tongue after the fashion of the modular form in English and produced entirely new kinds of narrative. As Sivarama Padikkal illustrates, Murigaradhya's work *Sringara Kathana* did not use realistic description characteristic of the English novel, but retained the ornamental descriptive mode of the old narratives of his language, and employed colloquial speech in the dialogues and

inserted descriptions of the Indian landscape in to the narrative (227-228). In the case of Menon, as George Irumpayam maintains, it is a critically accepted fact that his narrative hardly draws on any English narrative for plot, character, background and style. In terms of realistic treatment and coherence it is said to excel the English fiction that Menon thought he was inspired by (70).

The inference that could be drawn from the strikingly similar experiences and practices of these pioneers of the extended fictional form in Indian languages is that domestication of the available modular form has been an intensely ideological activity. The domestication involved a serious consideration of the ideology of form and content. As in Murigaradhya's experience, the Indian content brings about a change in the available modular form and consequently, the first novels in the Indian languages turn out to be entirely new kinds of narratives. If what happened in the case of the novel in Indian languages is the mutative reception of the English novel form, the Indian English novel can be said to have radically reconstituted both the received form and the language. In the case of the Indian novel in English the very process of representing native experience through a language and framework alien to the cultural moorings of the author and the community that he/she belonged to was enough to bring about mutations. The Indian content and narrative tradition in tension with the European narrative form and English language in fact produced an ideological space where the issues of concern to the Indian community could be debated and resolved symbolically. This ideological space enabled the native writer to address both the educated native as well as the British ruling class. According to

Raja Rao, the Irish writers also have appropriated the colonizer's tongue successfully:

> The Irish, remember had done it, not only with Yeats, but again with Frank O'Connor and Sean O'Faolain. Further, Joyce had broken in, as it were, from the side-wings, giving us sound and symbol structures that seemed made for almost the unsayable. So why not Sanskritic (or if you will, Indian) English? (*Meaning* 147)

The emergence of the African novel, in English and other African languages, is not much different from the way it occurred in India. There also the modular forms available are domesticated to meet the ideological needs of the African communities. In short, the reception of the extended form of the fictional narrative into the narrative cultures of what are presently called postcolonial societies can be said to be an ideological transaction. This ideological transaction in the Indian context began in the second half of the nineteenth century while in the case of the African nations it occurred some decades later. The late nineteenth century and early twentieth century Indian fiction focused its attention on advocating reform while some works thematizing resistance to colonialism were also produced. Whatever the focus, the tension between the cultures of the colonizer and the colonized constitutes the fundamental character of the Indian novel in English ever since its emergence. This tension escalated significantly in the nineteen thirties with the increased middle class participation in the anti-colonial struggle. The Indian novel in English consequently took a significant turn at this time. It became a markedly political site for challenging the imperial discourses. In the same way the African fiction in English also, in its originating moment, set about to ask

certain very radical questions that rendered colonial and imperial assumptions, imaginings and claims acutely problematic. Both the Indian and the African writers have in one way or another found European representations or other prejudiced imaginings of their culture as a provocation for writing fiction. One of the pioneers of the African fiction in English, Achebe, on being asked by Lewis Nkosi as to what prompted him to write, responded:

> I was quite certain that I was going to try my hand at writing, and one of the things that set me thinking was Joyce Cary's novel, set in Nigeria, *Mr.Johnson*, which was praised so much and it was clear to me that it was a most superficial picture of - not only of the country - but even of the Nigerian character, and so I thought if this was famous then some one ought to try and look at this from the inside. (Duerden and Pieters 4)

Achebe's response is neither individualistic nor idiosyncratic. From his responses to Lewis Nkosi we learn that Ngugi wa Thiongo, the prominent Kenyan writer, too begins his literary career in the way Achebe does, that is, looking from the inside at the Kenyan character and Kenya in the context of the Mau-Mau war —the violent struggle for Kenyan independence (121). Raja Rao says in the foreword to *Kanthapura* that he is trying "to convey the various shades and omissions of a certain thought movement" (v). The thought movement he refers to is the non-cooperation movement led by Gandhi in the twenties against British colonialism (ix). Obviously Rao too is trying to look from the inside at the Indian character and India in the context of the anti-colonial struggle. Saros Cowasjee acclaims Mulk Raj Anand for his indictment of the cruel customs and tradition of Indian society and British rule in

India (37). Definitely, Anand too, as an insider, is looking at India under the British rule. Though Ngugi, Rao and Anand do not explicitly state what prompted them to writing fiction, it goes without saying that all of them have ideological concerns similar to the ones that informed Achebe's response. In this sense Achebe's response can be considered representative.

What is most striking and significant about Achebe's response is his conviction that "someone ought to try and look at this (Nigeria and Nigerian character) from the inside." Achebe definitely puts a heavy ideological emphasis on the word "inside" and calls for a radical departure from the established and dominant practice of looking at Nigerian reality as the Europeans did, from a colonial perspective. His awareness of the European perception of Africa and Africans became acute when he joined the University of Ibadan. Here, black students like him experienced severe identity crisis on account of the typically demoralizing syllabus. As an arts student Achebe read Shakespeare, Milton and Wordsworth. The syllabus of this University, similar to that taught in British universities, consisted of certain "writers considered relevant to Nigerian students: Conrad, Joyce Cary and Graham Greene." The history classes that Achebe attended were done from the British point of view (8). Encountered by this kind of curriculum and interpretive strategies that valorized the British perspective, the student generation of Ibadan, as Robert M.Wren rightly notes, was "discovering that it had an identity at variance with what the curriculum presumed" (1). Though the discovery did not come easily and did not come to all, Achebe, as Wren points

out, was definitely one of those who recognized the imperial and colonial manipulation of the ideological apparatuses of modernity:

> For some, and Achebe was one of them, the British higher education made available not only the British past but much of the Nigerian past as well. At some point during his studies at Ibadan – from 1948 to 1953 – the future novelist began to correlate his sense of literature and his sense of Nigerian history and tradition. He recalled much of his home life, and he encountered, in the writings of novelists, anthropologists, colonial officers and missionaries, a Nigeria at once similar and alien – like one's own image in a distorting mirror. (2)

Achebe found that the culturally fabricated derogatory and distorted images of Africa in the accounts of novelists, missionaries, anthropologists, colonial officers, travellers and adventurers pass in the garb of realism and absolute truths, while what really happened to the African peoples, cultures and traditions remained unarticulated. In other words, the image of Africa as the land of howling savages and the conception of African culture as contagious primitivism that drives civilized Europeans to madness remained uncontested and dominant. The ideological apparatuses of the colonial regime successfully circulated these myths. The only way to counter this psychological violence, Achebe felt, was to capture and appropriate the ideological apparatuses of modernity to articulate the African perspective. So, Achebe's call to look at the Nigerian life and character from the inside marks the launching of a narrative movement to counter the Euro-centered cultural fabrications of Africa by capturing and appropriating the most powerful cultural artefact of the European middle class, namely the novel. Besides inaugurating the counter-

narrative movement with *Things Fall Apart*, Achebe had also initiated the practice of reading back the canonical texts on Africa from the perspective of the colonized. The practice of reading back canonical English fiction as a means of cultural resistance to imperialism and colonialism has already been elaborately discussed in connection with Achebe in the second chapter. What remains to be studied in his case is how he deploys the fictional space and form to destabilize, deconstruct and historicize Europe's mythmaking of Africa. The idea is to assert that

> African people did not hear of culture for the first time from Europeans: that their societies were not mindless, but frequently had a philosophy of great depth and value and beauty, that they had poetry, and above all, they had dignity. It is this dignity that many African people all but lost during the colonial period and it is this that they must now regain. (Achebe, "Role of" 8)

The nineteenth century Igbo world he calls into existence in *Things Fall Apart* is neither the heart of darkness nor a space sparsely populated with mindless, howling savages given to occasional frenzy and the unspeakable rite of cannibalism. Human communities having both strength and weakness inhabit the Africa that he imagines. For instance, Achebe opens the novel very appropriately with Okonkwo, the central character, who embodies the strength as well as weakness of the Igbo community. He blindly conforms to the customs and rituals of the tribal tradition. But at the same time he is insightful enough to foresee the incipient colonialism and resist it. Achebe portrays him as reminiscing his rise to fame as a wrestler and a farmer. Then in the next chapter Okonkwo is depicted as receiving the message of

the town-crier: it was a call for the Igbo community in Umuofia to gather in the market place the next morning in order to settle the feud with Mbaino (22). In the next move of the story one finds Okonkwo dispatched to Mbaino with an ultimatum (24). Right from the beginning of the narrative, Okonkwo is hardly a fully transparent primitive in the lower rungs of Darwinian conception of evolution. He is an ambitious human being struggling to come up in a somewhat complex society. Achebe peoples the early chapters with men of capabilities: the ambitious Okonkwo, his father and flautist Unoka, the successful musician Okoye, the powerful orator and one of the elders of the clan, Ogbuefi Ezeugo. In these chapters the major concern is the conflict with Mbaino. By depicting the community debating this issue and resolving it, Achebe is in fact categorically dismissing as unfounded the dominant image of the simple minded, primitive African. This is also his way of demonstrating the existence of an African (Igbo) community that consists of individuals seeking upward mobility. Though the community is beset with contradictions it has its own systems to hold together and manage situations of crisis.

Achebe uses the fictional space to undermine the numerous prejudiced "historical accounts" of pacification of African tribes by the colonial regime. "Pacification" is the euphemistic term that the soldier-administrators use to signify the massacre of African communities who resisted colonial expansion and conversion to Christianity. In the context of Achebe's novels this term refers to the colonial mass killings and suppression in the Igbo hinterland between 1900 and 1920. Achebe subverts the privileged European perspective by creating a District Commissioner. In devastating

irony, the narrative concludes with an account of a book on the pacification of certain tribes "the District Commissioner who had toiled to bring civilization to different parts of Africa" is going to write:

> As he walked back to the court he thought about that book. Every day brought him some new material. The story of this man who killed a messenger and hanged himself would make interesting reading. One could almost write a whole chapter on him. Perhaps not a whole chapter but a reasonable paragraph, at any rate. There was so much else to include, and one must be firm in cutting out details. He had already chosen the title of the book, after much thought: *The Pacification of the Primitive Tribes of the Lower Niger.* (168)

By pushing this drivel of a going-to-be-written story which condescendingly sets apart "a reasonable paragraph" for Okonkwo to the end-point of his counter narrative Achebe not only decenters the European accounts of punitive expeditions but also shows in a telling manner how the Igbo resistances to colonial expansion are reduced to the myths of pacification of violent tribes by the British imperial imagination. Okonkwo interests the Commissioner only as a "man who killed a messenger and hanged himself." His suicide in the view of the Commissioner has nothing to do with the colonial presence and the resistance to colonial expansion. This kind of reduction and distortion of African history is set right by Achebe. So fiction writing for him is also a struggle to reclaim the minute history of his community and to resist the cultural oppression of imperialism. For doing this, he challenges not only the imperial vision but the mode of depiction as well. So the Africa that Achebe brings forth is not like the one in the linear narratives

of Conrad and Cary. Their Africa – static, unchanging and conforming to colonial occupation – looks like a romantic myth in comparison to Achebe's Igboland. Achebe's Africa is a living entity where people like Okonkwo resist British colonial expansion that dehumanized and terrorized the Africans. The District Commissioner is cast to mark the English incomprehension as well as misinterpretation of African cultures: for instance, the District Commissioner is informed that suicide is considered by the Igbos as an offence against the Earth and so people of the same clan are forbidden to touch Okonkwo's body. He is also told that they require the help of strangers to bring Okonkwo's body down from the tree and bury him. When he hears this, "the resolute administrator in him (the commissioner) gave way to *the student of primitive customs*" (167, emphasis added). He notes it with great interest, not as the Igbos' awareness of the preciousness of life and their reverence for the same, but as a custom that signifies their primitive thinking and existence. The commissioner is trained to see the Africans as barbarians. He dutifully does so. He never tries to understand the Igbo belief that life is precious and man has no right to take it. In other words, he sees only that which proves the imperial notions of African culture. Okonkwo's self-immolation shows how colonial intervention drives the African to turn upon himself violently. It is in this sense that Obierika, Okonkwo's friend, holds the colonial authority responsible for the abomination Okonkwo commits on himself. By depicting the tragic and abominable end of one of the greatest men of the Igbo community, Achebe is making the African humanity speak out at those who

imagined them as subhuman. He, in fact, reverses the binary savage/civilized.

If European cultural prejudices led to misrepresentations, their advanced military outfit and indiscriminate action spelt disaster to several African communities:

> The European had the guns and the troops; the people had only their blacksmith-made hunting guns (like Okonkwo's inaccurate piece with which he fires at Ekwefi in Chapter V) to shoot with, and the bush to hide in. Resistance almost invariably resulted in what the colonials called 'collective punishment.' No effort would be made to identify guilty individuals; as at Abame, the soldiers came to shoot people and to destroy dwellings. In view of the great traditions of British jurisprudence, of the rule of law, this may be surprising. Indeed it appears to have troubled some people in London, though what action should be taken seems to have been a puzzle. Doubtless some idealists argued that the practice should be forbidden – but to forbid it meant an end to 'pacification' since the white man could not rule these independent stateless societies save by terror. (Wren 14)

Colonialism thus unleashed cultural violence that drives people like Okonkwo to self-immolation. The physical violence it let loose in its scramble for Africa wiped off entire villages like Abame. In Achebe's narrative, and so in history too, the British are more violent than the African people they claimed they were trying to pacify and civilize. Achebe shows convincingly that the African counter violence is far more justifiable as a reaction to the violent European scramble for Africa.

Achebe's attempts to contain the western mode of historicizing begin with the title itself. He draws upon the Irish

resistance tradition available in Yeats to conceive an alternative to the dominant western conception of history as linear. This is an inevitability for Achebe who is also making what Edward Said prefers to call "a voyage in" or "a spiral away and extrapolation from Europe and the West" (*Culture* 288) as Yeats did "in seeking historical alternatives to the nativist impasse" in his attempts to lift the burdens of Ireland's colonial afflictions. The full system of cycles, pernes, and gyres are seminal to Yeats's efforts at decolonization of the Irish culture (*Culture* 220-238). By his eloquent allusion to the cyclic conception of history, anarchy and the collapse of a civilization which Yeats recreates to signify what the English did to his country and culture Achebe not only punctures the linear conception of history that legitimates colonialism as a necessary evil but also undermines the domestication and containment of the Irish culture by the English. Here Achebe, perhaps without intention but with remarkable political correctness, highlights the anti-imperial historical formation as the fundamental and binding characteristic of human societies that were subjected to prolonged imperial and colonial domination by the European nations. Achebe is implicitly saying that Ireland is "in but not of the West" (cited in Stuart Hall 246). The use of proverbs, seasonality, festivals, rituals, modes of transaction of goods and Igbo-specific ways of naming generations as signifiers of a contested culture provide contrasts with the disastrously gendered, more hierarchic, intensely capital-oriented and heavily exploitative European institutions that were heading to success in the cultural conflict. In the narrative these signifiers of

traditional life function to resist the dominance of the Western historicizing of the African/Nigerian reality.

Achebe's second novel, *Arrow of God*, tells the rest of the story of the conflict between the Igbo community and, in the words of Mudimbe, the "three major figures" of Africa's colonization by the West: the soldier, the explorer and the missionary (46). In this narrative also white myths of Africa are strongly contested by several means. Ezeulu – the chief priest of Ulu – as a character is a very complex figure who almost singlehandedly strives for harmony and peace among neighbouring communities and seeks measures to learn the white man's ways. He argues strongly for harmony and peace among the tribes and asserts, to the assembled Umuaro, that "Ulu," of which God he is the chief priest, "would not fight an unjust war" with Okperi (334). He even invites the anger of his clan by witnessing against Umuaro before the white man who sat in judgment over the land dispute between Umuaro and Okperi. Ezeulu's way of negotiating the colonial presence is by sending his own son to learn the white man's ways. He obliges the white administrator "Wintabota" by sending his son Oduche to the mission but at the same time he is sensible enough to understand that "when a handshake goes beyond the elbow" it turns to another thing (332). It is evident that Ezeulu is in no way the stereotypical African fetish priest of European imagination. He knows what is happening to his community and culture and he is resourceful enough at least to try to negotiate the contradictions brought in by the coming of the white man. A brief analysis of the major decisions he takes would show how he strives hard but fails in his attempt at negotiating colonialism. One such instance is his

decision against war with Okperi. He objects to war for two reasons: There is no justice in demanding a land that for years belonged to Okperi and a war would give the white man – Wintabota and his soldiers – an opportunity for "pacification." The community rejects Ezeulu's opposition and wages the war. Just as Ezeulu fears, Winterbottom intervenes in the fight between the villages to "pacify" the Igbos of Umuaro. He seizes and breaks their guns. Then, he settles the case by giving the disputed land to Okperi (347). Ezeulu witnesses against his clan and some of his people think that he helps Okperi to have the land. Another major decision he takes is to send his son Oduche to mission. This decision furthers the suspicion of the community. Here also, Ezeulu is misjudged. His intention is to let Oduche learn the whiteman's ways to enable the clan to resist Christianity better. No body sees it that way. The priest of Ezedimili and the rival of Ezeulu, Nwaka, finds his action objectionable and he indirectly but convincingly accuses Ezeulu of friendship with a "white body" (467). Ezeulu's friend Akuebue's words capture the attitude of the community at large in these matters:

> But I must repeat what I said before and if you don't want to listen you can stop your ears. When you spoke against the war with Okperi you were not alone. I too was against it and so were many others. But if you send your son to join strangers in desecrating the land you will be alone. You may go and mark it on the wall to remind you that I said so. (457)

The oppositional attitude of the community grows with Oduche's desecration of the python and Winterbottom's offer of Chiefship to Ezeulu. He knows, like Winterbottom, that his community neither had nor would it tolerate a centralized authority like a king or a

Chief. So Ezeulu declines the offer and the colonial authority detains him for defiance. This in turn causes severe conflict within the community. Ezeulu, on his release, refuses to declare the Yam festival. He does so to register his protest at the community which failed to react to their priest's unjust detention by the colonial authority. But his strategy suffers a set back when a significant number of people of the clan choose to follow the Christian rituals.

> The Christian harvest which took place a few days after Obika's death saw more people than even Goodcountry could have dreamed. In his extremity many a man sent his son with a yam or two to offer to the new religion and to bring back the promised immunity. Thereafter any yam harvested in his fields was harvested in the name of the son. (555)

The largescale conversion mentioned above takes place because people are blind to the colonial designs. Ezeulu's obstinacy in not declaring the festival can very well be seen as a strategy, perhaps an unconscious one, on his part to connect the delay in proclamation to colonial interventions. He wants the community to see that the colonial authority is responsible for the delay. He expects them to react accordingly. But the community, it appears so, reads what happened in an altogether different way by connecting his obstinacy, the sudden death of his son Obika and also his dementia:

> To them the issue was simple. Their god had taken sides with them against his headstrong and ambitious priest and thus upheld the wisdom of their ancestors –that no man however great was greater than his people; that no one won judgment against his clan. (555)

In so reading, they miss precisely what Ezeulu wanted them to see. When Achebe writes that "Ulu in destroying his priest had also

brought disaster on himself," in a sense he is giving his approval of Ezeulu's attitude in preference to that of the community. This may be because community did in a rather slavish and blind manner what they accused Ezeulu of doing.

The narrative resists European narratives by means of other strategies too. The strategic employment of narrative space to problematize the European image of Africa can be examined as an instance here. The picture of Africa that Winterbottom, the Captain in charge of the Government station, has is not basically different from what we get in Conrad. Winterbottom wonders about the "unspeakable rites" and the "heartbeat of African darkness." Africa to him is "the dear old land of waking nightmares" (349). His advice to Tony Clarke is directed to evoke a sense of the supposed inscrutability of the natives:

> One thing you must remember in dealing with natives is that like children they are great liars. They don't lie simply to get out of trouble. Sometimes they would spoil a good case by a pointless lie. (357)

But he appreciates Ezeulu, for him a priest-king, as honest and for a moment in the narrative he metamorphoses into an anthropologist and theorizes what was to the European the rather unusual deviation of this African into honesty and straightforwardness:

> But he was a most impressive figure of a man. He was very light in complexion, almost red. One finds people like that now and again among the Ibos. I have a theory that the Ibos in the distant past assimilated a small non-negroid tribe of the same complexion as the red Indians. (357)

The idealization of Ezeulu by Winterbottom is nothing but imperial politics. Those who colluded with the imperial expansion and rule become "noble savages," just as the native people who did not participate in the colonial economy become "lazy" in the eyes of the imperial authority. Implicit in the words that Achebe makes Winterbottom utter is a concoction of geographical racism, biological racism and cultural fetishism that is characteristic of the European thought. It is the belief that Africa by its very geographical positioning, far from the land of Christianity, is an abode of the sly and the evil. Just because one is an African, that is a *non-white*, there is every chance that he is a depository of all undesirable impulses. Cultural fetishism underscores the strong belief of Europeans that diffusion of their culture can cure what they perceive as the maladies of African culture. By making Winterbottom a living embodiment of the imperial ideology Achebe subverts the self-legitimizing rhetoric of modernity.

The narrative that the District Commissioner in Achebe's first novel thinks of writing becomes a reality in *Arrow of God.* Winterbottom gives his subordinate officer, Tony Clark, a copy of the book: *The Pacification of the Primitive Tribes of the Lower Niger* (352). Achebe destabilizes this prejudiced account of pacifications with the larger narrative of the African perception of the colonial brutality. Winterbottom's presentation of the African as a child and great liar comes immediately after the scenes of detailed debate within the community over the conflict with Okperi. The reader who is already equipped with the details of what happened and how it came about, when posited with the highly reductive and naïve report of the captain, would invariably spurn the European version.

That is, the embedded European version is circumscribed and rendered powerless. Achebe juxtaposes the African and European perceptions of colonialism and thereby exposes the latter as superfluous, unjustifiable and unbecoming of a culture that claimed to be more advanced in many ways.

It follows from Achebe's practice of fiction writing that a look from the inside is endowed with the potential to unsetttle imperial perspective, its cultural prejudices and structures. So it is not at all surprising that his writings in fact inaugurated a counter narrative movement in which creatively inclined people from different parts of Africa actively participated. Of the writers inspired by Achebe, Ngugi wa Thiongo stands out as one who has adapted the extended fictional narrative to resist colonial cultural and political aggressions in Kenya. As a prominent writer in English and later as a significant writer of fiction in Gikuyu, Ngugi can be said to have added greater dimensions to cultural resistance. People like Ngugi, Gerald Moore observes, were singled out by their clan for a special education to equip them for leading the "community out of the division and cultural confusion" that colonial intervention caused (263). Ngugi says that though he read R.L.Stevenson, Peter Abrahams and D.H.Lawrence with interest, it is the African writers like Achebe who helped him to take a unique position vis-à-vis African culture:

> What the African writers did for me in a way that no other English writer could do for me was to make one feel that they were really speaking to me: the situation about which they were writing was one which was immediate to me, also I found for the first time I was talking with my own people. I was talking with characters whom I knew, in a

> way, who had agonies which I had seen with our own people in Kenya and at that point I felt that if there could be Africans who could write such stories, I could write as well. (Duerden and Pieters 123).

Recognizing his role as a cultural figure and identifying his mode of expression as the extended prose fiction, Ngugi began his writing career with a narrative titled first as *The Black Messiah*, later retitled *The River Between*, of which the author himself speaks:

> *The River Between*, in the novel itself there is physically a river between two hills that houses two communities which keep quarreling but I maintain, you know, that the river between can be a factor which brings people together as well as being a factor of separation. It can both unite and separate. (125)

The central theme in Ngugi's first novel is the Gikuyu-missionary conflict of the 1930s on the questions of circumcision of women and the right to education. But the larger project of the narrative is definitely what Said calls "the slow and often bitterly disputed recovery of geographical territory by the charting of cultural territory"(*Culture* 252). The narrative, writes Said, painstakingly "redoes Heart of Darkness by inducing life into Conrad's river" (254) and peopling the valley which to the European imagination was nothing but blank spaces where bands of degenerate and primitive figures wandered about:

> The river was called Honia, which meant cure, or bring back to life. Honia river never dried: it seemed to possess a strong will to live, scorning droughts and weather changes. And it went on in the same way, never hurrying, never hesitating. People saw this and were happy. (Ngugi, *River* 1)

The importance of the river and the life in the valley is reasserted some pages later with greater emphasis on life in the valley:

> The importance of Honia could never be overestimated. Cattle, goats and people drew their water from there. Perhaps that was why it was called 'Cure' and the valley, the valley of life; *that is what it was, a valley of life.* (26, emphasis added)

The kind of emphasis that Ngugi gives to the river and the life in the valley is characteristic of the writings of the people who have been subjected to loss of land. In the case of Kenya, a white settlement colony where the land of many a native was lost to the white man and the Kenyans were confined to reserves, there was, invariably, bitter contestation over the territory. That is, Ngugi's concern is not only to show that Africa is a land of civilizations but also to claim and recapture the territory lost culturally as well as politically. It is as part of this ideological need to establish the right over the land that several characters in the fictional landscape come up with claims over the geographical terrains where the story is imagined to take place. For the same reason one finds warnings and predictions about the white man's plausible entry of the land and the ways to tackle the consequent domination. For instance, the ridges that flank the river Honia are the abode of great men for whom the white man's coming and domination is a significant issue. Mugo wa Kibiro, the great Gikuyu seer of the old is one such. His message to the people of the ridges and the land around is significantly one that warned them about the plausible coming of the white man: "There shall come a people with clothes like butterflies" and "these were the white men" (2). Chege, father of the protagonist Waiyaki, is a seer of a sort and a descendent of Mugo.

He takes his son after his initiation by the traditional rite into manhood to the sacred place on a small hill. On the way to the hill he stops significantly near every plant and tree explaining to the young one about them. The adolescent boy inches forward to maturity when these hidden things of the hills are revealed to him. This is an external voyage that demonstrates the African's intimacy to his land as well as long time possession of it. It is also, on the other hand, an internal voyage or a journey in head and heart into the tradition for which the plants, trees and the land as signifiers are the points of beginning. Ngugi seems to assert that the knowledge of the hills, its secrets and deep love for it that come through a process of long and intimate life in the land is fundamental to one's right to stake the claim. For it is after establishing his knowledge of everything around that Chege begins to trace the tradition of the people there and their right over the land:

> 'Do you see all this land, this country stretching beyond and joining the sky?' His voice was deep and calm, Waiyaki realized that it was charged with strong feelings. He whispered:
>
> 'Yes.'
>
> 'It is beautiful to the eye —-'
>
> 'It is beautiful.'
>
> 'And young and fertile.'
>
> 'Yes. Young and fertile.'
>
> 'All this is our land'
>
> 'You know Gikuyu and Mumbi ----'
>
> 'Father and mother of the tribe.' (20)

This moment of assertion of the right over the land is followed by a reference to the imminent crisis and the means to overcome it. Chege tells his son that he too, like Mugo, warned the people about the Siriana Missionary Centre but they did not bother:

> When the white man came and fixed himself in Siriana, I warned all the people. But they laughed at me. May be I was hasty. Perhaps I was not the one. (24)

So he wants Waiyaki to

> Arise. Heed the prophecy. Go to the Mission place. Learn all the wisdom and all the secrets of the white man. But do not follow his vices. Be true the people and the ancient rites. (24)

But the ways of the white man do not, however, exist in perfect harmony with the tribe's ways as Chege had thought. The Church in spite of its occasional and diplomatic compromises is bent on locating in the tribal practices rituals of barbarity. In the Kenyan context it is the female circumcision that becomes highly controversial. For the Christians the death of Muthoni after circumcision is a confirmation of the barbarity of Gikuyu customs. Muthoni being the daughter of Joshua, a pious convert and leader of the converts, her death due to circumcision becomes doubly controversial. Reverend Livingstone, the head of the mission at Siriana, the single missionary figure into whom Ngugi reduces the white Man's power and knowledge, decides that "circumcision had now to be fought by all means in their hands" (65). Here also, as in Achebe, things begin to fall apart following measures by the Christians to check what is to them a ritual of barbarity. Ngugi is making Waiyaki recall what happened and in his thoughts he

points an accusing finger at the intervention of colonialism in the form of Christianity for the terrible split in the community:

> Had the missionary come to widen the split between Makuyu and Kameno? He saw the two ridges glaring at one another menacingly. Were they going to fight it out between themselves, the missionary encouraging his followers? (68)

The missionary attitude is indeed one that aggravated fissiparous tendencies. It is especially so with regard to education:

> The children of those who defied the laws of the Church and continued with their tribal customs would have to leave Siriana. And no child of a pagan would again be allowed into school unless the child was a refugee. Even then the child would have to renounce circumcision. (69)

For many a Kenyan who values education as an efficient tool for upward mobility in society, the leaving of Siriana is nothing but inflaming. The situation becomes highly volatile when denial of education is coupled with

> the most recent alienation of land near Siriana forcing many people to move from places they had lived in for ages, while others had to live on the same land, working for their new masters. (73)

One finds Ngugi's young men vigorously and passionately discussing the denial of education and the capture of land by the white man. Unlike and, of course, antithetical to, habitual European imaginings, they are persons who take stock of what is happening in the ridges and the Gikuyuland in general and seek ways to counter it. For instance Kinuthia's perception of the situation and his ability to analyze explodes the European myth of the irrational, wild and sub-human African:

> Take Siriana Mission for example, the man of God came peacefully. They were given a place. Now see what has happened. They have invited their brothers to come and take all the land. Our country is invaded. This government post behind Makuyu is a plague in our midst. (74)

The immediate outcome of such perception and analysis is the setting up of what is called people's own schools to accommodate those whom the churchmen branded "the children of darkness"(78). None other than Waiyaki, the protagonist of the narrative, establishes the first native school, Marioshoni. Though he leads the movement to establish an alternative to Siriana education, Waiyaki stands for the unity of the ridges rather than for a self-defeating and destructive fight within the tribe. He does not want Makuyu and Kameno tear apart one another. But his obsessive search for reconciliation is in itself baseless and imbued with Christian values as Gerald Moore observes:

> Witness his obsessive search for 'reconciliation', which totally ignores the impossibility of reconciling those who utterly reject tribal belief and custom with those who seek, with equal fanaticism, to uphold them. (267)

Kinuthia perceives the mind of the community rightly and he wonders whether Waiyaki knew that

> people wanted action now, that the new enthusiasm and awareness embraced more than the mere desire for learning. People wanted to move forward. They could not do so as long as their lands were taken, as long as their children were forced to work in the settled ridges, as long as their women and men were forced pay hut-tax. (135)

Waiyaki's love for Joshua's daughter Nyambura complicates the situation further. In the heat of the call to protect the purity of the tribe, the elders look upon Waiyaki's involvement with the girl on the enemy side with suspicion. As one who had taken the oath to protect the purity of the tribe, his affair with the uncircumcised girl appears to be nothing less than betrayal and treachery to his age-grade. All this precipitates the tragic failure of the one to whom the community looks forward as a saviour. Waiyaki's failure and implied death at the conclusion of the narrative is very significant. It marks, according to Moore, a point in the history of the Gikuyuland when the Christian adherents are all set to join the ranks of the Home Guard to defend the rule by the white man while the more militant men of the tribe prepare to shift to the forest to declare war on those who took their land and those who facilitated it (268).

As in Achebe, in Ngugi too, the African community under British intervention is in constraints and falling apart but it nevertheless tries to negotiate the realities of colonial occupation by assimilation as well as opposition. Muthoni's revolt is more than a conflict between a father and a daughter. She in fact defies the patriarchal authority of the colonizer and the imposed religion by getting herself circumcised. Ngugi counters the European version of Africa as stagnant, barbaric and passive by positing the Gikuyuland as a dynamic culture with various interest groups in operation. Though beset with internal conflict, it is hardly a disoriented community and in confronting colonial designs it suffers heavily. Ngugi demonstrates that the community falls apart not because of its infight and lack of resourcefulness and because of the highly

sophisticated and brutal weapons-economic exploitation, pseudo-psychology, pseudo-anthropology, cultural indoctrination and physical as well as cultural violence – employed to bring about colonial conquest.

In *Weep not, Child*, Ngugi depicts the deployment of weapons of colonization and the consequent damage on the Gikuyu culture in a more elaborate manner. The protagonist of this work is Njoroge and he belongs to a family that suffers heavily from British colonial violence. Njoroge's mother, Nyokabi, had valid reasons to persuade her husband Ngotho to send their son to school:

> Her other son had died in the Big War. It had hurt her much. Why should he have died in a white man's war? She did not want to sacrifice what was hers to other people. If Nyoroge could now get all the white man's learning, would Ngotho even work for Howlands and especially as the wife was reputed to be a hard woman? Again, would they as a family continue living as *Ahoi* in another man's land, a man who clearly resented their stay. (19)

The death of her son in the Second World War and the family's squatter status that urge Nyokabi to plan the future of Nyoroge in a different way are direct consequences of the imperial expansion. A little later in the narrative Ngotho describes how all these happened. Ngotho's historical end-piece to the Gikuyu legend begins with a question that his story in fact provoked in Nyoroge: Where did the land go? Mentioning that he himself asked that question in waking and sleeping, Ngotho continues:

> Then came the white man as had long been prophesied by Mugo wa Kibiro, that Gikuyu seer of the old. He came to the country of ridges, far away from here. Mugo had told the people of the coming of the

white man. He had warned the tribe. So the white man came and took the land. But at first not the whole of it. (29)

It was then the second big war came and teenagers like Ngotho were taken by force to make roads and clear forests for the warring white man. When the war ended and he returned

> The land was gone. My father and many others had been moved from our ancestral lands. He died lonely, a poor man waiting for the white man to go. Mugo had said this would come to be. The white man did not go and he died a *Muhoi* on this very land. (29)

If Ngotho fought in the war only to be dispossessed, the plight of the next generation who fought the second big war, Boro's for instance, is equally miserable:

> He too had gone to war, against Hitler. He had gone to Egypt, Jerusalem and Burma. He had seen things. He had often escaped death narrowly. But the thing he could not forget was the death of step-brother, Mwangi. For whom or what had *he* died? (30)

Boro too returned from war to be unemployed and landless and his whispered reaction to Ngotho's story anticipates the turn of events to come in the history of Kenyan freedom struggle:

> As he listened to the story, all these things came into his mind with a growing anger. How could these people have let the white man occupy the land without acting? And what superstitious belief in the prophecy?
>
> In a whisper that sounded like a shout, he said, 'To hell with the prophecy.' (30)

Boro's anger is directed not only at the white man who took the land but also at his own father, a patriarchal and representative figure, who according to him, like the people of that generation, failed to stop it.

If the colonial intervention dispossessed Ngotho and so many others it had also made some of the native people, Jacobo for instance, rich and powerful. Jacobo is "the first black person who was allowed to cultivate the cash crop pyrethrum" (68) who becomes rich and by political alliance with the white he becomes a chief also. He is given chiefship evidently because he stands with the whiteman in the general strike to defeat it and in the attempt gets attacked by Ngotho. Ngotho, on the other hand, is told to leave Jacobo's land; he loses his job in the settled area and is subjected to persecution along with his family when emergency is declared to quell the Mau Mau. In the wake of the Mau Mau the colonial machinery becomes an engine of oppression:

> It was said that some European soldiers were catching people at night, and having taken them to the forest would release them and ask them to find their way back home. But when their backs are turned they would be shot dead in cold blood. The next day this would be announced as a victory over Mau Mau. (95)

When Jacopo who is part of this machinery is killed especially for the arrest and murder of the barber, Nganga the carpenter and four others, Nyoroge and his father Ngotho are arrested and tortured. Howlands, Ngotho's former employer but now the brutal District Officer, lets Ngotho go home "more dead than alive" (144) on finding that Boro is actually the person behind the death of Jacopo. Ngotho, it is revealed later, told a lie to shield his son Kamau who he thought killed Jacobo. Nyoroge's visit to Jacobo's house a few days before Jacopo gets murdered throws suspicion on him also. This leads to his arrest at the school, interrogation and torture of the third degree. Just before the narrative concludes Ngotho dies.

Boro who returned just that moment, leaves for the forest, with blessings from his father, once again to fight. The concluding chapter focuses on the tragic and broken figure of Nyoroge caught between the Mau Mau and the white violence, contemplating suicide but saved in the nick of the moment from it by his mother. The condition of the family that Nyoroge recalls before he tries to take his life is emblematic of the condition of Kenya that colonialism precipitated:

> But he had wanted to see the two women (his mothers) and sleep under the same roof for the last time. He recalled Ngotho, dead. Boro would soon be executed while Kamau would be in prison for life. Nyoroge did not know what would happen to Kori in detention. He might be killed like those who had been beaten to death at Hola Camp. (152)

Colonialism creates aggressive and fanatic rebels like Boro and ambiguous compromisers like Nyoroge for which neither of them can be held responsible. If Boro is the product of colonial land grabbing and physical violence, Nyoroge is the product of its cultural violence. It is significant that Nyoroge often tries to be political– his interest in Jomo Kenyatta and Kimathi who represent the two mutually supporting faces of the Kenyan freedom struggle is obvious – but he never becomes political in the way Boro is. Partly, this ambivalence is an outcome of the training at Siriana under white men whose ideological positions are well revealed in the passage given below:

> But he believed that the best, the really excellent could only come from the white man. He brought up his boys to copy and cherish the white man's civilization as the only hope of the mankind and especially of the black races. He was automatically against all black politicians who in

> any way made people to be discontented with the white man's rule and civilizing mission. (130)

This passage that immediately precedes Nyoroge's arrest and brutal torture under the supervision of sadistic Howlands in fact reveals the rather inhuman underside of the self-proclaimed British civilizing mission. To Howlands land is god and the Mau Mau claim over the land is to him more than a defiance for which they should be reduced to nothingness. And he does it. Howlands's perception of Mau Mau and black men, given below, bespeaks the way Africans are conceived and thus deprived of land and human rights for centuries:

> Who were black men and Mau Mau anyway, he asked for the thousandth time? Mere savages! A nice word – savages. Previously he had not thought of them as savages or otherwise, simply because he had not thought of them at all, except as a part of the farm – the way he thought of donkeys or horses in his farm except that in the case of donkeys and horses one had to think of their of their food and a place for them to sleep. (87)

Ngugi counters this imperial version by enveloping Howlands and his jaundiced perception with the narrative that centralizes the experiences of the Gikuyu community in its confrontation with British colonial and imperial incursions.

The discussion on Ngugi and Achebe for the time being may be concluded on the note that they succeeded in exercising the right to self representation, which in fact is also the right to see the community's history whole, coherently and integrally, through their fiction. This results not only in the reclamation of fictive territory and restoration of African culture with the deserving primacy but

also in the rejection of the primacy of Europe as the sole advanced culture and the self-proclaimed civilizing agency of the world. In short, one should say that unlike European writers who looked *upon* Africa from the world, Achebe and Ngugi looked at Africa and at the world *from* Africa and the impact of that was, as already mentioned, tremendously subversive and unhinging to the imperial ideology and the power structures activated by it.

Among the Indian writers who pioneered the extended fictional mode to articulate their responses to colonialism both Rao and Anand are significant. Born into a family of silver smiths in 1905, Anand was shaped by an age of protest. In the Indian context the protest was directed at the cruel customs and tradition as well as the oppressive British domination. Saros Cowasjee notes that Anand attacked the British obliquely in some of his fiction while in certain other works his indictment of British colonialism was frontal (37). He was so radical in his critique of the British rule that his friendship with some of the English men of letters was broken. Cowasjee observes:

> Indeed so virulent and consistent was Anand's attack on British rule that it cost him the friendship of Stephen Spender, V.S.Pritchett and Leonard Woolf, all of whom were favourably disposed to the question of India's independence. (37)

Anand himself confirms his preoccupation with anti-imperial resistance when he is asked in an interview by K.D.Varma to comment on his role as a pioneer of Indian fiction in English. Life of Indians (his thrust is on fiction writers), according to him, "was a political struggle against imperial oppression." He elaborates that when he was in exile in London "he felt the urge to write a

confessional" about the Indian condition and "the confessional became the source of (my) protest from which all the novels have come" (93). In a critical response to Anand's first work of fiction, *Untouchable*, R.T. Robertson considers it as an "archetypal presentation of the colonial situation" (104). He identifies Bakha, the central character, as an archetype, the first one of the kind in Indian fiction representing communities caught between Hindu caste hierarchy and colonial hegemony (99). Saros Cowasjee also makes this point, perhaps a little more strongly, when he remarks that Anand's "narratives introduced a whole range of new people who had seldom entered the realms of literature" and "more than all this he attacked British rule in India" (37). Anand underscores the point made by both these critics regarding his oeuvre when he defines his place in the line of Indian writers who pioneered the anti-imperial narrative movement:

> The major novel of Bankim Chaterji, *Krishan Kanta's Will*, deals with the Brown barons, created by the British, Tagore's *Gora* creates middle class characters below the Brown barons, and *Home and the World* is about an exalted liberal home and females like Bimla. Sarat Chatterji goes beyond Bankim Chatterji and Tagore, writes about lower middle class sections. Prem Chand wrote about the peasants of Eastern India. I began with untouchables and continued with the others rejected, considering even the exalted princes rejected because under imperialism everyone was untouchable. (Varma 93)

Anand, in other words, combines the cause of the liberation of India from British imperial domination with the liberation of those who are marginalized within the traditional power structures. As a writer, his choice is to write back, which is also one of the ways of

fighting back, indeed a cultural mode of fighting back. It mainly involves the creation of an India from the margins, one that challenges the imperialist myths and claims built through centuries of Euro-centered discourses. It would be profitable to see how Anand translated his political concerns against British imperialism into textual situations and imagined an India that countered the stereotypical and derogatory constructs popularized by European discourses.

Anand's first work of extended fiction, *Untouchable*, is a severe indictment of casteism in India which according to him was one of the two major obstacles in the path of India's cultural reorientation. He devotes the major part of the narrative to depict the fiendish segregation and exploitation of a section of people in the name of caste. But Anand also knows that the other major obstacle is the alien authority that constricts out lives in every way and so it is possible to find in all his fictional works including the one under discussion responses of disapproval to the presence of the British. Bakha, the protagonist of the work, likes the British and takes to their ways because, unlike the upper-caste Indians, the "Tommies had treated him as a human being" (12). Throughout the day the upper-caste Hindus and his own harsh father insult and abuse him to the effect that by the end of the day he wishes "he could die" (135). Anand at this point of the narrative makes Bakha meet Colonel Hutchinson, Chief of the local Salvation Army. The somewhat long encounter with missionary teaches him to his surprise that Yessu Messih regards a Brahmin and a Bhangi the same. Drawn by the hope of a pair of cast-off trousers as gift from the missionary Bakha accompanies him to his house. There

at the house after he witnesses the sudden anger of Hutchinson's wife Bakha realizes to his horror the depth of the white woman's contempt for him. Her reaction at his sight stirs in him the bitter experience he had that morning when he accidentally touched a caste Hindu. Bakha remembers how the man abused him. The man called the people around and humiliated Bakha by slapping him in public (52-57). Teresa Hubel considers this incident as the central and particularly powerful event of the story (164). Anand places Bakha's encounter with the Colonel's wife in contrast to his humiliation in public by the caste Hindu. Though the upper-caste Hindu male and the English mem-sahib treat him alike, the response of the latter is more terrorizing and nauseating to him:

> The colonel's wife had also opened her little eyes like that, behind her spectacles. That had frightened Bakha, frightened him more than the thrust of the touched man's eyeballs, for she was a mem-sahib, and the frown of a mem-sahib had the strange quality of the unknown, unchartered seas of her anger behind it. To Bakha, therefore, the few words which she had uttered carried a dread a hundred times more terrible than the fear inspired by the whole tirade of abuse by the touched man. (*Untouchable* 149)

The words "unknown" and "unchartered" that qualify the gaze of the white woman in fact alludes to the colonial gaze that deprives Bakha (the native who is already dispossessed in some ways) of the remains of his human dignity. Immediately after this terrifying experience Bakha finds himself on the Grand Trunk Road, the very road and its surroundings that in Kipling's depiction is a miniature India conspicuous for its total absence of any signs of resistance to British domination, but at the same time famous for his celebration

of the *parao* remarkable for its "Asiatic disorder" (Kipling 69). Kipling sees there everything that is symptomatic of the Asiatic disorder but nothing that unsettles the Great Game of British control over India. But Anand makes Bakha see in the very same place the nationally organized and politically anti-imperialist India ready to shake the very foundations of the British Empire:

> The British government is nothing. Every country in Europe and America is passing through terrible convulsions, politically, economically and industrially. The people of Vilayat, the Angrez log are less convulsed on account of their innate conservatism, but very soon every country on earth including Vilayat will be faced with problems that cannot be solved without a fundamental change, in the mental and moral outlook of the West. (154)

If there exists no threat to British rule in the India that Kipling imagines and activates in *Kim*, Anand's India is evidently a terrain highly charged with the spirit of nationalism and the seemingly unifying power of Gandhism. When Kipling makes the half-Indian Kim serve the imperial interests of keeping India within control, Anand brings his protagonist from the fold of a marginalized and exploited community to the national stream in the march for freedom. In fact, Bakha's journey through the oppressive experiences is designed to culminate in golbagh, the setting for a mammoth national meeting. There he witnesses the mass movement on its course to dismantle the imperial machinery. Moreover, he learns that the movement addresses the issues of people like him who are branded outcastes and put to terrible persecution and exploitation. Anand concludes the story on the note of hope that things for the marginalized and exploited in India

would change for good with their merger in the national movement. The merging of the fragments into the unified one – the nation – that Bakha witnesses signifies such a hope. But such unification in the Indian context at that time invariably means the imminent destabilization of the British Empire. Anand suggests this figuratively. Through Bakha he directs the reader's attention to the complete alienation of the British in India. It is emblematically spelt by the terribly lonely and solitary figure of the English policeman at the meeting standing ignored by everybody including people from his own nation (175).

Coffee and tea plantations in India in the years of British rule were sites where the ideology of imperialism was put to practice in all its ruthlessness. The power structure of the plantations and exercise of authority there closely resembled the exploitative machinery of the empire. In reality these plantations were miniature empires in terms of oppression. The language and literature of Indian experience of imperialism highlights the close correspondence between these two exploitative power structures by making the plantation a metaphor – an eloquent one – for a land subjected to domination and ruthless exploitation by an alien authority. In the Indian context the British tea and coffee plantations were major sites where the economic blood of the nation was spilled considerably. Anand's third work of fiction, *Two Leaves and a Bud*, deals with British imperialism by focusing on the Macpherson Tea Estate as a metaphor for the empire. The national community of this work also, like in most of other works of Anand, is drawn from the margins of Indian society: Gangu, an uprooted field labourer, his family and his co-workers. Gangu

leaves his village in the Punjab and reaches the tea estate situated in the hills of Assam along with his wife Sajani and children Leila and Budhoo. Intimations of an impending doom trouble him throughout the journey. He in fact enters an acutely perilous and imperialist power structure where malaria takes away his wife and the English man Reggie Hunt, the assistant manager, shoots him to death at point blank range when he tries to stop his daughter Leila from being molested. The judgment of the court that exonerates Reggie Hunt and the armed militia airdropped to terrorize the striking workers to submission illustrate the violence of the British institutions and the hollowness of their claim to justice and fair rule. The work also builds up a counter view through de la Havre, the physician and the intended husband of the manager's daughter, Barbara. Havre being a strong sympathizer of the workers' cause in particular and the Indian cause in general, he is asked to quit.

The account on Anand and his fiction brings to light the political and cultural concerns evoked by imperialism and the means adopted to articulate it. Concerns are historically determined, so are the means of articulating them. Hence it is not very surprising that Rao shares the concerns as well as the mode of articulation that one finds in Anand, Achebe and Ngugi, writers who belong to colonized cultures distant in space though non-distant in time. It is something more than mere coincidence. It is the grand structures of imperialism evoking responses in a more or less similar and systematic way. In the 1920s Indians started confronting the British domination in a more culturally and politically organized way. Consequently Indian fiction turns into a

visibly anti-imperial space. Rao wrote his first book of fiction in English after what can be called his Kannada phase when he wrote in Kannada a novel that did not survive and four other pieces of which one is a verse composition. These pieces of composition, as Naik rightly points out, have in them in traces the themes of conflict with the West and the cultural estrangement caused by British imperialism (28). In the verse pieces, he conceives his motherland as an adorned goddess, considers himself as "fallen" and finds relief in singing glories of his land. In the prose piece he describes his journey abroad as a pilgrimage to Europe. He feels wretched on leaving Karnataka and counts even a drop of water of his land as more valuable than the nectar of foreign lands (24). If at all these pieces reveal anything, they reveal the condition of a colonial subject with a grave identity crisis arising out of double exile: the real loss of land to the British on the one hand and the figurative loss of it on account of his self-imposed exile in France on the other. He leaves the land when the land and community need him badly. Absence in this context of surging nationalism amounts to sin. But exile for him had also facilitated association with some radically political writers like Ignazio Silone and Andre Malraux. The former, a writer of socialist inclination, who combined folklore and politics to narrate the story of a village resisting tyranny provided for Rao an experience and perspective comparable to that of his community struggling against British imperialism. The latter, as Rao himself admits, inspired him to "stretch the English idiom" to meet his urgentmost demands (*The Meaning* 147). Himself a student of History and English literature, Rao must not have been a stranger to the denigrating European

discourses on India and the Euro-centred teleology of historical progression that rules out any legitimate space for resistance. How his anti-imperial concerns get translated into *Kanthapura* needs to be examined in detail.

Rao makes a radical departure from the modular fictional form of the West when he imagined the Indian freedom movement of the 1920s and 1930s. He replaces the alienated central figure of the Western novel by people who overcome their initial alienation to merge into a political and cultural movement set against imperial domination. The narrator, Achakka, a woman with an uncolonized mind, tells the tale of the Gandhian movement. Rao makes use of the Hindu myths and metaphysics very effectively to problematize the imperial take over of India. He brings together myth and history in such a way that the British becomes Ravana, India Sita and Gandhi the new avatar sent by the presiding Hindu deities to free India. By this strategy, as Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin rightly point out, the temporality of the struggle is transformed into mythical permanence (34). When Rao does this he punctures the Western notion of history as linear progression. It is, therefore, for Rao, a means to defeat the imperial take over of other people's land and history. The village Kanthapura is conceived as under the power of a local deity, Kenchamma, rather than the British:

> Kenchamma is the center of the village and makes everything meaningful. A marriage, a funeral, sickness, death, ploughing, harvesting, arrests, release –all are watched over by Kenchamma. (viii – ix)

Later when the confrontation with the British authorities becomes intense

> . . . everybody, as they passed by the Kenchamma grove, cried out, 'Goddess, when the demon came to eat our babes and rape our daughters, you came down to destroy him and protect us. Oh, Goddess, destroy this government' . . . (135)

This wresting of power from the British and its transfer to the local deity right at the beginning of the narrative is a fictional enactment of the dismantling of colonial and imperial machinery.

As people like Rao are writing against a powerful tradition that assumed imperialism as a benign form of rule and Indian acceptance of it as an obvious reality, conscious strategies had to be devised to combat such hijacking of history by imperial writers. Rao reclaims the 1857 struggle from the arrogating gaze of British writers by encapsulating the rebellion in the form of a song sung by the freedom fighters in Kanthapura in moments of physical confrontation with the colonial forces:

> O lift the flag high,
> Lift it high like in 1857 again,
> And the Lakshmi of Jhansi,
> And the Moghul of Delhi,
> Will be ours again. (238)

On another occasion of intense conflict, among shrieks, moans and cries, this song rises from them:

> And the flame of Jatin,
> And the fire of Bhagath,
> And the love of Mahatma ina ll,
> O, lift the flag high,

Lift the flag high,

This is the flag of the Revolution. (245)

Operating within the narrative these songs not only destabilize the imperial version of the 1857 struggle as madness and sepoy mutiny but also brings to life the long line of figures of Indian resistance to British domination.

The Skeffington Coffee Estate is a miniature empire. Like the British Empire it grows bigger and bigger and almost surrounds Kanthapura. As it grows it uproots more and more people from distant places and draws them into its structure. Armies of coolies are brought from the shores of Godavari on false promises and made to live and work there. This situation is similar to that of Kenya where land was captured from the natives which results in migration, forced labour and reserves for black people. The Sahib is typically imperial in his attitude: "The Sahib says that if you work well you will get sweets and if you work badly you will get beaten—that is the law of the place" (67). Ten years they lived there in the midst of death, danger, disease, slavery and poverty. No one could go back to where they had come from. When the nephew of the old Sahib takes up the management of the estate the exploitation becomes sexual too:

> He is not a bad man like his uncle, nor does he refuse to advance money; but he will have this woman and that woman, this daughter and that wife, and every day a new one and never the same two in a week. (79)

The casual but dictatorial way in which the young Sahib picks on a woman, deals with her and dispenses her is portrayed with irony in the narrative:

> Sometimes when the weeds are being pulled or the vermin killed, he wanders into the plantation with his cane pipe and puppy, and when he sees this wench of seventeen or that chit of nineteen, he goes to her, smiles at her, and pats her on her back and pats her on her breasts. At this all the women know they have to go away, and when they have disappeared, he lies down there and then, while the puppy goes round and round them, and when the thing is over he takes her to his bungalow and gives her a five rupee note or a basket of mangoes and plantains, and he sends her home to rest for two days. (79-80)

The Sahib's attitude to Indian women is in keeping with the general Victorian prejudice, shaped as it apparently is by the writings of Richard Burton and others who, according to Rana Kabbani, popularized such views:

> All women were inferior to men; Eastern women were doubly inferior, being women *and* Easterners. They were an even more conspicuous commodity than their Western sisters. They were part of the goods of empire, the living rewards that white men could, if they wished to, reap. They were there to be used sexually, and if it could be suggested that they were inherently licentious, then they could be exploited with no qualms whatsoever. (51)

The Sahib's attitude to the women working in his estate is very similar to the one that Anand also depicts. By and by Gandhism spreads all over and along with it the British punitive measures also get tougher. Open confrontation ensues between the colonial authority and the people of Kanthapura, most of them women, when they stop paying taxes – punitive taxes. The Skeffington coolies also become part of the resistance movement gradually (243) and the narrative ends with the picture of a devastated

Kanthapura devoid of men and even mosquitoes. But this desolateness was only at the physical plane. The people of Kanthapura, women in particular, grow in their awareness of freedom and justice so that even the dispersal of the village is a considerable advance to freedom from imperial domination. The fictional space of *Kanthapura* is thickly populated by women and resounding with their emotionally and patriotically charged voices trying to stop the takeover of the village by the imperial forces. This is especially so towards the conclusion of the narrative. The female intimacy, emotionality and sacrifice highlighted throughout the work unsettle the predominantly imperial attitudes of male intimacy, patriarchy, hyper rationality and aggressive possessiveness. The Indian metaphysics plays a pivotal role in this decentering process. Rao's first fictional work, thus, contains the exploitative enterprise of the British empire in India and validates the national rising against it, as Helen Tiffin points out, by imagining the flow of local goods from the hills towards the sea coast to be taken to the imperial center but intercepted and repossessed on the shores by the figure of Gandhi (175).

If in *Kanthapura* Rao's concern is mainly resistance to the imperial exploitation of India at the economic and political levels, in his second and more famous work of fiction *The Serpent and the Rope* he is concerned chiefly with an exploration of the philosophical encounter between India and Europe and it is emblematically done through Rama and Madeleine. Unlike Kipling's East and West, Rama and Madeleine certainly do meet but in spite of their earnest attempts to remain together ultimately fall apart. The child that is born out of this marriage of continents is

significantly short-lived. Extrapolated to the level of the nation, the death of the infant marks the problematic nature of the political structure born of Europe. Rao seems to say that European ideologues made sense of India through the typically continental analytical tools and showed themselves, on retrospection, unequal to the task of knowing the truth of India and biased heavily against India. Madeleine too in her attempt to know India in a different way gets stuck, ironically, with the rituals of Buddhism.

The foreigner produced an India to define himself/herself and his culture favourably against it and the whole process finally drew India into a marginalized, subservient and humiliating position defined by imperialism. The process has been so Euro-centred, reductive and negative that the Europeans overlooked what they chose to remember in particular in the European context: it is not the Indian who makes India but "India" makes the Indian and this India is in all (*Meaning* 18). Rao projects this rebelling Indian in him on to Ramaswami who always thought of "a house white, single storied, on a hill or by a lake," "of going day after day to the University and preach to them the magnificence of the European civilization" (*Serpent* 15), returning to what is to the modern Europe and its hyper rationalists of the high-imperialist period the most objectionable and irrational philosophy of India (406). His desire to escape such an oppressive history is intense and it finds expression in resolute terms:

> The sages have no history, no biography—who knows anything about a Yagnyavalka or a Bharadavja? Nobody. But some petty king of Bundelkhand has a panegyric addressed to him, and even this is somewhat impersonal. We know more of King Harsha than we do of

> Sankara. India has, I always repeat, no history. To integrate India into history—is like trying to marry Madeleine. (*Serpent* 332)

The attitude that this rhetoric marks is hardly against history. It would be naïve to interpret it as apolitical. It is, on the other hand, a harsh indictment of the European conception of history that leaves no space for the dignity of the other and its culture. It critiques the European framework of history that valorizes the marginalization and dehumanization of suppressed Others. In other words, it is Rao's way of responding to what Guha describes as "a deletion of the entire pre-colonial past of our people" and the substitution of "a foreshortened history with the colonial state as the subject" (289). That is why Rao insists that India has no history. His negative statement may be taken to mean that India has no history that comes within the purview of the European conception of history as the conquest of non-European peoples, Nature and ignorance. Rama contradicts the European conception of history as linear progression with a passage from his thesis:

> 'History is not a straight line, it is not even a curved line,' I had written. 'History is a straight line turned into a round circle. It has no beginning, it has no end—it is a movement without itself moving. History is an act to deny fact. History, truly speaking, is seminal.' (401)

By the statement that integrating India into history is like trying to marry Madeleine, Rao seems to suggest the inadequacy of the European epistemological tools, the prejudiced deployment of them in the perception of non-European cultures like India and the schism and cultural estrangement that it unleashed. Rao is incidentally rejecting as inherently faulty and insufficient the observation of James Mill that India has no history in the modern

sense to lay claim on. He does it by constructing Indian culture into a monolith, a unified spiritual abstraction in orientalist terms. By taking such a position of resistance he partly anticipates the sharp political edge of new historicism that broadened the very concept of history and thereby destabilized the claims of conservative and Euro-centric notions of history. But it is also true that Rao ends up privileging Orientalist notions of India.

This chapter studies how Achebe, Ngugi, Anand, and Rao challenge English imaginings, respond to the experience of imperialism and try to resolve the fundamental contradiction of the times - imperial domination - in symbolic terms. But domination by the English was not however the sole contradiction of the times, though it was the most significant one. Certain practices in the Indian and African cultural traditions also needed to be confronted along with the issue of domination by the English. In fact, those questions related to the discriminatory practices in the native traditions also came up for resolution during the struggle for liberation from British rule. The writers we considered in this chapter are those who took certain positions regarding these questions of social justice. They have taken up these issues and tried to resolve them by the imaginative projection of a national community in their fictional works. The chapter that follows studies the constructed nation and the ideology that informs the whole process.

Nationalist Ideology, Tradition and the Margins

Muraleedharan. K.C "Fiction as Cultural Resistance: A Study of African and Indian Fiction of the Post-colonial Period " Thesis. Department of English, University of Calicut, 2002

Chapter Four

Nationalist Ideology, Tradition and the Margins

This chapter intends to study the nation as it is fictionally constructed. As such, the aesthetic strategies employed in the animation of the national community, the ideology that impels the whole process and the margins that are incorporated but written into new hierarchies would be the major points of interest. For exploring these aspects we would return to some of the texts discussed in the previous chapters because these texts are produced at the high time of nationalism. The point of the analysis, to anticipate the conclusion, is to demonstrate that the narratives of anti-imperial nationalisms also, like the narratives of imperialism, produced problematic representations provoking further appropriation of the fictional space. Women identify the nationalist novel, adapted to the Indian and African context, for instance, as a densely ideological product that naturalizes and propagates tropes that validate patriarchy, which in their view are to be reworked to undermine patriarchy and rearticulate their story. The representation of the subaltern in the nationalist novels is also identified as highly problematic now.

To begin with, how Rao imagines the formation of a national community in his work *Kanthapura* may be examined. The village where the story takes place, Kanthapura, is a terrain of rigorous caste divisions. The narrator, a Brahmin widow, describes the five quarters into which the social space of the village is divided on the basis of caste hierarchy: the Brahmin quarter, the Pariah quarter, the Potters' quarter, Weavers' quarter and the Sudra quarter.

Following this description of the five quarters which also serves the purpose of introducing the people of the village, the narrator dwells on how Gandhism began in that remote village. According to her, all the trouble, that is Gandhism, began with Moorthy's stumbling over a half-sunk linga in the backyard of a Brahmin house. Moorthy unearths it, the city boys (boys of the village attending college in the city, Moorthy and Dorai included) wash it and Bhatta, the conservative Brahmin priest consecrates it. That is, it is a typically Brahmin affair to begin with, and metaphorically it involves the rediscovery of a dominant tradition (linga) and consecration of the same by the upper caste male members of the society. The newly constructed temple came to be called Kanthapurishwari's temple (9). The linga and the temple are two symbols with significant ideological underpinnings in the Indian culture. The linga is the symbol of the Saiva cult to begin with. But in course of time, the linga worship became very common among all upper caste Hindus. The temple is, besides being the seat of god, the traditional institution through which the social and caste hierarchy are symbolically legitimized. As symbols, both refer to a sphere of community life where domination by the Brahmin social group is not only taken for granted but also legitimized for the supposed role of Brahmins as intermediaries between the temporal and the supernatural world. At the beginning of the narrative, these symbols are sites of exclusive upper caste authority: that is, for Bhatta and other Brahmins not initiated into Gandhism, these symbols hold the conventional meaning of a God signifying Brahmin authority over other social groups. That is why postmaster Suryanarayana urges others to celebrate Sankara

Jayanthi and one by one, Bhatta, Agent Nanjundia, Pandit Venkateshia and Rangamma come forward with the offer of feast (10). But for Moorthy, the person who stumbles over the linga, the linga and the temple are symbols with a different orientation of meaning. The narrator presents the finding of the linga as a purely accidental discovery and conveys that impression by way of a casual statement. But the narrative suggests strong intentionality in Moorthy since his vision of the Mahatma: He throws his foreign clothes and books into the bonfire (49). He quits his college studies as a Gandhi man to work among the dumb millions of the village (as Gandhi wants him to do, 49) and reaches his village where he finds the linga and decides to consecrate and build a temple. To believe that a temple that is built and a linga that is consecrated by Moorthy have the same meaning for him as to Bhatta is to ignore the thrust and subtlety of the narrative. What Raja Rao makes Moorthy do is to appropriate the commonality of the temple and the linga as symbols in the community's consciousness that would inspire them to collective action. M.K.Naik reads this as the shrewdness of Moorthy who finds that the master key to the rustic Indian mind is religion (59). One should acknowledge Naik for this insight that the religious symbols provided a means for Moorthy to communicate with the people around him; but his interest is not in the meaning these symbols already signified. His concern, it seems, is to use them to make new meaning. That is, Moorthy is not merely making use of these symbols but ascribing new meanings to religion as such and radically expanding the boundary of the traditional belief on the national lines to accommodate and bring together various social groups. Through Moorthy Rao has been

challenging the ideology of Brahmanism and its symbolic foundations. Not very surprisingly, as we shall see later, Rao's text too faced the same kind of challenge that Gandhi and Moorthy faced from the folds of orthodox Brahmanism.

Once the temple is built Moorthy starts organizing festival celebrations. As part of the festivals, the Harikatha artist Jayaramachar comes with a Harikatha embodying notions of Swaraj and birth of Gandhi as a reincarnation (14–17). Immediately thereafter, Jayaramachar gets arrested for giving the folk art form a nationalistic slant. Within a short period Moorthy violates the caste boundaries of Kanthapura little by little thereby bringing people from the Pariah quarter, Weaver's quarter, Sudra quarter and the Brahmin quarter in a collective action. It is at this point of the narrative that the radical appropriation of the Hindu belief becomes clear to Bhatta, the orthodox Brahmin priest who used to sit and sing with others and listen to Seenu reading the Khadi-bound autobiography of Gandhi (36). He goes to persuade Moorthy and Rangamma against "Gandhi vagabondage" (38) but returns dejected and finds "the sky all black and starless" (45). This scene is comparable to the Placido Gulf scene in Conard's *Nostromo* for its ideological implications. The Placido Gulf scene is, in Eagleton's view, the expression of crisis in western bourgeois ideology (Marxism 7). The scene in *Kanthapura*, where Bhatta gropes in the dark in utter confusion as well as a deep sense of despair and meets Bade Khan the emblematic figure of British colonial authority in Kanthapura, signifies the ideological collapse of Brahmin orthodoxy with the tempestuous entry and spread of

Gandhism among the people of the sleepy Brahmin dominated village.

It is interesting to see how the two symbols, linga and the temple, are employed to suit the ideological interests of nationalism. The emphasis on the traditional temple and its local deity Kenchamma is shifted to the new temple and its more democratic deity Siva. Consequently, as Esha Day notes, the historical action of the novel is centered in and around this space (32). First of all, with the Harikatha encapsulating the birth of Gandhi as a divine occurrence, the linga acquires a social and political relevance. The temple becomes the centre of nationalist activities. It is the place where they elect the congress committee. Moorthy, the congress leader, observes a long fast at the temple and in the battle with the British it is used as a shelter for women in general and for a mother and her early-born child in particular The women spend hours inside it, the door being locked from outside by the police, and they are released when Pariah Rachanna's wife Rachi after a series of adventures rushes to the temple and unlocks it. Even the once orthodox narrator appreciates what would be in the normal course a violation by Rachi of the supposed Brahmin boundary and the sphere of Brahmin authority. It is a place where Gandhi's autobiography was read aloud to the village folk along with Hindu scriptures. That is, Moorthy succeeds in raising the questions of justice and equality and initiates political action against the Brahmin and imperial domination through the reconstitution of a dominant indigenous belief system.

The novel presents allegorically in Moorthy's ex-communication the orthodox Brahmin opposition to the nationalist project that in the beginning set about raising issues of caste and gender discrimination with a view to integrating the oppressed sections of the Indian society into the mainstream of anti-imperial struggle. Rao's attack on Brahmin orthodoxy and his privileging of the nationalist gesture of reconsidering the caste hierarchy did not pass without violent protestations. C.D. Narasimhaiah writes about the agitation to have the novel *Kanthapura* withdrawn from the list of books prescribed by the Mysore University on account of the questionable way in which Bhatta is portrayed (259). Such a reaction is most expected. When Moorthy appropriates the symbols and expands the horizons of Hinduism to include with honour the oppressed castes, the Brahmin dominance is threatened. Divested of power by the consolidating forces of nationalism, people like Bhatta who hold on to concepts like polluting presence are sidelined. When Raja Rao tells this story of nationalism the implication is that it is possible in the real life also and naturally the reactionary interest groups rally up in protest against the fictional work.

The fight against imperialism not only envisaged the dismantling of the oppressive imperial machinery and the expulsion of the foreigner from the highest authority but also the creation of a new community and a more humane way of life. In expressing and embellishing symbolically the reality of a new community Rao has been reinventing a tradition. M.K. Naik makes this point very strongly indeed:

> From among the writers in his mother tongue, Kannada, he singles out the Vachanakaras (devotional writers) and Kanakadasa and Purandharadasa. They have, he says, 'affected me so profoundly that they seem to have changed my style of writing'. The vachanakaras (literally, 'makers of sayings') were twelfth century medieval Kannada saints of the Lingayath faith, among whom Basaveswara, Prabhudeva, Akka Mahadevi, Channabasava and Siddharama were prominent. (15)

The admission by the author that the Vachanakaras influenced his style is indeed true as Naik illustrates. But in the case of *Kanthapura,* it goes even beyond that. Rao is symbolically reenacting what the founders of the Lingayat tradition did with the inventory of symbols in the possession of the Brahmins in the twelfth century. The temple in the Rao fiction reminds one of the 'Sivanubhava–mandapa' (the religious house of experience) - of Virasaiva origin – a spiritual as well as social institution that gathered persons of all ranks, castes and professions, from the prince to the peasant (Shree Kumara Swamiji 99). Tejaswini Niranjana's observation substantiates the point:

> What appears certain, however, is that the Virasaivas or Lingayats came from different castes and occupations, and successfully challenged both priest and king, or temple and palace—the traditional centers of power. (176)

Moorthy likewise redefines upper caste Hindu symbols to suit the politics of national liberation.

With the redefinition of the two dominant symbols Moorthy wins the consent of the people for political action against imperialism. At this crucial point in the narrative when his final move to upset the progressive movement with the connivance of the

Swami at the Mutt failed, one finds Bhatta expelled from the narrative: "To tell you the truth, Bhatta left us after harvest on a pilgrimage to Kashi" (134). Even his house is burnt in the heat of the resistance against the British regime and its Indian supporters. Though the narrator leaves the impression that Bhatta has opted out, it is surely a moment in the narrative that signifies the actual defeat of Brahmin orthodoxy at that point of history in the freedom struggle of India. The inglorious exit of this emblematic figure from the terrain of nationalist consolidation does not, however, mean that the chances of orthodoxy from staging a return later are permanently sealed. For the narrator tells us at the end of the novel that Bhatta has moved to Kashi where "for every hymn and hiccup you get a rupee." Interestingly enough Rama, the protagonist of Rao's *Serpent and the Rope*, who can be considered Moorthy's academic counterpart of free India, encounters in Benares figures strikingly similar to Bhatta.

Rao's intervention into tradition and attempt at cultural redefinition in the 1930s with his *Kanthapura* is significant in the sense that he was not merely reproducing the Gandhian movement but making use of the indigenous Hindu cultural resources (deities, rituals and other cultural categories and symbols) to contest both a suffocating tradition and imperial modernity and point to an alternative way of living that would enable the community to negotiate the realities of foreign domination. Moorthy's place is between Bhatta the stark reactionary and Dore who is contemptuous of tradition as a whole (171). He is a dynamic character who does not, however, stop with Gandhism. He goes

beyond the Gandhian ideology in his search for social justice and equality, as his letter to Ratna reveals:

> "Ratna things must change. The youths say they will change it. Jawaharlal will change it...And he calls himself an equal-distributionist, and I am with him and his men." (258)

In short, Rao represents culture as the sum total of what people do as a community to negotiate the realities of life. He successfully depicts such a community caught up in imperialism and thereby attempts a redefinition of received cultural entities to fight imperial domination. His shift from the Gandhian strain of the nationalist ideology to that of the Nehru variety in the fag end demonstrates the investment of both Rao and Moorthy in the Nehruvian conception of progress. Moorthy's letter to Ratna conveys this hopeful investment in the nationalist ideology. Moorthy, it seems, believes that the nation-in-formation is safe in the hands of Jawaharlal and the nationalist ideology that impels the process would definitely resolve the most significant question of independence and also the related issues of discriminations within the indigenous social structures. The narrative ends on this note of hope and faith in the nationalist ideology as a panacea for the internal maladies of Indian culture. As we are going to see, Anand's narrative also moves along the same trajectory.

From Rao's *Kanthapura* to Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchable* the movement is very smooth in spite of acutely different literary strategies employed. One reason for this is certainly the fact that the ideological thrust of both works is the same. If Rao renegotiates communal identity and wins consent for political action against imperialism by redefining the symbolic foundations

of the community Anand also does the same by, to use Premila Paul's words, "distilling a social metaphor which takes in its sweep a whole range of postulates of Hindu culture" (13). When Anand knits together the different elements, a coherent narrative depicting a fictional community rigorously observing "untouchability" or "polluting presence"springs into existence. It is a community that defines itself by rigid caste consciousness, to begin with. The lie of the fictional landscape is an empirical affirmation of the social divide resulting from the notion of polluting presence. As Rao also does in the opening pages of *Kanthapura*, Anand too gives an account of the boundaries imposed by casteism:

> The outcaste's colony was a group of mud-walled houses that clustered together in two rows, under the shadow both of the town and the cantonment, but outside their boundaries and separate from them. There lived the scavengers, the leather-workers, the workmen, the barbers, the water carriers the grass cutters and other outcastes from Hindu community. (11)

When Bakha moves out of the area marked for the untouchables, his freedom as an individual and a human being is at stake. The narrative proceeds with a series of insults that Bakha suffers: cigarettes are flung at him just as bones to dogs. Jalebis are thrown to him and he catches it as one catches a cricket ball. In both these cases the money he gives is purified by sprinkling water on it before the shopkeeper touches it. Then a rich high caste Hindu merchant runs into Bakha and makes a scene abusing him for not announcing his approach saying "posh, posh sweeper coming" (57). This incident shakes Bakha into realizing the

grimness of untouchability and initiates an interrogatory debate on it in Bakha's mind:

> The cruel crowd! All of them abused, abused, abused. Why are we always abused? The sanitary inspector that day abused my father. They always abused us. Because we are sweepers. Because we touch dung. They hate dung. I hate it too. That's why I came here. I was tired of working on the latrines everyday. That's why they don't touch us, the high castes. (58)

Thus Bakha recognizes the derogatory social identity imposed on him by a hostile section of the community. But everyone in the community doesn't subscribe to the view of the rich merchant who complains of Bakha's polluting presence. There is, for instance, Havildar Charat Singh. He allows Bakha to enter his kitchen, shares tea with him and even gifts him a brand new hockey stick. Singh is liberal in his attitude to Bakha but he also does not abandon the idea of pollution altogether. That may be why Bakha is given tea in the bird's drinking pot. Singh's attitude marks a point of positive but insufficient change in the community to the question of untouchability. There are also people vying with the rich merchant in upholding casteism and abusing Bakha: the priest who made advances at Bakha's sister Sohini and the crowd at the temple, the lady who throws down pancakes from the third floor to Bakha in the yard more contemptuously than to a dog (83). In other words, the community Anand imagines doesn't subscribe wholly to the concept and validity of the practice. Moreover the narrative by way of thrust and space contrasts the insults Bakha suffers at different places with the warmth and humanity, though of a limited kind, that he receives at Charat Singh's. Besides, some

episodes are contrastive in their very combination. For instance, two things happen at the temple; Bakha's supposedly hesitant entry of the temple and the priest's willful attempt at molestation of Bakha's sister. Both are violations of the boundaries concerned. In the contrasting combination the violation of caste boundary by Bakha appears as positive and revolutionary. In contrast, the priest's attempt at violation of Bakha's sister's honour becomes nothing less than criminal and barbaric.

Anand makes Bakha 'defile' both high caste individuals and institutions and initiates a discussion on the question of polluting presence and the ideology that underpins it. This is carried out in the narrative in a strategic manner. At first the narrative provides a direct and close account of the insults Bakha suffers and this runs into about 86 pages. Then Bakha anticipates his future in terms of his present and this leads to a brief stocktaking of the insulting events of the day:

> He could see himself being shouted at by a crowd, he could see the little priest fling his arms in the air and cry 'defiled defiled'. He could see the lady who had thrown the bread down at him reprimanding him for not cleaning the gutter. (87)

After Bakha's anticipation of a grim and offensive future he narrates the day's insults to Chota, his friend. The personal experiences awaken Bakha to the reality of casteism and prepare him to take an attitude to the issue:

> 'No,no', his mind seemed to say 'never', and there appeared before him the vague form of a Bakha clad in a superior military uniform, cleaning the commodes of the Sahibs in the British barracks 'yes, much rather,' he said to himself to confirm the picture.(87)

Not only that. Bakha develops a dislike for his home, his street and his town and this dislike is accentuated by his father's narrative set in the past. This narrative makes it clear to him that he was an accidental survivor of caste victimization. Bakha's own narration to Chota of that day's insults carries him further towards the resolution of this plight: a movement away from home which for him epitomizes the victimization of casteism. His visit to Charat Singh, Singh's gift and the Hockey match which ended in confusion and fight lead to Bakha's leaving of his own home. Bakha, in Robertson's view, is as much a metaphor of caste victimization as he is an individual who tries to challenge casteism. So his leaving of home can also be taken as symbolic. Symbolically, Bakha quits the hierarchical space that Hindu society imposes on him and seeks locations from where he will be able to resist casteism and redefine his identity in the process.

The search for new ideological locations to resist high caste domination on the part of Bakha reminds us of what Gail Omvedt describes as the "mobilization of the oppressed and exploited sections of society...[that] occurred on a large scale in the 1920s and 30s under varying leaderships and with varying ideologies"(34). One of the ideological locations that Bakha is drawn to is Christianity in the person of Colonel Hutchinson of the Salvation Army. Christianity was considered by many at that time as an alternative to the caste-ridden feudal-Hindu religious structure. Hutchinson's warmth and Yessuh Messih's equal regard for Brahmin and Bhangi interests Bakha but Mrs. Hutchinson's frown undoes what the Colonel in his proselytizing fervour manages to

build up. Bakha instantly perceives the striking similarity between the casteist and racist gazes:

> There was a common quality in the look of hate in the round white face of the colonel's wife and in the sunken visage of the touched man. The man's protruding lower Jaw, with its transparent muscles, shaken in his spluttering speech, came before Bakha's eyes. Also his eyes emerging out of their sockets. The colonel's wife had also opened her eyes like that behind her spectacles. (149)

Bakha also realizes that both gazes turn him into an object of contempt. The charm of the alternative ceases then and there. In rejecting such alternatives, Anand seems to be making an investment in the ideology of the nation as envisaged by Gandhi and Nehru. Bakha takes to the word of the Mahatma as hopefully as others around him. People around Gandhi are drawn from different religions, races and castes. There are Hindu Iallas, Kashmiri Muhammadan, Sikh rustics, Pathans, Indian Christian girls, outcastes and Europeans. Standing amidst the humanity drawn across caste, colour, race and creed, Bakha comes to recognize the ideological position from where he could redefine his social identity:

> Gandhi alone united him with them (the multitude), in the mind, because Gandhi was in every body's mind, including Bakha's. Gandhi might unite them really. Bakha waited for Gandhi. (153)

Gandhi's narrative of his own violation of caste boundaries impresses Bakha and he resolves to go back to work according to the Gandhian principles. His resolution is not simply a result of what he hears from Gandhi but is related as well to what he

gathers from the debate between Iqbal Nath Sarashar and R.N. Bashir on the future national community. Bashir, the anglicized Indian barrister, seems to disown tradition completely and thinks of Gandhi as "humbug" (167). Iqbal Nath Sarashar, on the other hand, prefers cultural diversity and cultural dynamism to the wholesale import of the culture of imperial modernity. He wants India to change but not entirely after the European fashion but definitely making use of the resistance traditions within India with the tools of modernity to support it:

> Right in the tradition of those who accepted the world and produced the baroque exuberance of Indian architecture and sculpture, with its profound sense of form, its solidarity and its mass, we will accept and work the machine. But we will do so consciously. . . . We can envisage the possibility of creating new races from the latent heat in our dark brown bodies. (170-171)

Bakha's acceptance of Iqbal Nath's solution to fight casteism with Gandhian ideals and the flush system signifies his investment in the nationalist ideology, a location from where social relationships in the Indian community can be redefined to bring the oppressed and marginalized communities into the national mainstream.

Anand makes a revolutionary departure from the tradition of fiction writing in India in voicing the concerns of the oppressed sections of the Indian community. He creates a fictional landscape where the injustice of casteism is exposed and the call for refashioning of Indian society on secular lines is made through an interrogatory debate. Anand looks at communal identities as something that could be reinterpreted and renegotiated. He certainly suggests that caste hierarchies have to be undermined

rather than grudgingly lived with and that, in this process of subversion, narratives can play a decisive role.

In his ideological stance Anand is akin to Raja Rao. The two writers, to speak in a comparative way, highlights the pitfalls of modernity and tradition, though their aesthetic strategies are evidently and entirely different. Raja Rao falls back on traditional values and cultural categories to negotiate imperial modernity while Anand seeks to rectify the discontents of tradition with the egalitarian propositions of modernity. Raja Rao collapses imperialism and modernity into a monolith and undertakes its critique while Anand works to undermine the distasteful aspects of tradition using the awareness received from the West. That is, one can say that while Raja Rao creatively uses the Indian puranic tradition that mixes the real and the mythical, Anand employs the Western realist mode and its rhetorical devices in negotiating the crisis in identity faced by Indian writers. Similar is the case of Chinua Achebe and Ngugi wa Thiongo, who negotiate the African identity put in crisis by English domination.

Chinua Achebe's project in writing fiction, as he unequivocally stated, has been to assert that the African people indeed have a tradition worthy of serious consideration. He shows through his fiction on the Ibo past that African societies were not mindless but frequently had a philosophy of great depth and value and beauty: that they had poetry and lived a life of dignity. This was, as we have already seen, Achebe's response to the dominant and stereotypical representations of Africa as stagnant and barbaric. But Achebe's intervention into the Igbo past is also an attempt in tune with the need of his times "to revalue the religious

ethos of his people and reorient it to suit the demands of the contemporary world". As a cultural figure reworking communal identity from the post colonial perspective, Achebe does not merely replicate his tradition but imagines a community that contests the meaning of shared cultural symbols to resist both the whiteman's manouvres to perpetrate domination and the African's (the Igbo's to be precise) reluctance to change. What follows is a reading of Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* to locate narrative moments that highlight his intervention into the meaning of symbols and rituals fundamental to the Igbo society to resist the culture of indigenous orthodoxy.

One instance that highlights Achebe's intervention into Igbo rituals and beliefs is his narration of the moment of transformation of Nwoye, Okonkwo's first son:

> It was not the mad logic of the Trinity that captivated him. He did not understand it. It was the poetry of the religion, something felt in the marrow. The hymn about brothers in darkness and in fear seemed to answer a vague but persistent question that haunted his young soul-the question of the twins crying in the bush and the question of Ikemefuna who was killed. He felt a relief within as the hymn poured into his parched soul. (122)

Nwoye's transformation revealed by himself at the opening of Chapter Sixteen and narrated in detail in the rest of the chapter is a slow and steady process of silent study and interrogation leading to the final rejection of certain abominable values of the tribe. Achebe delineates Nwoye's transformation in a strategic manner in the chapters that go before. He brings in Ikemefuna in the opening chapter itself. Ikemefuna is the "doomed lad sacrificed to the

village of Umuofia by their neighbours to avoid war and bloodshed" (21). The community entrusts the lad to Okonkwo's custody because he is the great warrior who led Umuofia to victory over the rival clan. In the three chapters that follow one finds Ikemefuna adapting to Okonkwo's family in spite of occasional moments of sadness and depression at the thought of his mother and sister, all the while developing an intimacy to Nwoye. At the opening of Chapter Seven Ikemefuna is fully absorbed into his new family. He is like an elder brother to Nwoye and he kindles a new fire in the younger boy and makes him feel grown up. Okonkwo also acknowledges the influence of Ikemefuna in Nwoyé's overall development. In the middle of this chapter Ogbuefi Ezeudu comes to inform the decision of Umuofia to kill Ikemefuna as the custom of the tribe demands. At the end of Chapter Seven when the Umuofia men led by Okonkwo returned "Nwoye knew that Ikemefuna had been killed and something seemed to give way inside, like the snapping of a tightened bow" (58). Nwoye remembers that he had the same feeling when he heard the cry of the twins who were put in earthenware pots and thrown into bushes.

The narrative reaches a point where Nwoye revolts at the abominable customs observed by the tribe. Some of these customs, like the killing of Ikemefuna and the throwing away of the twins put in earthenware into bush, notes Wren, enabled the pre-colonial Igbo community to restrict its size. That these customs were practiced largely does not mean that there was no disagreement in the community regarding them. If Okonkwo represents those who agree to the practice, Nwoye stands for the voice of dissent within

the community. Obeirika's pondering over the custom that made him throw away his twins and Uchendu's rather sorrowful account of his daughter Akueni who lost her children because they were born twins are instances of disagreement that finds expression through Nwoye. In that sense, Nwoye is the collective voice of dissent in the community and as Innes suggests, "the authorial consciousness" supports "the questioning and alienated vision of Nwoye" (35). Culture being an ongoing debate, taking place at the boundaries of the two conflicting communities living closely or within the same community on the ways of life, rituals, customs and symbols, it is quite possible that cultural entities are in constant contestation. Achebe as a writer serves his ideological role by uncovering the voice of dissent within the community and highlighting it in favour of an alternative cultural formation. The inadvertent killing of Ezeudu's sixteen-year-old son by Okonkwo at the gun firing ritual of Ezeudu's funeral is the means by which Achebe privileges the voice of dissent. Killing a clansman was a most horrible crime among the Igbos and the community punishes Okonkwo with exile for seven years. Okonkwo and his family therefore move to Mbanta, the village of his mother, which is more or less on the paths of becoming Christian. Metaphorically, the aggressively masculine Okonkwo is made to understand the significance of the female principle:

> A man belongs to his fatherland when things are good and life is sweet. But when there is sorrow and bitterness he finds refuge in his motherland. Your mother is there to protect you. She is buried there. And that is why we say that mother is supreme. (113)

The author's intention in conceiving the story in this way can be understood by comparing the murder of Ikemefuna with the inadvertent killing of Ezedu's son. Okonkwo participates willingly in the murder of Ikemefuna to demonstrate his manliness. But in killing Ezedu's son inadvertently his own clan describes him as a doer of "female Ochu" (105). Ikemefuna's murder provokes Nwoye's dissent and the accidental death of Ezedu's son places Okonkwo and his family, Nwoye being one of them, in Mbanta where Nwoye's dissent could be worked into rebellion. The banishment renders Okonkwo powerless but it makes Nwoye more powerful than his father in the sense that Umuofia is open to his voice of dissent while exile silences and alienates Okonkwo, the father. It is significant that Nwoye makes his drastic statement of revolt at Umuofia in the absence of his father:

> 'What are you doing here?' Obierika had asked when after many difficulties the missionaries had allowed him to speak to the boy.
>
> 'I am one of them,' replied Nwoye.
>
> 'How is your father?' Obierika asked not knowing what else to say.
>
> 'I don't know. He is not my father,' said Nwoye, unhappily. (119)

It is with this statement that expresses the rejection of the father figure that things nearly start falling apart in Umuofia and in the life of Okonkwo. In Mbanta where Okonkwo lived in exile for seven years the falling apart of the clan started early and was faster in pace. In this regard, the shifting of Okonkwo and family to the relatively Christian Mbanta from the acutely tribal Umuofia is significant as a narrative strategy. It validates the dissent in the community of Umuofia at tribal practices like abandoning twins and killing prisoners of clan wars. Achbe depicts the submission of

the Igbo to the new structures brought in by imperialism and the undermining of the traditional practices of which Okonkwo is a true representative. That is, the work is faithful to its historical perspective in that it presents not only the internal factors in the breakdown of the presented Igbo society but also the external factor of alien influence. This is represented spatially by the new orientation of village life towards the alien centres of church, school and law-court.

The third part of the novel serves as a contrast to the first and second parts. If parts one and two critique tradition for its abominable rituals and favour a revolt of the type Nwoye makes, the third part critiques unwarranted attacks on certain traditional beliefs and rituals by the overzealous exponents of the new religion. Achebe seems to suggest that some beliefs and rituals are profoundly meaningful for the community to hold itself together and resist cultural incursions. Achebe makes the imagined community debate an incident in which a traditional ritual came to be violated. The ritual in question is the appearance of Egwugwu (ancestral spirits in mask). One of the overzealous converts, Enoch by name, needlessly provokes the spirits to demonstrate that the spirits are powerless before a Christian. One of the spirits, provoked and furious, strikes him. The angry Enoch unmasks the Egwugwu in public and with that the harmony between adherents of the old belief and the new belief that father Brown had assiduously built up with his moderateness is threatened. The ancestral spirits surged forward in sudden fury and pulled down the church leaving the priest safe. The narrative voice favours the action of the Egwugwu and projects Enoch as 'The Outsider who

wept louder than the bereaved' (151). Even Mr Brown, who converts Enoch tells him that "everything was possible" but everything was "not expedient" (146). What prompts Achebe to depict Enoch as a contrast to Nwoye, an unfavorable contrast for that matter, may be the significant social role played by the masked ancestral spirits in Igbo life:

> They were called Egwugwu and they were really beyond the law practically. They could sing what they liked, they went from A's house to B's house and they would say some nasty things about A in B's house, and then go to C and say some nasty things about B. Usually things based on facts, you see, but normally things people would not say in the daytime and this was the way that just for amusement. (Duerden and Pieters 11)

It follows that Egwugwu is a kind of ideological apparatus for social criticism in the Ibo community and even in Christian festivals years after the time of the narrative, Egwugwu is a conspicuous presence. Enoch's desecration of Egwugwu is significant as an act that leads the narrative to its climax: Okonkwo's murder of the court messenger and his suicide thereafter. For the same reason, the reader holds Enoch responsible for the abomination that Okonkwo brings upon himself by killing the court messenger.

Achebe lets Enoch challenge the ritual of Egwugwu and provides a space for dissent in the narrative, but unlike Nwoye's voice of dissent, it dies off, being a very lonely one unapproved of by both the Christian and tribal communities. The conflicting communities can be seen to have come to a uniform stand against the desecration of Egwugwu in the narrative. The silence of the Christian community as depicted by Achebe justifies the eloquence

of the tribe on the matter. This kind of representation of two conflicting cultures is possible only by a look from the inside. When looked from outside, there is every chance that what is in Achebe's narrative would be reduced to a story of the pacification of a primitive tribe in which Okonkowo would turn out to be a barbarian "who had killed a messenger and hanged himself" (168). Enoch would sometimes be projected in such a narrative as a progressive and revolutionary character who favours change and fights tradition fearlessly. Achebe makes Enoch do the act of sacrilege and treats him with a shameful exit from the narrative. This narrative validates the view that Achebe turns the colonial legacy into fictional opportunity and thus deploys fiction to reorganize African cultures in the crucial juncture of transition from colonialism to national independence. The reorganization involves the contestation of core images, rituals, symbols and concepts fundamental to the Igbo as well as the aggressive western culture. This is done with a view to generating new meanings and redefining cultural boundaries.

It is possible to say that Ngugi wa Thiongo has also been dealing in the same way with the Gikuyu cultural context. Ngugi too felt that the Gikuyu community needed to be reorgnized following the crisis and cultural confusion caused by British imperialism. One finds Ngugi addressing earnestly the issue of cultural realignment to counter imperialist domination in *The River Between*, of which the author himself speaks in the following vein:

> One action leads to the next along the normal sequence and divisions of time – seconds, minutes, hours, days, weeks, months, years. Event leads to event in a relay in a field of continuous time. It is the

> biographical approach where the character/narrator follows the hero in time and space from his/her point of entry to that of exit, let's say from birth to death. The point of view is largely that of the central character. The one narrative voice is that of the omniscient narrator author. (Duerden and Pieters 75)

Putting aside Ngugi's observations regarding the structure of the work for the time being and focusing on the omniscient narrator and central character it would be possible to locate the central issue this fictional narrative debates. One persistent question that the narrator and the central character Waiyaki try to negotiate comes up in the narrative in the form of hints, doubts and waverings. At certain points of the narrative it is solidly put. For instance, when the situation arises, following Muthoni's death, for the people to take a position, Kabonyi breaks away from the Christian church and returns to the tribe (69). At this point both the central character and the narrator suffer from their inability to associate or affiliate to either the Christian church or the tribe: "Where was his place in all this? He felt a stranger, a stranger to his land" (69). When Marioshoni, the native school, comes into being in opposition to mission schools of the Siriana character, the narrator finds himself caught in a crisis of cultural identity. The same question comes in a persistent and a solid manner: "Where did people like Waiyaki stand?" (80). At a still later point in the narrative when the polarization between Kameno and Makuyu ridges deepens and Joshua works more aggressively for the mission, the same question perturbs Waiyaki in a very painful manner:

> Waiyaki felt uneasy. He remembered that he had always wondered what to make of people like Kabonyi, where to place them. Then he moved on to himself. Where did he stand? Perhaps there was no half way house between Makuyu and Kameno. (99)

The question where the central character stands in the cultural encounter comes up most significantly for the last time in the narrative during a meeting between Waiyaki and Nyambura. Nyambura reminds him of Muthoni, the daughter who got circumcised challenging her father Joshua in particular and the Christian belief system in general. Waiyaki at this moment in the narrative is once more bewildered as to where he stands. Most significantly he sees Muthoni in Nyambura, though the latter is not initiated into the tribe and lives away from it.

Waiyaki's concern as to where he should stand in the cultural confusion unleashed by the colonial encounter can be said to be the one that Ngugi also shares. That is, if Waiyaki's concern is as to where he stands, Ngugi's deepest concern is to show where one should stand for the liberation of the community from unhealthy nativism and equally harmful white domination. The problems the Gikuyu community faced with the coming of the missionaries and the colonizer are problems that could not be addressed or negotiated from positions of cultural polarity. That is, colonialism could not be fought successfully by a complete rejection of the alien culture and an uncritical acceptance of native culture; neither is it possible to do it by the indiscrete and blind assimilation of the colonial values and the Christian belief system or the outright and wholesale rejection of the native way of life. So, as the narrative itself projects, the central question is one of taking positions in the

cultural confusion that is eating away at the vitality of the Gikuyu and other African communities in African countries. There is the need to create a location out of the beliefs of the tribe as well as those of the Christian church to address and negotiate issues the community encounters since the arrival of the colonizing missionaries.

While raising the question of taking positions in a situation of transition, Ngugi debates the possibility of a synthesis between the contending cultures towards the formation of a new community. In fact the first movement of the narrative comprises the birth of a new community to be nurtured both by the indigenous ways of life and modern missionary education. In the chapters up to the eleventh, the community debates one of the most important rituals of the Gikuyu belief system namely, circumcision. The most controversial circumcision in the narrative is that of Muthoni and it becomes so for various reasons: she gets circumcised as a mark of rebellion against her father Joshua who is a spirited Christian and an aggressive preacher against female circumcision practiced within the Gikuyu community. Another reason that gives significance to Muthoni's circumcision is her death and it initiates a spirited debate. Before going into the debate within the Gikuyu community on this tribal rite, as imagined by Ngugi, it is essential to understand the special cultural and political significance of certain rites and rituals and their ideological projection in Kenya in and around the 1930s.

Gerald Moore in his significant essay on Ngugi and his works suggests that the two opposed ridges Makuyu and Kameno are nothing less than a microcosm of the whole situation in the Gikuyu

Highlands in the years 1910 to 1945. These were the years when Jomo Kenyatta who began his life as a boy at the Church of Scotland Mission in Gikuyu became a moving force in the rejection of that church's preaching against circumcision. In that atmosphere charged with the ideological message of a going back to indigenous culture it is quite unsurprising that Muthoni feels that to be a real woman she has to undergo circumcision. So she rebels and escapes from Makuyu to Kameno. The shift in her position in the narrative is a cultural shift. It is not a complete rejection of Christianity, nor is it a wholesale acceptance of the customs of the tribe. This aspect is evident from the conversation between the two sisters Muthoni and Nyambura following the latter's visit to Muthoni in bed after circumcision: Muthoni tells her sister that she is still a Christian, a Christian in the tribe. Her last words to Waiyaki are to tell Nyambura that she sees Jesus and that she is "a woman beautiful in the tribe" (Ngugi, *River* 60). Muthoni's words testify to the fact that she values the tribal custom dearly and is still capable of taking in the spirit of the new faith. By creating Muthoni and Nyambura, Ngugi is making the imagined community debate the issue of female circumcision in a significant way. To the Christians including her father Joshua, Muthoni's death is a punishment for the sins she committed: disobedience and circumcision. The men of the tribe like Chege, Waiyaki's father, too consider her death as a punishment: punishment to Joshua for not observing the customs of the tribe. To Livingston the incident confirmed the barbarity of Gikuyu customs. These responses to Muthoni spring from the two extreme attitudes to culture. The cultural purists who identify with the native tradition do not see

cultural entities as something that acquire meaning through communal negotiation. The same is the case of the other contending groups, whether it be Kenyan Christians or foreign missionaries. It is to be noted that none of these responses are given validity in the narrative. The responses of Waiyaki and Nyambura are qualitatively different and of the same category. Nyambura remains uncircumcised but she never finds fault with her sister undergoing it. After Muthoni's death Nyambura even develops a distance from the church and, in spirit, she becomes a living extension of Muthoni's rebellion. It is significant that Waiyaki finds nothing disgraceful in Nyambura remaining uncircumcised. That is, these characters have the same ideological stance regarding culture and together they take a position from where questions and issues the community faces could be addressed.

By taking a position Ngugi does not underestimate either the tribal culture or the alien culture and their divergent ways. The complete break with Siriana after the circumcision incident is validated in the narrative by linking circumcision and missionary education and giving up the latter for the former. The narrative voice approves of the choice as is evident from the lines that follow:

> Circumcision was an important ritual to the tribe. It kept the people together, bound the tribe. It was at the core of the social structure and a something that gave meaning to a man's life. End the custom and the spiritual basis of the tribe's cohesion and integration would be no more. The message was Gikuyu Karinga. Keep the tribe pure. (79)

The central character Waiyaki himself keeps away from Siriana for the sake of the unity of the tribe at that point of time and builds up the school Marioshoni, an alternative to the Siriana Missionary

School. That Waiyaki stands with the tribe at a crucial juncture does not mean that he is an exponent of Nativism. Later in the narrative there comes the moment when he places education over rites and rituals and on that count wages an ideological battle with Kabonyi who is a confirmed nativist though he lived the life of a Christian for a short period as mentioned at the opening of the narrative. The debate that Muthoni starts with her decision to circumcise deepens into an ideological battle with her death separating the tribe into two strongly contending parties. Waiyaki and Nayambura defend and reinforce the cultural position assumed by Muthoni against the strong adherents of Nativism such as Kabonyi and staunch supporters of Christian belief like Joshua. "Waiyaki who did not like to identify with either side" knew that only reconciliation, tolerance and unity could save the community from its present crisis (125). That is why Waiyaki who breaks away from Siriana and leaves his studies on the question of circumcision at one point in the narrative ventures to marry Nyambura. Paradoxical it may appear on the surface but deep down it is a cultural attitude that does not divide the community into the faithful and the faithless. Waiyaki's non-identification with either side is a cultural stance that enables him to deploy the resources and inventories of both cultures in sorting out and resolving issues in relation to each other. Identification with one way of life or set of rites and rituals annihilates such a possibility and hinders the very negotiation of cultural identities in the interest of a community caught in cultural and political confusion. That is, by imagining Waiyaki in the way he did Ngugi is not simply recapturing the history of the thirties and forties in the Gikuyu

land but asserting the need to see culture as an ongoing dialogue and endless negotiation in terms of meaning. Waiyaki both supports and challenges rites as Muthoni does by becoming a Christian and a woman in the tribe. It is significant that traditionalists as well as the Christians find it difficult to accommodate her: Her father considers her as lost to the devil while Kabonyi brings in the issue of Muthoni's death to victimize Waiyaki. The attitude of the contending groups to Nyambura and Waiyaki is similar and it is significant that these two characters who take firm positions on the cultural and political issues of the community are ultimately suppressed by the cultural purists like Kabonyi. Ngugi is staunch in his belief that the future of the community lies with Waiyaki and Nyambura who possess a sort of double vision. Significantly he concludes the narrative placing both Waiyaki and Nyambura in the hands of the community that can either mar or make its prospects by its attitude to cultural figures like Waiyaki.

In all the four fictional texts studied in this chapter, the central question regarding the national community debates has been the reworking of the tradition as a part of the struggle for liberating the nation from the colonial rule. Whether it is the Nigerian culture, Kenyan culture or the Indian culture the major concern of the times is the reconstitution of the indigenous culture by the selective assimilation of certain aspects of the western culture. Moorthy, Bakha, Nwoye and Waiyaki are imagined to exemplify the response of the people to the various institutions brought in by imperialism. All these characters are, in one way or the other, figures who seek to free the community from the

orthodoxy of the indigenous culture, thus enabling the community to liberate itself from imperial domination. From the vantage point of hindsight into past history, it is possible to say that these communities have been able to achieve the prime agenda of their prolonged struggle against imperialism. Looking from the standpoint of anti-imperial nationalism's foremost agenda, that is, the subversion of imperial authority, these narratives can be seen to be politically fulfilling. In other words, these narratives become politically fulfilling because they foreground the question of undermining imperial authority. Significantly, as Aijaz Ahmad observes, the "foregrounding" of some "great questions" about the nation is "the essential canonizing gesture" which involves "subordination or even foreclosing of certain (other) kinds of questions" (124). Some of these "other" questions subordinated to the primacy of the authorized questions about nation pertain to the representation of class, gender and other marginalized entities.

The question of class, one may note, is subordinated to the question of colonial oppression in Raja Rao's narrative, *Kanthapura.* The novel attempts to present the nation as a homogeneous unit and thus suppresses and forecloses certain questions highly relevant to the subaltern and the untouchable. But there are moments in the narrative that betray the contradictory pull on the nationalist ideology and the nationalist suppression of subaltern aspirations. One such incident follows the discussion of a news item about the country of hammer and sickle. The narrator is wonderstruck to know from Rangamma that the country of hammer and sickle has done away with all forms of social discrimination. She recounts what she heard about this

country from Rangamma with overwhelming approval, not to highlight the political significance of Socialism or Communism, but to mark that "Rangamma was no village kid" like other women of Kanthapura (42-43). What is notably ironic about the whole episode is that the subaltern is not allowed to participate in the discussion that concerns him most. Pariah Ramakka who goes to Rangamma to take the paddy to be husked comments that the country he heard about where the Bramin and the Pariah are equals is indeed a strange country. Rangamma who waxes eloquent on nationalist interests is conspicuously disinclined to discuss this matter with him. She forecloses the subaltern issue with a curt reply: "My paper says nothing about that" (43). The narrator appreciates Rangamma not only for the vastness of her general knowledge but also for suppressing the subaltern question. What marks the statement of Rangamma is her reluctance to discuss a topic that threatens to undermine the dominance of her caste and class.

The upper caste appropriation of the nationalist ideology is very much visible in another context also. The formation of the Congress Committee in Kanthapura is the context. The meeting is held at the temple and the different caste groups are addressed and asked to take an oath before the deity. They enter inside the temple and take the oath. When the turn of the Pariah caste comes, their leader Rachanna stands up and volunteers to take the vows standing in the courtyard. Then, as the narrator says, "Moorthy is so confused that he does not know what to do." Range Gowda, the landlord of the village, interferes and manages the situation this time: "Here in the temple or there in the courtyard, it

is the same god you vow before" (107). The obliging Pariahs thus take oath from the courtyard steps. Moorthy's muteness and Gowde's glossing strategically frustrate the narrative possibility of undermining the upper caste notions of polluting presence. Though the narrative boasts of a Congressman, Advocate Ranganna, opening his temple to those who are considered untouchables (130), the pariah community of Kanthapura is not only denied entry to the temple but also represented as happily assisting the upper caste people to take away the right. There is an incompatibility in the denial of will to Rachanna in the matter of temple entry because he is shown in the rest of the narrative as a daring person. A little earlier in the story he falls on Bade Khan, tears away his lathi and beats him for attacking Moorthy. Because of this he loses his job at the estate. This incompatibility in the character can be traced to the ideological burden of elite nationalism he is made to uphold against the immediate reality of oppression as an untouchable.

Nationalism as conceived by Rao is one that bases itself on reformed Hinduism. This is somewhat true about Indian nationalism. The real fight in the village, Kanthapura, is between secularist Congress and Brahmin fundamentalism, between Moorthy and Bhatta. Bhatta who is a landlord and a moneylender fights Congress for its secular views. It is important to note that the Congress elite deploys the reformed language of Hinduism and the corresponding terminology of the past to win over people to the nationalist project. This leaves the reader in doubt whether the Congress activists among the Brahmins and the other communities of the village were able to grasp Indian reality in strictly secular

terms. Moorthy conceives Gandhi as a reincarnation. The nation in his dream is a thousand-pillared temple. The problem with this language of nationalism with a remarkable religious thrust is that it can as well be used against secular nationalism also. The subversive element in this kind of appropriation is indeed commendable and the use of it may be unavoidable in those times but there is also the question of regression as it happens India today. The regressive movements in India are effectively using the same rhetorical patterns and categories that are employed in the early phase of independence struggle. The characterization of the minority in the novel betrays the lopsidedness of religion-based nationalisms. The only Muslim character in the novel signifies colonial suppression. He is an outsider to Indian (Hindu) nationalism. The construction of the Muslim as the Other in the narrative betrays the diverse pulls on the nationalist movement in India.

Anand stands apart from the mainstream novelists of his time as a writer who voiced the subaltern concerns with commitment. His first novel *Untouchable* gives primacy to the subaltern question in the larger context of anti-colonial nationalism. In spite of the authorial concern for the outcaste, the trope of the passive subaltern is a marked feature of Anand's narrative also. Bakha's father, Lakha, is a typical example for such a trope. Lakha's bitter experience with the high-caste Hindu doctor who almost killed his ailing son Bakha by a delayed visit persuades him to accept things as they are and never to rebel at the oppression. Bakha, unlike his father, is desperate for change. He is a chance survivor of caste discrimination. The doctor would have killed the seriously diseased

Bakha by not attending because his father polluted his medicines. In spite of his father's warnings, at one point in the narrative he feels sorry for not hitting back the woman who threw bread at him from the fourth storey. Though he passes through a series of torturing experiences, Bakha never rebels. On two occasions in particular Bakha is on the verge of returning the upper caste violence. When he hears that the priest made passes at his sister Sohini, "he felt he could kill them all. He looked ruthless, deadly pale and livid with anger and rage" (71). He recalls the incident of a brother killing the rustic who teased his sister. Then his rage turns into fear at the sight of what he feels the oppressive and fearful structure of the temple. Shortly after, his fear fades into jealous and sensual thoughts about his sister. On being slapped and abused publicly a desire for revenge rises in Bakha. This time also he moves from the desire for revenge to smouldering rage and then to gloominess. Anand conceives Bakha as having a physical inability to revolt:

> He could not overstep the barriers which the conventions of his superiors had built up to protect their weakness against him . . . So in the highest moment of his strength, the slave in him asserted itself, and he lapsed back, wild with torture, biting his lips, ruminating his grievances. (73)

This is one way in which the narrative forecloses the possibility of subaltern counter-action. The narrative contains Bakha's desire to hit back by the device of intervention also. Sohini stops him from taking on the priest while the tonga-wallah takes him away from the man who slapped him. Bakha also is informed by the ideology of elite nationalism like Rachanna. This ideology acts on Bakha

and Rachanna like a blinder so that they move towards the nationalist cause but remain largely unresponsive to oppression in the name of caste.

Bakha is confined to ideational protest and it is, perhaps, because Anand intends him to be so. Asha Kaushik endorses such an argument and in her view the protest at the level of ideas signifies the authorial dedication to the dictates of realism. She maintains that "Anand realizes the futility of such an alternative (physical revolt) in view of the organized power of the high castes compounded by the frustrating despair, almost immobilizing the depressed classes" (129). Consequently she reads the sweeper boy's inability to hit back as a signifier of fidelity. Almost every reading of *Untouchable* invariably applauds the narrative for its detailed realism and sympathetic portrayal of Bakha's life. But some of the critics, Susie Tharu and Teresa Hubel for instance, have problematized the unconscious ideology that realism is correlate with. Hubel argues that realism as employed in Anand's novel is susceptible to the dictates of middle-class advantage. She observes:

> What we are more likely to conclude is that the untouchable in this novel needs change, rather than to be an agent of change. This latter role is reserved for Gandhi and the poet. Although the text rejects the Gandhian approach to the problem of untouchability, it simultaneously inscribes it because it leaves Bakha unable to effect his own liberation. It leaves him dependent upon Gandhi, or Charat Singh, or the poet, or on anyone else who has the power and the education to imagine and implement the reform of Indian society. Bakha cannot do this himself because, though physically strong as well as angry enough to demand

> change, his personal power and the power of all untouchable in India is, the novel suggests, unavoidably curtailed by the subservience of centuries. (175)

Susie Tharu discovers the manifestations of the unconscious ideology of Indian nationalism that partakes of liberal humanism in the images and the language that Anand uses:

> Bakha is repeatedly described as behaving 'instinctively,' as having a fine physique like that of a thorough-bred animal. He is referred to as a tiger, lion, a bear, a horse. Consider 'his broad, frank face ordinarily so human, so variable, so changing, with its glistening high cheek bones, its broad nose, the nostrils of which dilated like those of an Arab horse.' ("Decoding" 37)

Thus, the mode of narration chosen by the author and his experiential locations have a crucial role in deciding how a specific question is foregrounded or subordinated in a nationalist narrative. In spite of Anand's professed commitment to the depressed class, the unconscious ideology of Indian nationalism, as Tharu and Hubel illustrate, weakens the subaltern position he takes and subordinates it to the interests of nationalist elite.

The African nationalist novels also, like the Indian narratives, in foregrounding the anti-colonial agenda subordinate the questions of class and gender discriminations that exist within the indigenous traditions. Achebe dismisses the real subaltern of Igbo community with a lone reference in his *Things Fall Apart.* "The low-born and outcaste" of Umuofia are spoken off slightingly as joining Christianity (143). Later, in *No Longer at Ease,* Okonkwo's grandson Obi falls in love with Clara who is an osu, a thing given to idols. Obi's father, the erstwhile rebel Nwoye who became a

Christian and took the name Issac, tries to dissuade Obi from marrying an osu. An objectionable account of the osu and the consequences of marrying an osu which Obi does not however accept is passed on to him:

> Osu is like leprosy in the minds of our people. I beg of you, my son, not to bring he mark of shame and of leprosy into your family. If you do, your children and your children's children unto the third and fourth generations will curse your memory. It is not for myself I speak; my days are few. You will bring sorrow on your head and on the heads of your children. Who will marry your daughters? Whose daughters will your sons marry? Think of that my son. We are Christians, but we cannot marry our own daughters. (282)

The osu thus characterized by Obi's father is an outcaste group dedicated to god and their position in the Igbo social hierarchy is lower than that held by slaves. The president of the Umuofia progressive Union describes Clara as "a girl of doubtful ancestry" (241). Clara as an osu girl is not given an opportunity to speak of the experiences of being an outcaste. Instead she and on her account the osu is spoken about by the socially privileged Christians. The osu as a depressed social group is denied voice and is situated on the edges of the nation that Achebe imagines. Obi surrenders before his mother's threat that she would take her life if he married Clara. Clara is made to quit the narrative after an abortion to lend primacy to the authorized question of Obi's and, by extension, modern Nigeria's corruption and frightening lack of conviction. Achebe, however, presents a positive image of Clara. She is an overseas-educated, sensitive, independent-minded woman, a nurse by profession. But her subaltern voice is

suppressed to direct all attention to the story of corruption in free Nigeria.

The examination of the Indian and African novels shows that the subaltern in them suffers from not only near invisibility but also lack of agency and authentic voice. This kind of objectification of the subaltern is the result of an effort to project the nation as devoid of elements hostile to the nationalist ideology. In the face of the imperialist strategies that depict India and Africa as chaotic, the representation of the nation as a homogeneous and harmonious entity marks a stance of resistance. But at the same time, the construction of the subaltern as passive to the elitism and parochialism of the nationalist ideology is also a means of cultural control of the margins as long as the discursive representation of the subaltern is almost entirely in the hands of the elite.

The canonizing gesture of the anti-colonial narratives is remarkably visible in the subordination of the gender question also. As in the imperial enterprise, gender dynamics is fundamental to the process of nation making. Gender is one of the significant defining parameters in the securing and maintenance of the national enterprise. As in the case of the nationalist appropriation of the subaltern, the elite male writers have largely and almost entirely undertaken the discursive representation of the woman in the nationalist context. This has led to what can be called the appropriation of the woman's question. The construction of femininity in the Indian and African nationalist male narratives and the response of women to that are densely political projects that demand close analysis.

Writing Women

Muraleedharan. K.C “Fiction as Cultural Resistance: A Study of African and Indian Fiction of the Post-colonial Period ” Thesis. Department of English, University of Calicut, 2002

Chapter Five

Writing Women

The nationalist resolution of the women's question in the Indian context is a highly contested site and considerable contributions from eminent historians mark the intellectual and political sharpness with which the whole debate has been conducted. Prominent among the contributions is Partha Chatterjee's thesis. According to Chatterjee the nationalist resolution of the women's question is part of its larger project of reworking tradition in the struggle against colonial domination. The resolution was conceived and executed by bifurcating the domain of culture into two spheres—the material and the spiritual. The material sphere, which includes science, technology, rational forms of economic organization and modern methods of statecraft, was projected as the forte of the Western culture the inculcation of which would enable the native to overthrow the alien rule that established its dominance through advances made in this domain. So it was necessary to launch a project to enable the native to meet the colonizer on equal terms, and this was to be achieved by "rationalizing and reforming the traditional culture of the people" ("Nationalist" 237). But the project was to move on rigorously chartered lines:

> But this could not mean the imitation of the West in every aspect of life, for then the very distinction between the east and the west would

> vanish—the self-identity of the national culture would itself be threatened. ("Nationalist" 237)

The selective appropriation that the nationalists encouraged was guided by the notion that "it was not desirable to imitate the West in anything other than the material aspects of life, it was not even necessary to do so, because in the spiritual domain the East was superior to the West" ("Nationalist" 237). The selection proved a highly complex process but it was managed with the questions like "is it desirable? Is it necessary?" In due course, as Chatterjee points out, the material/spiritual distinction in the discourse of nationalism condensed itself into "an analogous but ideologically far more powerful dichotomy: that between the outer and the inner." The outer was conceived as the "mere external" and the "inner" as the true self, the spiritual distinction of Indian culture, genuinely essential and unlike the "outer" to be retained without contamination ("Nationalist" 238). This thesis of nationalism when applied to the matter of concrete day-to-day living divided the social space into what Chatterjee calls "the home and the world" or "ghar and bahir":

> The world is the external, the domain of the material; the home represents our inner spiritual self, our true identity. The world is a treacherous terrain of the pursuit of material interests, where practical considerations reign supreme. It is also typically the domain of the male. The home in its essence must remain unaffected by the profane activities of the material world—the woman is its representation. ("Nationalist" 238-39)

One of the consequences of the splitting of the domain of culture into binaries was the identification of social roles along gender

lines. Once women were conceived as the custodians of national culture, it became imperative that "no matter whatever the changes in the external conditions of life for women, they must not lose their essentially spiritual (i.e. feminine) virtues" which, in other words, also meant that "there have to be marked *difference* in the degree and manner of westernization of women, as distinct from men, in the modern world of the nation" (Chatterjee, "Nationalist" 243). Right from the middle of the nineteenth century, says Chatterjee, up to the present day there have been controversies about the precise application of the binaries to "the various matters concerning the every day life of the 'modern woman'—her dress, food, manners, education, her role in organizing life at home, her role outside home" ("Nationalist" 244). A few instances that show how significantly nationalist narratives participated in defining the new woman in formation within the framework of the freedom movement may be recalled.

Rao upholds the dignity and equal role of women in the struggle for freedom. Rangamma and Ratna, the two women leaders of Kanthapura, are on a pedestal with the male protagonist Moorthy. They, Ratna in particular, at certain moments of crisis, wrest the initiative and lead the struggle. Rangamma overcomes the vestiges of the stereotypical widow to be a figure of admiration and action in the community. But at certain points in the narrative both these women are made to surrender their control over their own destiny and are persuaded to gloss over the real questions of oppression raised within the fabric of nationalism. This deprivation of voice and control over the self are executed through the narrator. The narrator of this story, hence, functions

in two contradictory ways. She is in the main a female nationalist counter voice to the upper caste voices of imperial slant. She also functions as a mechanism that sanitizes the critique of certain aspects of tradition that Indian nationalism in its dominant version wished to suppress. For instance, the real tension between Brahmin orthodoxy and its main female victims – widows - is signified by the antagonism that Bhatta and the orthodox Brahmin women harbour for Ratna, the young widow. The presentation of the same is worthy of recall for the controlling strategy it plays in the case of an otherwise admirable and self-asserting character like Ratna:

> Then Rangamma's sister Kamalamma came along with her widowed daughter Ratna, and Bhatta rose to go, for he could never utter a kind word to that young widow, who not only went about the street alone like a boy, but even wore her hair to the left like a concubine, and she still kept her bangles and her nose-rings and ear-rings, and when she was asked why she behaved as though she hadn't lost her husband, she said that that was nobody's business, and that if this sniffing old country hens thought that seeing a man for a day, and this when one is ten years of age could be called a marriage, they had better eat mud and drown themselves in the river. (44)

This passage on analysis would allow us to see the emancipatory as well as regressive pulls on the nationalist ideology that determine the creation of Ratna. The representation of Ratna can be studied in relation to the specific historical context of the nationalist struggle against the colonial denigration of Indian tradition. In the context of what they considered the civilizing mission, notes Partha Chatterjee, the colonial authorities identified Indian tradition as

degenerate and barbaric and to prove the point they "invariably repeated a long list of atrocities perpetrated on Indian women not so much by men or certain classes of men, but by an entire body of scriptural canons and ritual practices" (*Nation*118). By taking a sympathetic position

> with the unfree and opposed womanhood of India, the colonial mind was able to transform this figure of the Indian woman into a sign of the inherently oppressive and unfree nature of the entire cultural tradition of a country. (*Nation* 118)

The British colonial state in order to justify and legitimize its rule, consistently foregrounded the "backward" and "retrograde" social conditions of Indians. In denigrating Indian traditions one of its strongest claims was that women in India were extremely oppressed. Nationalist narratives, observes Chatterjee, sought to undermine the colonialist construction of the Indian woman by calling into existence "the new woman." In constituting this new woman, Chatterjee elaborates, "nationalism adopted several elements from tradition as marks of its native cultural identity" and produced a "classicized" tradition that was "reformed, reconstructed and fortified against the charges of barbarism and irrationality" (*Nation* 127). Ratna is such a new woman in the making and she is imagined in opposition to the "common woman" who is "coarse, vulgar, loud, quarrelsome, devoid of superior moral sense, sexually promiscuous, subjected to brutal physical oppression by males" (*Nation* 127). The passage that describes Ratna's social conduct as a child widow hints at some of these elements "undesirable" to the nationalist imagination, like the reported rudeness in expression and defiance in movements that

the orthodox Brahmin women find hard to accept. Ratna stands in contrast with the common womenfolk and Rangamma. The contrast is subtly maintained in the suggested intimacy between Moorthy and Ratna, and, Rangamma and Sankar. Ratna is not as desexualized as Rangamma for she feels embarrassed when Moorthy after the fast suddenly declares, in opposition to his feelings of love for her till then, that Ratna is to him like a sister (92). As the story proceeds she ventures to explain the Vedas though there "never was a girl born in Kanthapura that had less interest in philosophy than Ratna" (147). Later when she takes up the overall leadership of the movement the narrator notices that "there's the voice of Rangamma in her speech, the voice of Moorthy, and she was no more the child we had known, nor the slip of a widow we cursed" (217). When women exclaimed happily over the burning of Bhatta's house, she advises them against verbal violence even (219). In the end, the "deferential" Ratna leaves, after her term in jail, for Bombay to join Moorthy, and the narrator definitely leaves the question of their future relationship to the discretion of the reader (257). Rao depicts Ratna as overcoming her "grossness" and "crudity" gradually to come out of the narrow world of the home to participate in a wider community. The passage that reports the defiance of Ratna in fact emphasizes the violation of the feminine ways, in this particular case, of a young widow, which was all the more irritating to the Brahmin orthodoxy. Ratna's depicted metamorphosis from a common, crude girl into a woman who chooses the path of suffering and sacrifice demonstrates the nationalist construction of the new woman.

The new Ratna is the nationalist answer to the colonialist projection of Indian woman as unfree. Her emergence involves also her breaking out of the shell of indigenous orthodoxy. So the narrative privileges her in various ways. Considered from the angle of fight against orthodox Brahmanism that takes place in the village, the passage that reports Ratna's behaviour assumes greater significance. This account of her conduct received through the woman narrator embodies the orthodox Brahmin gossip about her. It, to a certain degree, confirms Bhatta's own view of her. But Bhatta as a character is conceived in such a way that his utterances and views are presented to be contradicted and defeated within the narrative. Ratna's defiance presented by the narrator as gossip has only negligible effect because orthodox Venkamma and others dutifully malign the "Gandhi people" and, as in the case of Bhatta's views, their views are also devalued by the nationalist slant of the narrative. Moreover, in this particular case, the narrator gives enough clues to mark these words as mere backbiting (44). The narrator celebrates Usha, her ideal of womanhood, in a paragraph or two, but it is Ratna who holds more space in the novel. She holds this space, as Pereira says, "to defy both the oppressors of the Raj and the conservative traditions of the village" (103). Usha's death itself is symbolic of the demise of the ideal kitchen-bound woman. Ratna challenges the Brahmin orthodoxy and its inhuman treatment of widows by making her body speak in many ways. That is, as the gossip goes, by moving "about the streets like a boy, wearing her hair to the left like a concubine, keeping her bangles and her nose rings and earrings." Slanders apart, Ratna's reported conduct manifests not only her

retrieval of her own body from the conditioning gaze of the Brahmin orthodoxy but also her deployment of it in defiance of their dictatorial notions of womanhood. She reacts sharply to those who try to control her life as a woman and challenges their concept of marriage. She launches a severe critique on the Brahmin notion of marriage as applied to child widows. Her vocabulary, emphasis and tone are decisively non-Gandhian, if not un-Gandhian, and the thrust of her words is reverberatingly pro-feminist in the beginning. It would not be an exaggeration to suggest that Ratna is constituted of the anti-imperial as well as anti-patriarchal impulses. She undermines the notion of the "feminine," and this is why Bhatta tolerates Moorthy, but not Ratna and Rao also unambiguously demonstrates his preference for Ratna only after making sure that she acquires "the feminine virtues." That is, he prefers her more as a woman seeking the freedom of her country and less as a rebellious presence that threatens the nationalist image of the Indian woman. However, he privileges the sanitized version of Ratna by dispensing Bhatta with a pilgrimage to Kashi. All these strategies point to the fact that the passage that describes the defiance of Ratna cuts both ways. That is, it is a disguised voice of Ratna critiquing patriarchy and it is also the nationalist voice of definitive control on the new woman in formation. The narrator at first prefers Usha who, as she says, would never utter a word aloud or say nay to anything but finally settles for Ratna. The ambivalence that is palpable in the narrator's attitude to Ratna's "morals"(146) signifies the nationalist anxiety over the "feminine," the supposed preserve of the national culture. The partial denial of voice to Ratna in the beginning and rectification of the same later

when she is reconstituted to fit the new patriarchy of the nation underscores the nationalist politics of "speaking for women" and "making women speak," while strategically withholding them from asking certain significant questions regarding their existence in a culture that is pronouncedly male-dominated.

The nationalist trope of the "classicized woman" with its emphasis on the feminine is the very foundational principle that holds together the nation that Rao posits in his *Serpent and the Rope*. According to Susie Tharu,

> Ramaswami is brought back to a real "Indianness" through the dignity and strength his young, widowed step-mother achieves in her careful ritual; through his awareness of his growing sister; and finally through Savitri, who is modern and even in some ways westernized, but is truly Indian. ("Tracing" 203-204)

If Savitri's "feminine virtues" reunite the spiritually wandering Rama with the real India, Shantha, who too is an embodiment of the feminine, anchors Ramakrishna Pai, the male protagonist of Rao's *The Cat and Shakespeare*, to modern India. The narrator celebrates the "feminine attributes" of Shantha with the terseness and force of a thesis: "She remained a wife. My feet were there for her to worship. My weaknesses were there for her to learn; my manhood, at least such as I possess, for her to bear children" (23). He continues in the same vein collapsing Shantha's womanhood and wifehood:

> To be a wife is not to be wed. To be a wife is to worship your man. Then you are born. And you give birth to what is born in being born. You annihilate time and you become a wife. Wifehood, of all states in

> the world, seems the most holy. It stops work. It creates. It lives on even when time dies . . . Such is woman. (30)

If the narrative celebrates Shantha for indulging in the service of patriarchy, it in the same breath devalues Saroja, Pai's real wife "who is a tremendous worker . . . busy inspecting the rope making" (30). The narrator describes her as coming to him with their daughter when he falls ill and leaving by the evening train itself "as she had boat repairs to inspect" (32). Here he conforms to what Susie Tharu describes as "the common trend of glorifying women who fulfill their wife and mother roles with exceptional ardour" placing "an enormous burden on the women who came within its defining scope" ("Tracing" 263). Saroja is implicitly and sternly told to fulfill "domestic demands and the requirements of femininity before moving on to 'serve the nation'" ("Tracing" 264). The women in *Kanthapura*, as Perera notes, are not only told to do the same but also brought back into line by the use of physical force by men (102).

Achebe's imaginative world is also severely gendered. In *Things Fall Apart*, Okonkwo, the central character, is conceived as an embodiment of aggressive masculinity. Okonkwo's masculine identity is constructed in opposition to a corresponding category of femininity. The gender bias manifests itself in characterization as well as language. Women and children are clubbed with items of possession. For example, Achebe clubs "barn full of yams" and "three wives" (19), "three huge barns, nine wives and thirty children"(29), and "foolish women and children" (53). All these references imply that women owned no property and women themselves formed an item of property. The consistent clubbing of

women with children also turns problematic as it equates a woman to a child. Both these stereotypical representations, woman as object and as child, are characteristic of the colonial mind-set and the presence of the same in the narratives of anti-imperial nationalism points to the rather unconscious assimilation of the ideological tools of colonial modernity by the nationalist elite.

This binary that divides the domain of culture on gender lines becomes visible in every aspect of the day-to-day life in the narrative. Even crops are described in terms of gender difference: man's crops and women's crops. Okonkwo's mother, sisters and his wives "grew women's crops, like coco-yams, beans and cassava" (32), while "Yam stood for manliness" (39) and "was a man's crop" (32). The result of such a division along gender lines is that Okonkwo's sphere of activity is centralized while the other sphere that is equally significant to community life is marginalized. Consequently those characters who promote the reigning ideology become full-fledged and others, women in particular, remain in the narrative as appendages. If one applies the words of Pierre Macherey to Achebe, his rendering of Okonkwo can be read as "the extension of a half presence" (215). The other half is unspoken or suppressed by the unconscious ideology of patriarchy working in him. This prejudice that speech itself evokes can be foregrounded by a close reading of the constructed masculinity of Okonkwo.

The defining drive of Okonkwo's life is the fear of being branded an "agbala," a term of derogation for women and untitled men (25). The narrative repeatedly refers to the other sex, sometimes to define Okonkwo's masculinity and at other times to highlight achievements of the men of the clan. A few such

instances that highlight Okonkwo's masculinity are worthy of scrutiny. Okonkwo, at the beginning, is imagined in opposition to his own father Unoka and, later he is placed in opposition to Nwoye, his own first-born. Unoka is an antithesis of not only of Okonkwo but also of Okoye, the successful contemporary of Unoka and a flautist like him. Okoye is considered successful in terms of his possessions: "He had a large barn full of yams and he had three wives." Besides these, "he was going to take the Idemili title, the third highest in the land" (19). Nwakibie, the man who helps Okonkwo to start his life, is distinguished in the clan for his wealth that is described as "three huge barns, nine wives and thirty children" (29). Nwakibie, Okoye and Okonkwo are great and successful men and Unoka because he fails to own barns and wives (the narrative speaks of only one wife, that is Okonkwo's mother, 32) becomes an agbala, a "woman" of the clan.

Nwoye, as mentioned earlier, is another foil to Okonkwo. His "degenerate and effeminate" nature is Okonkwo's lifelong worry (127). But he feels happy when Ikemefuna "kindles a new fire in the younger boy," and by and by he is drawn to the world of his obi from the female world of kitchen. His "grumbling about women," in Okonlwo's opinion, marks this transition. Okonkwo is "inwardly pleased" and the change, according to him, "showed that in time he would be able to control his women-folk" (52). This was essential, for prosperity alone, Okonkwo emphasizes, would not make a man: "No matter, how prosperous a man was, if he was unable to *rule* his women and his children (and especially his women) he was not really a man" (52, emphasis added). So this change that Nwoye feigns also involves a withdrawal from the narratives of foolish

women and children (69) to "the masculine stories of violence and bloodshed" (53). But Okonkwo's participation in the killing of Ikemefuna to demonstrate his masculinity in fact undermines the prospective changes in Nwoye. At that point begins the real fight between the aggressive masculinity that Okonkwo represents and the masculinity moderated by the feminine principle that his son (who later targets the manifestations of such masculinity from the location of Christian culture) stands for. From this point onwards the reader finds Okonkwo more and more anxious about the decline of the masculine tradition in his family as well as his clan. He, agitatedly, goes on saying to himself and a little later to his neighbour Obierika that "she (his daughter, Ezinma) should have been a boy" (60-62).

Achebe at this point introduces some accounts that threaten patriarchy and male privileges. The accounts about Abame and Aninta, their neighbouring clans, where "titled men climb trees and pound foo-foo for their wives" is received with disbelief and a comment that comes as a response to this betrays the fear of losing control over female sexuality: "You might as well say that the woman lies on top of the man when they are making the children" (68). The story of the egalitarian social and sexual attitudes is as unfamiliar and strange to them as "the story of the whiteman" whom they have not seen yet (68). If the alternative to patriarchy that allows women freedom and equality as in Anintha and Abame is laughed off as impossible with the peculiar logic of a sexual comparison, the living example of a man and his wife leading a saner, loving and exemplary life based on a notion of male-female equality in Umuofia itself is just mentioned without emphasis.

Okonkwo finds it very hard to believe that Ndulue "who could not do anything without telling her" (his wife, Ozoemena) was also the warrior who led Umuofia to war in those days" (64). This speaking away of a beautiful man-woman relationship is significant enough to draw the attention of a sharp reader. Florence Stratton observes that the narrative "backs away from the issue" of "questioning the hierarchical nature of the gender relations in Umuofia" by the rather insignificant way in which the story of Ndulue and Ozoemena's marital relationship is presented (28). The very purpose of marriage in Umuofia is to bless the clan "with nine sons" of Okonkwo's stature (100). The wedding song sung at the uri (part of the betrothal ceremony) of Obierika's daughter conceives the bride as readily consenting to the desire of male sexuality with a contrived silence: "If I hold her foot/She says, 'Don't touch!'/ But when I hold her waist-beads/She pretends not to know" (101). The marriage rituals are often designed in the interest of the reigning patriarchy. For instance, the last ceremony of Amikwu's marriage involves a trial of the bride by the prospective husband's close relatives. The bride is surrounded and grilled. One question was "How many men have lain with you since my brother first expressed the desire to marry you?" (111). Provokingly male-biased, the ritual glorifies virginity in an embarrassing manner derogating the honour of the bride in question.

Okonkwo's masculinity is also constructed in opposition to the female figures in the narrative, particularly his wives. As he wants Nwoye to do in the future he shows himself to be a man of his self-conception not only in terms of his prosperity but in his rule over his wives also. Okonkwo's treatment of his wives leaves

them without a space of their own. They are powerless in the public sphere (Stratton, 25) and terrorized in the domestic space. Women are spoken of and ordered to but are never allowed to speak themselves. So they are no better than the figures of a tapestry. At best, they are projections of Okonkwo's own male biases. In Stratton's view the narrative constructs "woman as a passive object, acted upon, never acting in her own right" (36).

In *Arrow of God* the women speak a little more. They are active but confined to the domestic realm. Ezeulu like Okonkwo has more than one wife. Though not aggressively masculine, Ezeulu too rules his wives. He intervenes often to silence his wives and children: "Keep quiet there, you two" (323), "Keep quiet there" (326). This he utters sometimes without enough provocation and justification. For instance, when Matefi runs into the obi as her son Obika comes shivering with fright and speechless, he silences the worried mother with this command. The stereotypical delinquent wife is very much present in this narrative also. There are two such, both Ezeulu's wives: Matefi and Ugoye. Though Matefi is not threatened with a gun or beaten like her counterpart in Achebe's first novel, she is told the matter sternly. She had valid reasons for late cooking; she had to fetch water from a distant stream as the one nearby was abandoned. Ezeulu knew this but decides in advance to "speak his mind to whoever brought him a late supper tonight" (325). So he pays no attention to her explanation and threatens her saying "if you want that madness of yours to be cured, bring my supper at this time another day" (327). There is violence here also, though it is verbal. Ugoye too is "notorious for late-cooking" and "deserved the rebuke even more"

but being "wiser than the senior wife she never cooked late on the days she sent food to her husband" (384).

When compared to the potentially political, cultural and economic roles that women in pre-colonial African societies are known to have taken, the rendering of the women in the narrative appears to be a marked departure from the actual history. So the lopsidedness in the representation of male-female power relations in the pre-colonial Igbo community that Achebe imagines is something that demands serious attention. Pre-colonial African societies in general and the Igbo community in particular are known for the flexibility of gender construction. Women held a basically complementary position in pre-colonial Nigerian society. They were not subordinate to men. The power relationships were, to a certain extent, based on seniority rather than gender. This is why the first wife was always held in honour as Achebe also shows in the case of Anasi (*Things* 30). The absence of gender-specific pronouns in many African languages and the interchangeability of first names among females and males is a philological indication of the social de-emphasis on gender as a designation for behavior. Many areas of traditional culture, including personal dress and adornment, religious ceremonials, and intragender patterns of comportment, suggest that Africans often de-emphasize gender in relation to seniority and other insignia of status. If this was the actual pre-colonial situation of women, one conclusion possible is that Achebe "failed to imagine either a sister for Okonkwo, a female nationalist hero, or a female counterpart for Nwoye, a woman in revolt against Umuofia's definition of her gender" (Stratton, 36). Stratton's insightful reading of the Achebe text against the grain of

the dominant critical perspective is largely tenable and the major issue she takes up with the narrative, the absence of a female nationalist counterpart to Okonkwo, is highly relevant. But what is problematic with her thesis is her construction of Achebe almost as a figure who conspires in his narratives against the liberation of African women. For instance, her concluding sentence, "Achebe does not tell African women 'where the rain began to beat them,' nor does he attempt to restore 'dignity and self-respect' to African women" (37-38) provoked the actual African woman subject, Obioma Nnaemeka, to defend Achebe against what she calls a vendetta:

> Stratton's project sounds more like a vendetta than literary criticism. Achebe does not need to tell African women "where the rain began to beat them"; they already know. They know that the rain, called "colonialism" by the invaders (rainmakers!) that brought it, began one stormy night when they (African women) were peacefully asleep. African women also know that it is not Achebe's responsibility to restore their "dignity and self-respect" because he did not take them away in the first place (103).

This response by critic Nnaemeka highlights the pointlessness in marking out Achebe as an anti-woman writer for what was the manifestation of the nationalist ideology that saw women as the other of man. Approached from the position delineated above, it appears, at least in the case of writers like Achebe, that more than the individual writer's unwillingness or stubbornness to address or suppress an issue, it is the unconscious politics of the ideology that determines the configurations of a narrative. Then the thrust of the interrogation should be brought to bear upon the ideology

rather than the individual who is partially an unconscious victim of it. So it becomes essential to situate the writing subject in his specific historical locus. Stratton's own observation provides a point of departure: "What we have, then, is a story whose concern is wholly for men and their dilemmas, one in which what happens to the women is of no consequence" (37). A statement of this sort with its total refusal to see Achebe's gesture purposefully obliterates what the narrative is trying to tell. Nobody, not even the radical African feminist, if there is one, would say that the story is "wholly" unconcerned of what happens to the woman. It is really concerned. It speaks about women and makes some women speak also. But in its efforts to counter the imperialist derogation, infantilization and feminization of the indigenous culture, the narrative, to adopt Machery's words, also creates a *certain absence* (217, emphasis in the original) or partial absences, even distortions. So the truth about the story is not that it does not speak about women, but that it speaks less, sometimes in the wrong way, for reasons valid at the time of writing. It is in making the narrative speak less, little, and sometimes wrongly that the politics of the unconscious ideology becomes crucial. This aspect of the partial blindness that ideology causes is touched by Stratton when she says "the characterization of Umuofia as an aggressively masculine society appears as Achebe's response to colonial writers who, in their feminization of Africa and Africans, contributed to the justification of the colonial presence in Africa" (37). Achebe was writing under the burden of African nationalism the constituting force of which was a return to the source and a selective approval of tradition. The lack of transparency of the ideology of nationalism at

the moment of its formation affects the individual as a kind of cultural blindness that is cured only later, perhaps only in some cases. Achebe and Ngugi are writers who have learned later how nationalism itself is gendered and gendered in all possible ways. They have realized how class positions and racial formations complicate the issue of women and situate them differently as understandable from their later works of fiction. But between the blindness and the new vision there is a period in which they earnestly invested their faith in the nationalist ideology, almost blindly in the face of what can be called a Hobson's choice. An account of the nationalist politics of the period will show how cultural figures have been incorporated into the whole process to validate the ideology and culture of anti-colonial nationalism the rendering of which appears problematic now.

Nigeria's indigenous societies, as has been pointed out above, did not place much emphasis on gender. Their thrust was on de-emphasizing gender. But the attitude of the colonial state was just the opposite. The beginning of colonial rule, it appears, brought in not only a division of the domain of culture into private and public spheres but also the identification of social roles along gender lines, as happened in the case of India. The colonial authorities changed the roles of women by means of legislation that restricted women and focused on men as a major work force to cater to the colonial economy. The purpose was in fact the creation of a male national elite and the subordination of the African women who enjoyed greater freedom in the pre-colonial times. This is how the male elite ventured to restrict women's participation in the public sphere. Whether Europeans introduced it to Africa or it was

adapted as a strategy by the native elite in their resistance to imperialism, the notion that women belonged to the home, nurturing their family, came to stay. This process in the African context marks the formation of classes and the rise to prominence of the colonial middle class. When power was transferred to this class in the freed countries in Africa the ideological apparatuses have been employed to restrict women in the same way as the colonial regimes restricted their women. A passage that Roopali Sircar paraphrases from Christine Obbo clearly depicts the situation:

> She further asserts that African women in post-colonial Africa are constantly expected to demonstrate that foreign ideas have not influenced them, and that by keeping out of politics and controversial issues like women's rights they uphold their traditions. (37)

So if women in the fictional Igboland are confined to the domestic space it was an outcome of the colonial policies accepted in part by the national elite, anxious of keeping the purity of the national culture. The colonial state began and the native elite continued, of course, with suitable variations, to dictate the lifestyles of women, endorsing their domesticity and the unwaged services they provided for the family. The concerted effort by the native elite following the male-oriented attitude that the colonial state instilled into it was to control women, their sexuality and fertility further defining their subordination. When Okonkwo orders Ezinma to "sit like a woman" (47) it is less his concern and more a nationalist concern over the morality of women in the context of the cultural conflict. Florence Stratton's comment where she compares Nwoye and

Ezinma in fact points to the nationalist project of making a new woman in opposition to the common womenfolk:

> For in contrast to Nwoye who ultimately rebels against his father's strict model of masculinity, she (Ezinma) submits to his definition of her gender, taking on the role of the tractable, serviceable, selfless daughter. Thus, for example, she agrees to reject all suitors until the family returns from exile to Umuofia when it will give a much needed boost to her father's prestige to have a marriageable daughter in the house. (30)

The formation of the "tractable, serviceable and selfless" daughter is a nationalist project that in fact both inspired and provoked African womanists like Flora Nwapa, Buchi Emecheta and Obioma. The point is that not only in Achebe but also in almost all writers of the time certain stereotypical patterning of women is visible but it is more a realistic presentation of the situation than Achebe's willful derogation of the African woman. So it is pointless to hold a single writer as responsible for something that was a national movement. The fact, in the case of Achebe and his contemporaries, is that in participating in the nationalist task of creating native heroes in terms of positivist categories they fell into the traps that literary representation itself involves. The creation of the image of an African Woman as an icon of obedience, domesticity and selected traditional virtues is there but whether the author sanctions it all is another matter. It is all the more so in the case of Achebe's narrative, which according to Innes, reserves separate and oppositional roles to the authorial consciousness and narrative voice (32,35). Stratton, as she herself declares, "considers the question of the relationship between the author and narrator" "relatively unimportant" (33), though she refers to the oppositional

construction of the two voices of the author. So it follows that the African nationalist ideology is to be identified more as the validating instrument of patriarchal interests than an individual writer like Achebe.

African and Indian women writers have strongly responded to the nationalist project of redefining women from a colonial and patriarchal point of view. But at the same time they are wary of the interventions of the white radical feminist critical discourse like that of Stratton's which poses Nwapa against Achebe. Women novelists have asserted their self by charting the struggle involved in negotiating the world they are confined to. They challenge the division of the cultural space into private and public spheres and the ideological confinement of women to the private sphere. Their insistence is on the fact that the personal is also political. Such insistence privileges the different aspects of the private sphere like female fecundity, childcare, domestic labour, sexual abuse, violence on women and such other aspects of a woman's life. Kamala Markandaya is the first outstanding woman writer in English in post-independence India who politicized the private world of women. Her forte was then recognized as the capacity to imagine a rural woman of immense potentiality for suffering, sacrifice and love (Iyengar, 438). Susie Tharu on the contrary observes that Markandaya in her *Nectar in a Sieve* produced patterns that conform to the tradition, "feeding feudal and Vedic cultural formations into what was the structure of Victorian sentiment" (262). These two comments point up a lack of consensus in critical opinion regarding Markandaya's first novel. This narrative can be reassessed making a virtue of this deep critical disagreement.

Between these two contradicting attitudes on Markandaya's work lies the undeniable fact that it is one of the significant works of the time in which an elite woman for the first time in independent India strives to articulate the story of a peasant woman at the suffering end of modernity and tradition. Between Rokea Sakhavat Hossain's witty utopian fantasy, "Sultana's Dream" (1905) and Markandaya's *Nectar in a Sieve* (1954) there appears not only a discontinuity in the production of fiction in English by Indian women but also a conspicuous change in the attitude to modernity that had a significant bearing upon Indian womanhood. This period in Indian history is obviously one of mobilization of the Indian people by Gandhi. Partha Chatterjee names this phase of Indian freedom struggle as the "moment of manoeuvre" and he cites the work of Gandhi as contributing to the elite appropriation of indigenous forms of knowledge to counter Western modernity. The elite mobilized the masses for national liberation but made sure that they remained distant from power and subjected to constant appropriation of the elite. As part of this ideological process what can be called "an eternal feminine" was set up in opposition to masculinity. Ketu H. Katrak's observation regarding that ideological process is worthy of recall:

> Gandhi's involvement of women in his 'satyagraha' (literally truth-force) movement—part of his political strategy for national liberation—did not intend to confuse men's and women's roles; in particular, Gandhi did not challenge patriarchal traditions that oppressed women within the home. Furthermore, his specific representations of women and female sexuality, and his symbolizing from Hindu mythology of selected female figures who embodied national spirit promoted ... a

> 'traditional' ideology wherein female sexuality was legitimately embodied only in marriage, wifehood, domesticity—all forms of controlling women's bodies. (quoted in McLeod 179)

The process that Katrak describes in detail shapes Markandaya's protagonist, Rukmani. Gandhi, in spite of the ideological shortcomings that Katrak points out, sought personal and ethical transformations for women and that contributed significantly to the empowerment of women, as Madhu Kishwar points out. Rukmani manifests that ethical transformation and the resultant strength of woman in action. In brief, the different pulls on the nationalist ideology converge on the body of the female protagonist and so her self becomes a site for the contestation of tradition and modernity and also for the patriarchal ideology that operates in both. Markandaya's *Nectar in a Sieve* is a seminal text that manifests the disclosure of the female self in the context of the clash between tradition and modernity in India.

Rukmani's life is a long tale of suffering, poverty and pain arising from the disintegration of the agrarian set up as a result of centuries of colonial manipulation. The family suffers from the vagaries of nature. But it is made acute by the colonial regime which with its land settlement acts reduced farmers like Nathan to semi-serfdom:

> Tannery, or not, the land might have been taken from us. It had never belonged to us, we had never prospered to the extent where we could buy, and Nathan, himself the son of a landless man, had inherited nothing. (134)

Her agony is aggravated by patriarchal demands on her but she never rebels. Suffering is her virtue and strength. The

accommodation of patriarchal interests without even a protest by the female protagonist has made it possible to argue that she is sculpted to fit the nationalist norm of the pleasing, tractable and emasculated wife. But such an assessment would be less than objective as it overlooks two aspects of Indian rural reality that the narrative builds up consistently. The first aspect is the intensity of the conflict between tradition and colonial modernity, against which the Indian rural woman had to define her identity. The second is of course the vagaries of nature, which most often put the rural folk in perilous conditions. For the rural women in India in the first half of the last century, the narrative seems to say, natural calamities and the onslaught of change brought in by colonial modernity posed a greater threat than the dictates of patriarchy. This is the story Markandaya tells. The major thrust of the narrative is the tradition-modernity conflict. Response to patriarchy is only secondary to the larger struggle of accommodating modernity as in the case of many postcolonial societies. That is, the male/female binary acts in close and decisive association with the binary town/village. Tracing the course of the narrative through these dichotomies would reveal how the woman protagonist negotiates patriarchy at the conflicting borders of tradition and modernity.

Rukmani's counter-modernity rhetoric is the most notable aspect of her: "There is nothing" she "would fly from" if she "could go back to the sweet quiet of village life." The town for her is "all noise and crowd everywhere" (46). The antithetical construction of the town and village is further and more intensely developed in her journey to the town. In the disappointing and devastating journey

she fails to find her son, but finds her daughter-in-law, frustrated, suffering and rude. Rukmani is robbed in sleep and her husband dies there. She survives the town and even saves an ailing orphan from the recklessness of the town and its scheming people (46). The village is described as being gradually annexed by the tannery and in this sense the tannery is very much a symbol of aggressive modernity. The metaphorical overtones of the tannery suggest a gigantic predatory organism of incredible and mysterious power:

> It was a great sprawling growth, this tannery. It grew and flourished and spread. Not a month went by but somebody's land was swallowed up, another building appeared. Night and day the tanning went on. (47)

The author connects the tannery significantly to the tragedy of the family. The first two sons of the couple, Arjun and Thambi, are "claimed" by the tannery in the sense that it gives them job and then dismisses them desperately to migrate to Ceylon. Inamdar who notes the possessive quality of the tannery says that Rukmani's sons desert the village when the tannery "frowns" upon them (59). Raja, the fourth son, dies at the hands of its watch and ward staff when he trespassed into the compound of the factory in search of something to eat. The third son Murugan is lost to the town. The presence of the tannery has a crucial role in Ira's and Kunthi's turn to prostitution. Finally, the family loses its land to the tannery. In spite of the devastating effect of the tannery on Rukmani's family, the narrative shows her as first accommodating and then accepting modernity. The acceptance of Ira and the albino child born to her indicates the accommodation of modernity with its aberrations. It is also significant that Selvam, the surviving son of Nathan and Rukmani, is instrumental for the family's

survival. His employment at the hospital, which is another institution of modernity, empowers him to do that. The return of Rukmani to this son following the death of Nathan, symbolically the death of the agrarian tradition, suggests the female protagonist's acceptance of modernity all the more explicitly. Her final acceptance of change shows that Markandaya's construction of the tannery as an obvious and intimidating presence is not so much for defending the tradition that was falling apart, as for explicating, as Tanega rightly asserts, "the nature and significance of the conflict between tradition and modernity and the role of a woman in the midst of the resultant turmoil" (53).

Gender bias marks everything in the society and in the words of Shashi Deshpande, it confronts the child at the moment of birth itself with the question is it a 'boy or girl?' (33). Rukmani's own response at the birth of her first child is informed typically by the ideology of patriarchy. When she sees that her firstborn is a baby girl, "tears of weakness and disappointment" overcome her and she responds rhetorically: "for what woman wants a girl for her first-born?" (14). This response of the mother herself illustrates that the life of a girl is defined from the moment of birth itself by the dictates of patriarchy. Infertility haunts Rukmani for seven years following Ira's birth. After seven years she gives birth to six sons in a line and nurtures them against all odds, thus satisfying the patriarchal norm.

If the birth of a baby girl is disappointing in a male-centered society, the birth of a baby boy is definitely not so. Rukmani informs us that Nathan was "overjoyed at the arrival of a son" and that the news brings her father who travels "all those miles by cart

from our village to hold his grandson" (20). The grandfather did not do this when the first child was born evidently because it happened to be a girl. Nathan celebrates the birth with a feast to the villagers. Only Kali, Rukmani's friend, dissents with a comment that such fuss would make one think that "the child had wings at least"(21). When consoling Rukmani for not having a son Janaki too turns out to be a voice of dissent. She wishes to be barren: "Janaki said, morosely, she wished it could happen to her: a child each year was no fun" (18). This is an instance of conceiving barrenness, at least as a temporary occurrence, to escape repeated deliveries that male sexuality in the agrarian context inflicts on women. Rukmani too in a fit of anger and frustration wishes the death of her child, Kuti, so that there is one mouth less to feed (85). Motherhood as hindrance to the education of women is also touched upon. It is Kali who tells Rukmani that she would forget "all about such nonsense" (reading and writing) when her child is born and her "hands are full" with other children. These statements express not the joys of motherhood but the burden that it puts on the woman as mother. The title *Nectar in a Sieve* also can be seen to undermine the concept of the joy of motherhood as something that the traditional mother hopes for and seeks compulsively but which invariably confronts her in the end with a pointlessness that is hard to bear. Rukmani tries to redefine motherhood by adopting Puli and the message she conveys is that giving birth is not the only way to achieve motherhood. Ira's motherhood is also a rebellious one as it goes against the grain of the patriarchal notions of chastity and wifehood. The point is that these voices of dissent are very much there operating against the

all pervading and dominant voice of the narrator who is caught in the joys of motherhood in no little measure. The culture of patriarchy haunts Rukmani's daughter Irawaddy as well: "the whole dreadful story was repeating itself, and it was my daughter this time" (50). Ira's husband divorces her for being "barren" and he says, "he waited for five years" without result.

Patriarchy interprets all intimacies between man and woman in terms of sex and turns it on the woman in question. Most interestingly it is through women that the patriarchal sanctions and accusations are voiced. A very eloquent instance of this is the interpretation given by Kunthi to the intimacy between Dr. Kennington, the medical missionary (113), and Rukmani (83). Rukmani conceals her consultations with the doctor for curing her temporary infertility even from her husband, fearing that it would cause suspicion and slander. Her caution in this matter is justified. Even her son Arjun and her daughter Ira seem to have such suspicions about the doctor. When Rukmani says that the doctor has the power to help her son he embarrasses her by looking at her "obliquely with darkening eyes" and commenting that whitemen have power "over men, and events, and especially over women" (52). She remembers with sudden clarity "her daughter's looks that far-off day" when she had gone to Kenny (83). Later in the narrative, the same fear haunts her when Selvam thinks of working as Kenny's assistant at the hospital. She thinks of telling him that the "villifiers" would "seek to destroy" his peace by misinterpreting Kenny's offer, but chooses not to "take the fire from his resolve or sow suspicion between them" (112). Ira too is a victim of the very patriarchal notions that she is seen to harbour

against her mother. The people around, "neighbours" and "women," Ira thinks, consider her "a failure, a woman who cannot even bear a child" (50). The major role the woman is asked to fulfill is that of the obedient wife and mother. Ira fails to live up to this role on account of her temporary infertility and for this her husband unjustly punishes her with divorce. The most astonishing fact about this imagined world is that patriarchy intrudes in to the life of women like Rukmani in and out of place while it is strategically silent about the promiscuity of men like Nathan.

There is no doubt that the fictional world that Markandaya calls forth is a densely patriarchal one. The autobiographical narrative of Rukmani validates the construction of her as a woman who tolerates male impositions without protest. According to Naresh K. Jain she is an "early example of female acquiescence" as she "accepts her husband's extramarital affair tamely within the space of a few sentences." That is, she conforms to the culture of "feminine modesty" that prefers "not to talk back" (24). Taneja, on the other hand, notes that her husband's adulterous relationship stuns her. Rukmani experiences disbelief followed by disillusionment, anger, reproach and pain but, observes Taneja, "she recovers from the shock of betrayal and responds reasonably." Her accommodation of Nathan's infidelity, he argues further, is in tune with her awareness that "not to break up or destroy, but to persist with and rebuild is what life is about" (55). These two antithetical view points take one back to the question as to how a character acclaimed for certain virtues comes to be interpreted later in a manner that reverses the first assessment.

Neither the author nor the critics seem to be responsible for this. At the time Markandaya wrote the work the dominant representational practice was realism. It would have been difficult for Markandaya to locate a living prototype in her community for creating a woman character who like Ibsen's Dora would be prepared to slam the door shut upon her husband. On the other hand, among Indian communities where patriarchy was naturalized and reinforced by a kind of nationalism that sought to keep women silent the representative female figure would be more conservative than Rukmani. Her passive accommodation of her husband's promiscuity is not as harmless as the author assumes it. She exonerates his infidelity by recirculating the male myth of woman as a sly and immoral seductress. Her husband also underscores her thesis: "I was very young, and she a skilful woman" (87). Naresh K. Jain rightly observes that "the character's silence is matched (significantly) by the writer's silence on the subject" (24). But when such incidents are very common in a society, and when the author has no other mode of representation to choose from but the mimetic mode, she/he would be forced to do what Markandaya did. As George J. Becker rightly comments, "realism seems to contain a kind of implicit Benthamite assumption that the life lived by the greatest number is somehow the most real" and the realist writer is always committed to "the lowest common denominator of human experience" (25-26). In other words, narrative realism rarely endorses or encourages a departure even when it is revolutionary. It compels the writer to produce a slice of life and most of the novelists try to be precise in what they think as "mirroring reality." Moreover, narrative realism

prompts the reader to take the depicted story as real, feel sympathy for the suffering character and thus win him/her over to the social cause at hand. The suppression of fictionality that narrative realism involves is in itself wedded to a politics about which the writers themselves are unaware. So it appears reasonable to say that when Markandaya reappropriates narrative realism from the margins for calling attention to the plight of women, it necessarily becomes an act of resistance.

If the character of Rukmani is analyzed from this point of view, it will be difficult to find fault with her response to Nathan's infidelity. Nathan, his infidelity notwithstanding, is a very considerate husband. In the seven years of her infertility he stands with her and provides emotional support. He is an illiterate but he never interferes in Rukmani's attempts at teaching herself or her children. He is hardworking, and understanding enough to let his daughter and sons do the job they like. To top it all, Nathan himself is a victim of the traditional as well the modern order and a partner in suffering to Rukmani. On the same page where we find Nathan's confession and Rukmani's acceptance of it without much protest and no rebellion, we also read about another rebellion which is very significant in the logic of this realistic narrative: "Sometimes from sheer *rebellion we ate grass*, although it always resulted in stomach cramps and violent retching" (87, emphasis added). If Markandaya orders her world in such a way as to suggest that the question of poverty there is more urgent than that of patriarchy, it is not because she does not want women to free themselves, but because, subsistence is a greater issue to the working class in postcolonial countries. It also suggests that

gender relations among the working class in the non-western cultures are more flexible. Markandaya constructs Rukmani, one should note, in contrast to the wife of Kenny who teaches her sons to forget their father (108). In the context of the postcolonial feminist assertion of cultural specificity of the non-west and the opposition to the white feminist theorization and erasure of cultural difference of the "Other women," reading Markandaya's narrative as an instance of reactionary traditionalism would be the greatest injustice one can do to the first woman novelist of English expression in free India. So, taking into account the narrative convention and its persuasive logic anchored to realism it seems more profitable to focus on the small acts of rebellion Markandaya and Rukmani manage to do and evaluate them on that count rather than theorize on the radical acts that they fail to do.

Rukmani is sufficiently self-conscious to recognize the male inflictions on her and her daughter's life. She directs her resources towards assuaging the damage in material and spiritual ways. She never rebels but that does not mean that she approves of the havoc patriarchy wreaks on her or her daughter. She learns to read and write and later teaches her son Selvam to read and write. Selvam builds on what she gave him to be the assistant of Kenny. Immediately after marriage Rukmani starts cultivating vegetables and trading in garden produce which keeps the family in good shape and enables her to conduct the marriage of her daughter in a satisfactory manner. She maintains her friendship with Kenny even in the face of vile accusations from Kunthi or oblique looks and comments from her own children. Her intimacy to Kenny is as strong as her intimacy to Nathan and, obviously, it inspires and

empowers her to act boldly. Conjugal life is meaningful to Rukmani and she finds it very difficult to even imagine Kenny's wife and children leaving him forever. But she is sensible enough to conclude that "he is not without blame" in precipitating matters (108). She prefers to maintain relationships even by sacrifice and suffering unlike Kenny's wife who refuses to come with him to India. She suffers the loss of five sons and the divorce of her daughter with dignity and deep sorrow. When Ira sells herself defying her father to feed the family, Rukmani realizes her daughter's plight and protects her. Rukmani accepts Ira and her illegitimate albino child Sacrabani. Both Rukmani and Ira thus disapprove of the dictates of patriarchy. Ira and Rukmani demonstrate that sometimes a virtuous woman is one who sells her body to live and a virtuous mother is she who stands by such a daughter. Markandaya tells us by Rukmani's adoption of Puli and Iras's motherhood that motherhood can also be conceived outside the notions of patriarchy. It may be said that this narrative partly because of the realist mode of first person narration falls short of posing serious challenges to patriarchy but at the same time it would be erroneous to say that women in it are deprived of social agency. Rukmani says that "women need men" and that "it is not right to deprive a woman" of the support of a man (108). But this does not mean that women are hopelessly enslaved and are given to male interests alone. They suffer but they also negotiate patriarchy with the hope in the possibilities of relationships rather than impulsive severing of the same. They hold on to certain values and when it requires of them to redefine the values they do so. Rukmani would starve rather than sell her body but she would

indeed understand a daughter who does it and feel no hesitation to stand by her. When she does this motherhood is redefined. There is also the redefinition of the virtuous woman. The women one finds in the narrative are not mere figures of tapestry and token presences but are figures in flesh and blood who, like Rukmani and Ira, awaken to the realities of a male-dominated society and negotiate their life within it with a sense of hope and purpose.

Markandaya suggests the underlying sisterhood between Rukmani and Kunthi in contradiction to the conscious building up of antagonism between the two in the narrative. In their experience as women whose sexuality and body are appropriated they are sisters who share a fundamental agony:

> I had not set eyes on her for a considerable time—not since the day I had seen her nakedness; and she had changed so much I scarcely recognized her. I gazed at her hardly believing. The skin of her face was stiff and shiny as if from overstretching, elsewhere it showed folds and wrinkles. Under her faded sari her breasts hung loose; gone are the suppleness that had been her pride and her power. Of her former beauty not a vestige remained. 'Well,' I thought. 'All women come to it sooner or later: she has come off perhaps worse than most.' (81)

The realization that all women end up sooner or later like Kunthi suggests the shared agony of women on whose body patriarchy writes its "his-story." This sisterhood operates at the unconscious level. Rukmani's attack on Ira thinking that it is Kunthi assumes significance in the context of this sisterhood. In attacking Kunthi Rukmani in fact attacks herself – the daughter being an extension of her own body. This is significant because the attack reveals to Rukmani that like Kunthi Ira too is selling her body. From this

moment onwards, it is interesting to note, there is no mention of Kunthi or Rukmani's antagonism to her. Acceptance of Ira implies the acceptance of the sisterhood.

The analysis of Markandaya's novel shows her as reworking the stereotypical image of the virtuous woman and mother. Keeping a fine balance of power between Nathan and Rukmani and underscoring the importance of man-woman relationship in and out of wedlock Markandaya highlights the predicaments of living in a patriarchal space. Flora Nwapa, the first African woman writer, makes a similar attempt at the redefinition of the African (Igbo) woman. Both these novelists voice the concerns of women in aesthetic terms and intervene in the nationalist discourse. Evidently, they share a common ground. An analysis of Nwapa's *Efuru* in comparison with the Markandaya novel would show this to be true.

Rukmani and Efuru marry beneath their social standing. Efuru pursues full-time trading as a profession while Rukmani's is only small-time vegetable selling. Like Nwabata in the Nwapa novel, Rukmani too is a victim of natural calamities and the deprivation it causes. If Nwaso and Nwabata are forced to send their daughter as a housemaid to Efuru, Rukmani's daughter takes to prostitution to feed her ailing and starving brother. Friendship between Efuru and the doctor Uzaru parallels that of Rukmani and doctor Kenny. Barrenness haunts both these women. In the case of Rukmani it is a temporary infertility. She remains infertile for seven years after the birth of her first child Ira. Efuru's is also a temporary sterility at the start. After two years of infertility following the marriage, a daughter is born but she dies in infancy

and then she suffers from permanent sterility. Thus Efuru's barrenness is her failure in the eyes of the patriarchal elements of her community. Barrenness, temporary or otherwise, connects Rukmani, Ira and Efuru. Rukmani and Ajanupu are also comparable as powerful mother figures. In her devotion to her husband and suffering existence and sacrifice, Ossai also is comparable to Rukmani. In fact there is a bit of Efuru, Ajanupu and Ossai in Rukmani while in her suffering from marriage Efuru resembles Ira. So it follows that these characters do not allow for a one-to-one superimposition, but at the same time they are comparable in their interests, attributes and situations and, all the more so in the way colonial and nationalist patriarchy deal with them.

Efuru exercises her will in choosing her husband and her profession. She goes to her lover's house on a market day and stays there without obtaining the consent of her father. But she, later, manages to earn by trading enough money to pay for the bride price with a fine and gets her marriage approved. Then only she feels fulfilled: "They went home and for the first time since that fateful Nkwo day the two felt really married" (24). Efuru refuses to take up farming and decides to pursue trading. She excels as a wife and a trader, becomes popular and remarkable in the community. But patriarchy constructs womanhood in such a way as to centralize wifehood and motherhood. A woman has to prove her womanhood by maternity, if possible by repeating it. When Efuru failed to be a mother in the expected time the subtle discourse of gossip intervenes:

> Neighbours talked as they were bound to talk. They did not see the reason why Adizua should not marry another woman since, according to them, two men do not live together. To them Efuru was a man since she could not reproduce. (24)

Florence Stratton considers the "small talk" in the narrative as extremely significant. According to her it is "a mode of patriarchal indoctrination." On this occasion "the gossip punishes her for deviating from the standard definition of her gender" (95). Polygamy being a regular practice in the community, Efuru also persuades her husband to take another wife but Adizua prefers to wait and see as the medicine man has asked them to do. It so turns out that she gives birth to a baby girl and even after it she feels she is "dreaming" and fears "it is not real" (31). This difficulty in coming to terms with the birth of the baby reflects the pressure on the female psyche.

Efuru confronts another crisis when her wayward husband elopes with a bad woman. On learning from her mother-in-law that Adizua was doing what his father did to his mother, Efuru decides not to suffer like his mother:

> Perhaps self-imposed suffering appeals to her. It does not appeal to me. I know I am capable of suffering for greater things. But to suffer for a truant husband like Adizua is to debase suffering. My own suffering would be noble. When Adizua comes back, I shall leave him. (62)

Shortly after she takes this decision her daughter Ogonim is taken ill and dies. She makes arrangements for passing the message to her husband and expects him at the burial. His failure to come at this juncture hardens her position but on Ajanupu's advice she waits for Adizua one more year. In the meantime she does

everything to trace him. When that too fails, she leaves her husband's house against the affectionate, persuasive words of her mother-in-law and Ajanupu to stay.

Relieved from marriage Efuru concentrates on trading as well as charity to the sick and the poor. It is during these days that Eneberi Uberife alias Gilbert starts courting her. She marries him but this relationship also turns into a dismal failure. Here also she fails not because she is less resourceful. She could not give what patriarchy demands most from a woman: children, sons. The patriarchal discourse in the form of gossip once more gets active and this time it finds her deviation from the norm unbearable. The most important fault in its view is that she looks "glamorous" but does not "fulfil the important function she is made to fulfil." The gossiping woman raises other charges of transgression also and orders Efuru's mother-in-law to control her:

> Why must they go to these places together? It is your fault for allowing them to be together always. Are they companions? Don't they know that a man and a woman should not be seen together often whether they are married or not. Amede, you must see to this. (139)

The situation worsens when Efuru fails to conceive after two years of married life. Gilbert keeps late nights and Efuru has strange dreams about Uhamiri. On the advice of the dibia she installs the lake goddess in her room and starts worshipping the deity. Gilbert, as is revealed later, keeps a secret affair and has a boy in Nkoyeni while pressure is mounting on him for another marriage. The death of Efuru's father in the meantime and Gilbert's absence at his funeral complicates matters but Efuru stands with him to tackle the situation. She makes arrangements for Ogea, her maid,

to marry Gilbert. Her sudden illness gives a rather unexpected turn to her life. The gossip interprets her illness as a punishment of Uhamiri for adultery and the two dibias confirm that. Then her husband calls Ajanupu to persuade her to confess. Efuru is too weak to respond to what goes around her. Ajanupu resists the move strongly. In the war of words that follows between her and Gilbert she provokes him with what Efuru later describes as "home truths." It concerns the "four unspeakable months" of his absence from the town and his imprisonment. Gilbert slaps her and Ajanupu knocks him down with a mortar pestle. Only Ogea and Ajanupu defend Efuru at that time. Ajanupu takes her to the hospital also. When she recovers she quits Gilbert's house and goes to the shrine of the goddess and is absolved from the charge of adultery. The text closes with Efuru's dream of the lake goddess as a woman of beauty and prosperity, though childless. The end of the narrative confirms her resolution to leave her husband and pursue the Uhamiri worship. The Uhamiri worshippers are women who either suffer from infertility or prefer smallscale motherhood. It is by all accounts a resistance tradition that empowers women in the Igbo society by conferring on them a status that is not in anyway inferior to motherhood. Nwapa by rediscovering the little female tradition of Uhamiri worship undermines the patriarchal notion that wifehood and motherhood are fundamental aspects of womanhood. That is, Nwapa ruptures the nationalist discourse on women and its celebration of the supremacy of motherhood by reconceptualizing infertility and smallscale motherhood.

The intervention by Nwapa and Markandaya in the essentializing and homogenizing anti-imperial nationalist rhetoric

is remarkable for the fact that their gesture has helped formulate the subalternity of women into a theoretical position from where patriarchy could be challenged in a better way. Leading men writers of fiction in India and Africa have responded positively to their gesture. Achebe and Ngugi, in the African context, have reconsidered their attitude to gender and declared their position by foregrounding the subalternity of women. Anand too has taken a similar direction. In short, these writers have responded by critiquing the nation from the position of women's subalternity giving the novelistic discourse an acute edge of cultural resistance. An overview of this process would not be out of place here.

Nwapa's assertion of the female self marks a moment in the latter half of the 1960s when the awareness of gender bias which was only in an amorphous state getting shaped into a well-defined attitude. The notably diachronic change in the conception of women seen in Achebe's works also points to the gradual formation of a pro-womanist consciousness. In contrast to his earlier novels, in his later works of fiction Achebe shows himself gradually overcoming the ideological blindness of his male-centered nationalism. In *No Longer at Ease* (1963), there is a discernible change in the style of Achebe's conception and representation of women. The female protagonist of the novel is an overseas educated, outcaste (osu) woman named Clara, a nurse by profession. Though she is made to quit the narrative Achebe conceives Clara as a resourceful, educated, self-sufficient and bold woman. She is a woman of self-respect, capable of taking decisions and executing them. Obi says he liked her because "she had no coyness in her" and "she seemed so sure of herself..." (231). The

outcaste in her is played down though Clara as a woman is treated fairly. The Umuofia catechist's wife who is reported to have broken his head years after their marriage with a wooden pestle out of bitterness for cutting short her education by marrying her reminds the reader of Nwapa's male daughter Ajanupu.

Eunice, a lawyer, in *A Man of the People* (1966) is a strong character of the type of whom the reader only hears about in the story of Obi. Her betrothed Maxwell Kulamo, the schoolmate of the protagonist Odili, is knocked down by a jeep and killed on the spot. She knows that Chief Koko, political adversary of Max, masterminded the murder. He has planned it to silence Max who knew that Mrs. Koko would lead the planned rigging at the elections. She stands like a stone figure near the felled Max for some minutes and acts with determination:

> Then she opened her handbag as if to take out a handkerchief, took out a pistol instead and fired two bullets into Chief Koko's chest. Only then did she fall down on Max's body and begin to weep like a woman (143).

Thus she, a solitary woman, avenges the death of Max. She does what the collective will of the people should have done.

It is in *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987) that Achebe makes a significant effort to transform the status of woman from that of object to that of a sensitive leader of potentiality. In this novel he creates a woman protagonist, Beatrice who has an honors degree from Queen Mary College, University of London. The author himself speaks about Beatrice to Anna Rutherford as a role model of womanhood through whom he tries to undo the myths that support the suppression of women:

> We have created all kinds of myths to support the suppression of the woman, and what the group around Beatrice is saying is that the time has now come to put an end to that . . . The position of Beatrice as sensitive leader of that group is indicative of what I see as necessary in the transition to the society which I think we should be aiming to create. (quoted in Stratton 159)

She is a feminist who knows "that every woman wants a man to complete her is a piece of male chauvinist bullshit" and "there was enough male chauvinism in (her) father's house to last (her) seven reincarnations" (*Anthills* 88). She inspires one of the multiple narrators, Ikem Osodi, to radically interrogate his earlier attitude to women. Ikem thanks Beatrice for giving him insight "into the world of women"(96). He remembers her telling him that his "thoughts were unclear and reactionary on the role of the modern woman in (Nigerian) society" (96). He observes in what he calls his love letter that the "biggest single group of oppressed people in the world," women, are marginalized along with the rural peasants, the urban poor, the blacks and the oppressed castes (98). Ikem confesses that his former attitude towards women has been unreasonably idealistic. He imagined them within the Negritudinal framework of the "Mother Africa" trope. On a pedestal as a Nneka, Ikem realizes, "her feet (are) completely off the ground" and there she is just as irrelevant to the practical decisions of running the world as she was in the old days. Instead of presuming the new role for women or attempting to define it he asks her to do it: "*You* have to tell us. We never have asked you before" (98, emphasis in the original). Achebe frees himself from the patriarchal blinders and it is perceptible as one moves from Okonkwo who considers women

as inherently and invariably stupid to Ikem who considers Beatrice as a woman who is capable of defining herself. Through Ikem's and Chris's new awareness of women inspired by Beatrice it is possible to see how women writers like Nwapa inspired Achebe and other male writers to foreground the woman's perspective. Beatrice is articulate and independent. As such she is not merely one of the narrators of the story but, as Robin Ikegami asserts, she is the most reliable narrator and plays a crucial part in Achebe's delineation of his vision (74). He continues:

> Beatrice's storytelling represents a movement toward a creative amalgamation of facts and passions, past and present, people and ideas. She continually insists on the reconstruction of either/or situations, but it is not an insistence that comes out of the stereotypical female-as-peacemaker model. Beatrice does not advocate compromise necessarily, but deliberate and progressive reformulations of oppositions. Here is a form of storytelling that seeks to actively bring about change. (76)

Beatrice embodies the strength, agency and intellectual integrity of African women resisting domination within the nation. In spite of Achebe's progressive vision of woman, unconscious patriarchal traces inform the narrative. Cynthia Vanden Driesen observes that the space allocated to the female is visibly shrunk. Beatrice is never shown at her work. Her sphere of action according to this critic is most often the bedroom (40). Stratton also accuses Achebe of not giving enough space in his narrative to female subjectivity (167). Yet, the naming ceremony at the end of the novel is female-centered and it shows Beatrice taking control of the ritual to radically reconfigure the conventional gender distinctions. She seizes the right of the traditional male and names the baby girl with

a boy's name, Amaechina. Ikem and Elewa's marriage defies class difference while the child born of them is conceived as defying gender (*Anthills* 222). Even the radical feminist critics approve of Achebe's position with regard to women. Sratton observes:

> [T]he assembly embraces class, religious, ethnic, and sexual difference. But gender is the category Achebe most favours in his representation of an alternative politics. Three female figures move into the narrative space formerly occupied by the male trinity: Beatrice, Ikem's lover, Elewa, and Elewa's baby. (166)

Boehmer too in her reading of *Anthills* observes that Achebe refuses to dictate to women the roles they are to assume in the public sphere. She sees this as a significant advance in the African novel ("Of Goddesses" 108).

Ngugi's narratives also tend to display a diachronic development in the conception of women. In his works too patriarchal traces are visible. Though these traces restrict the subversive potential of the authorial questions they do not however belittle or trivialize the questions of domination and the social role of women in the Kenyan society. Kenyan nationalism too being a severely gendered discourse the trope of the mother figure is an inevitable and dominant presence in Ngugi's fiction. He too associates the nation with mother and woman. In *A Grain of Wheat*, he feminizes Kenya through Mumbi. She is iconized as "Mother Kenya." This novel focuses on women as victim. Njeri and Wambuku lay down their lives for the hero Kihika. Wanja in *Petals of Blood* (1977) signifies the post-independence condition of Kenya. Stratton observes that Ngugi conflates in the body of Wanja, the figures of Africa as mother and whore (49). That is, though Wanja

signifies "regeneration of potency in the struggle for freedom from (neo-colonial) exploitation," the trope that operates is a patriarchal one (Stratton 50).

It is in his 1980s novels that Ngugi makes considerable advance in putting gender on the agenda along with his most preferred question of class. He claims that Waringa in *Devil on the Cross* (1982) "is a strong determined woman with a will to resist and to struggle against the conditions of her present being" (*Detained*10). Wariinga decides that "she will never again allow herself to be a mere flower" (216) of her boss. With this decision taken at the feast of the neo-colonial devilish private businessmen her transformation begins. She changes from a weak and passive woman to an aggressive, gun-toting champion of the cause of the oppressed. This transformation is positive in terms of class war and the empowerment of the working class. Viewed from a feminist position, it becomes highly problematic:

> Ngugi leaves the reader in no doubt as to the significance of the weapon with which he equips the heroine. For the conventional symbolic association of the gun with phallic power is made explicit. As Wariinga reminds the Rich Old Man just before she shoots him, she has taken over the role he used to perform when they played the game of 'the hunter and the hunted.' (Stratton 162)

In other words, continues Stratton, Waringa must become an honorary male before she can acquire heroic stature (162). All the same, it must be admitted, as Stratton does, that the identification of the heroine in masculine terms is a subversive manoeuvre as it at least initiates a reversal of the sexual allegory (163). Boehmer finds that Ngugi singles out female voices, fixes women beneath the

evaluative epithets "vibrant" and "beautiful" and thereby distances and objectifies them (143). In spite of this, "Ngugi's exertions to include women in his vision of a Kenya liberated from neocolonial domination," she asserts, "merits recognition" (143).

Ngugi's latest fictional work, *Matigari*, tells people that they have to fight again for liberating Kenya from the oppressive rule by the comprodor bourgeois. The central figures of the story are a Mau-Mau warrior (Matigari), a woman called Guthera and an orphan boy named Muriuki. The warrior is making a return from the forest to the independent Kenya. He finds that the sacrifices of his generation have come to nothing and the land is in the hands of the comprador bourgeoisie operating in union with the one-time foreign oppressors. He thinks of seeking out women who would tell him about the children and it is then he sees Guthera, a prostitute. She is a victim of colonial brutality and sexism. The colonial authority arrested her father for carrying bullets in his Bible during the Mau-Mau. The superintendent agreed to free him if Guthera slept with him. She rejects the suggestion and starts looking after her sisters and brothers by becoming a prostitute. She reformulates the Ten Commandments by adding an eleventh one: "Thou shall not sleep with a policeman". It is important that this novel continues Ngugi's preoccupation with the national question. He replaces the missionary-educated ambivalent central figures with one whose way is the way of open war with the oppressive state. Matigari, for all purposes, is a Boro who returns from the forests to see what his Siriana-trained brothers (like Waiyaki) in power are doing with the nation. Ngugi chooses the warrior and the prostitute whom official nationalism has

condemned to point up the fact that the liberation of the Kenyan society involves the unified effort of the subaltern and the woman. Though Ngugi is repeating the women-prostitute-nation pattern, Guthera is not a passive character. As Roopali Sircar observes, she is an "actor and doer" and it signifies "the participation of women in liberation movements and resistance organizations" in countries like India and Africa (158).

In spite of Ngugi's insistence on the significant role of women in liberating the nation, his writings are not free from the unconscious patriarchal ideology. For instance, a statement like "women are the ones who uphold the flame of continuity and change in the homestead" (27) is highly problematic in the sense that it reproduces the nationalist image of the home-bound woman. Matigari's response at his first meeting of Guthera glorifies femininity: "It was difficult not to stare at her. What was such a rare beauty doing in a dingy bar?" (28). The same kind of emphasis that one finds Ngugi giving to dress and female body in the case of his former female figures like Wanja and Wariinga is present here also: "So well built that her clothes fit her as though she were created in them!" (28). But it is evident Matigari identifies with Guthera and the boy: "He thought of Guthera. He thought of Muriuki. Their agony had become his agony; their suffering, his suffering" (88). This kind of emotional identification with the gender and subaltern question from the side of the male protagonist is indeed an advance in the direction of cultural resistance to internal dominations.

Anand is one writer in the Indian context who moves along the direction that Achebe and Ngugi took. His *Gauri* stands apart

from his other works as one that deals exclusively with the plight of women caught in the rigid structure of Hindu patriarchy. He takes up the gender question in this work in contrast to his earlier fascination for the subaltern male. By way of narrative technique, says Meenakshi Mukherjee, it is his first work where he employs myth with a negative thrust (164). This novel, as P.K. Rajan also observes, fuses the mythical, the realistic and the folk narrative forms into a single whole in order to undermine the myth of the pliant Sita (112). Mukherjee emphasizes the unique position of this work among Indian novels for "rejecting rather than extolling the time-honoured womanly virtues of patience and submission" (164). Anand makes a departure from his own earlier practice of conceiving women as marginalized. Two of his earlier women characters, Maya in *The Sword and the Sickle* and Janki in *The Big Heart*, are bold enough to challenge patriarchy. Dhar observes:

> In spite of their lack of formal education, they are fairly intelligent and participate in the political activism of their lovers. Of the two Janki is more impressive, because she helps Ananta to sort out his confusions. Through discussion, argument and sustained interrogation, in a spirit of critical sympathy, she enables him to clarify to himself on the issue of the use of machines in his trade and of his projected solutions to the problems arising out of the intricate relationship between tradition and modernity. (77)

Gauri's life in the narrative runs parallel to that of Sita at first but later she asserts her identity as a woman and thus explodes the passive and self-sacrificing Sita-Savithri myth. Just like Markandaya who attempts at redefining the virtuous woman, Anand undermines the nationalist narrative tradition deeply

entrenched in patriarchy. The novel opens with Panchi marrying the cow-like Gauri. She remains gentle to Panchi and his aunt Kesaro who troubles her repeatedly. Suffering everything for a considerable time, Gauri starts defying both Kesaro and Panchi who act in the interest of patriarchy. Gauri's transformation from the submissive, suffering Sita into the vigorously active Kali (95) unsettles the assiduously established construction of women as a tractable category in Indian English fiction. Mukherjee describes the densely patriarchal tradition of Indian fiction in English that Anand sought to dismantle as follows:

> Even in the limited range of Indo-Anglian novels over a period of thirty years we find not less than twenty novels where women adhere t an archetypal pattern, where women are lime Sita, Savithri or Sakunthala in their suffering and forbearance. (165)

Cultural resistance in Anand's *Gauri* takes a pronounced turn towards the gender issue. As in *Nectar in a Sieve* natural calamities and economic backwardness are crucial factors that decide the plight of Gauri but Anand does not subordinate the women's question to that of the class. The focus is on women's fight for a life of dignity in the patriarchal society.

Rao has, in most of his later works, conformed to the Sita-Savithri image of women. The emancipatory touch given to the women of *Kanthapura* is conspicuously missing in his later works. What one perceives in Raja Rao is a regression in the orientalist lines to reproduce and recirculate the image of the virtuous, passive and tractable woman and that is why Sarla Palkar in her analysis of the politics of gender in *The Serpent and the Rope* makes this justifiable remark that reveals his attitude to the gender

question: "Raja Rao has assigned definite places and functions to men and women and he disapproves of any deviation from the assigned gender roles" (92).

The analysis of the post-colonial Indian and African fiction in English shows unambiguously that both in its origin and development fiction has been fundamentally tied to the process of cultural resistance. The nationalist reconstitution of the modular fictional form of Europe as well as its further appropriation from the gender and subaltern positions show how the novel has been put to subversive political uses in India and Africa. In what can be called the postcolonial-womanist reconstitutions of fiction the fundamental aspect is the assertion of difference from Western cultures and the Indian and African novel are manifestations of such differences. So, by way of conclusion, it may be said that cultural resistance in India and Africa is an ongoing, gender-collaborative and culture-specific process born of anti-imperial impulses in the articulation of which fiction, especially the novel, has significantly been reconstituted.

Conclusion

Muraleedharan. K.C "Fiction as Cultural Resistance: A Study of African and Indian Fiction of the Post-colonial Period " Thesis. Department of English, University of Calicut, 2002

Conclusion

The practice of constructing a fictional world and thereby making an attempt to order the world around us is no longer looked upon as an ahistorical or apolitical activity. In the same manner, the practice of explaining the emergence of a genre in terms exclusively of the inventive genius of an individual writer is also somewhat outdated. These insights have revolutionized the study of fiction and accordingly the contemporary tendency is to view fiction as a form of discourse. Considered along these lines, it becomes explicit that the huge body of fictional writings produced as a result of the encounter between the colonising and colonised cultures can never be politically neutral. The analysis of the British travel writings and fiction leaves the strong impression that these genres have played a crucial role not only in subjugating the peoples of India and Africa but also in justifying that oppressive process. In content as well as in formal constitution these cultural artifacts are seen to partake of the ideological aspects of imperialism.

Heart of Darkness, as pointed out earlier in this work, constructs Africa in derogatory terms and deprives the African of his humanity. Both in terms of its structure and content the text validates the European perspective. *Kim* also operates in the same way by erasing all signs of Indian revolt from the textual terrain. The authenticity of these representations remained unquestioned for decades. The main reason for this was that the Indian or African community from which counter representations should emerge had still not mastered the epistemological tools and

reconstituted the social relationships in a manner that makes it possible to produce such cultural apparatuses. The situation changed drastically when changes occurred in the social conditions of the people of India and Africa. The new class that mastered the European epistemological tools took up the work of looking at African and Indian reality from an altogether new perspective. This was the process that resulted in the formation of the Indian and African novel in English. The formation of the African novel involved the reconstitution of the modular fictional form. Achebe and Ngugi pioneered the subversive use of the fictional space and undermined the established narrative conventions to articulate the nation and de-emphasize the European perspective of Africa. Raja Rao and Anand also have done likewise in the Indian context.

Most of these nationalist narratives are seen to construct nationalism as an invariably male process. The women and the subaltern in them are either idealized or shown as occupying only marginal spaces. They are denied agency. Women found that these narratives constructed their subjectivities so as to serve male interests. In their view these narratives perpetuated the colonization of women though they spoke eloquently of the decolonization of the nation. It is in the wave of this awakening that Markandaya and Nwapa have disrupted the biased nationalist tradition in a small way. That is, they conceived the social reality from the woman's perspective and deployed the fictional form to articulate that. The further appropriation of the fictional form in India and Africa begins with the intervention of the women writers in their attempt to redefine the woman in opposition to patriarchal interests and andro-centered nationalism. They have deployed

fiction to rediscover nationalist daughters and mothers. The focus on the woman of the nation and the significance of woman's perspective in the narratives of the women writers had certainly influenced the writers of their countries irrespective of gender. That is, in the latter half of the twentieth century the novelistic discourse of India and Africa have undergone significant shifts in emphasis owing to the awakening of women and their intervention. The essentializing and homogenizing anti-imperial nationalist rhetoric that was dominant up to the early 1960s began to give way to the critique of the nation. The formerly suppressed questions of class and gender have been reopened and writers began to take strongly subversive positions in these questions too. The 1970s is largely fluid and transitional in this regard but by the 1980s the positions become well-defined. Achebe, Ngugi and Anand have responded by putting the gender question significantly on their agenda in critiquing the nation. The multiple narrators and voices in the works of Achebe and Ngugi and the subversive reinterpretation of the Sita myth by Anand are instances of the reconstitution of the fictional medium as part of what can be called the decolonization of the woman and the subaltern. Raja Rao, on the other hand, conforms to the Sita-Savithri image of women and thus gets stuck with the orientalist and positivist perception of the world.

Women writers who continue the work initiated by Markandaya and Nwapa are remarkable for their contribution to the gender discourse in fiction. In the concluding decades of the twentieth century women writers in India and Africa have actively foregrounded the issue of the emancipation of women and

resistance to patriarchy. The further development of the novel is fundamentally tied to their practice. Manju Kapur in her fictional work *Difficult Daughters* (1998) tells the story of Virmati. The story is presented through Virmati's daughter Ida who looks back at her mother's and grandmother's life in a way that challenges the glorification of motherhood and marriage. She begins the autobiographical narrative on a note of rejection: "The one thing I had wanted was not to be like my mother" (1). This is how Ida responds to the life of her mother and grandmother. Her grandmother Kasturi was a victim of uncontrolled male sexuality and patriarchy. Repeated childbearing wrecked her health and she even tries to abort the eleventh pregnancy by crude means but failed in that too:

> Kasturi's eleventh child was born on a cold December night. A small, puny little girl. The mother looked at the will of god lying nest to her, closed her eyes, and let the tiredness of seventeen years of relentless child-bearing wash over her (9).

The kind of life her mother lived affected Virmati also. She, being the eldest, sacrificed her childhood and early youth in nursing her mother and eleven siblings who had come in quick succession. Her only solace was one of her cousins Shakuntala "whose responsibilities went beyond a husband and children" (14). Shakuntala's life gave her the idea that it is "possible to be something other than a wife" (17). Virmati's attempt at education was a move in this direction. But she fell in love with, Harish, the Oxford-returned Professor who lived in the same compound with his wife and children. So she refused to marry the man of her family's choice and ran away from the house. She was brought

back and locked up. But her relationship with the Professor grew intimate and she became pregnant but was forced to abort. After five years of hesitation the Professor, Harish, married her and took her home. There in the house lonely, unacknowledged and faced with the hostility of the first wife, Virmati was miserable beyond description. Ida also suffers from a disastrous marriage. Ida's relationship with her husband turns sour and moves towards a divorce from the moment her husband wants her to abort her first pregnancy. She refuses to do what her mother did. In short, Manju Kapur, in her straightforward narrative, foregrounds the sufferings of three generations of women from patriarchy and the growing resistance of women to such suffering. The concluding sentence of the story is a radical rejection of the submissive, acted-upon image of women of which Virmati, inspite of her academic achievements and occasional boldness, is a haunting symbol. Ida lays the symbolic, haunting image of the suffering mother and wife to rest through the narrative:

> This book weaves a connection between my mother and me, each word a brick in a mansion made with my head and my heart. Now live in it, mama, and leave me be. Do not haunt me anymore (262).

African women writers also demystify motherhood and marriage. Buchi Emecheta's first novel *The Joys of Motherhood* posits a challenge to conventional views of motherhood (Stratton 113). She at the turn of the decade (1979) disrupts the nationalist tradition of celebrating motherhood and marriage and rewrites nationalism by destabilizing the male perspective of it. Nnu Ego's pathetic end reveals the irony of marriage and motherhood. The final chapter ironically titled as "The Canonized Mother" concludes

like this: "[O]ne night, Nnu Ego lay down by the roadside, thinking that she had arrived home. She died quietly there, with no child to hold her hand and no friend to talk to her" (224). The homogenizing gesture of nationalist writing is absent in this novel. In contrast to the dual-sex, flexible gender practice of the Igbo community in general, Emecheta poses the more patriarchal Ibuza Igbo society through the life of Nnu Ego. In doing this she both incorporates and extends the tradition of women writing that Nwapa and Grace Ogot began in African writing in English.

The analysis of the post-colonial Indian and African fiction in English shows unambiguously that both in its origin and development fiction has been fundamentally tied to the process of cultural resistance to internal and external domination. The nationalist reconstitution of the modular fictional form of Europe followed by further appropriation from gender and subaltern positions show how the novel has been put to subversive political uses in India and Africa. In what can be called the postcolonial reconstitutions of fiction the fundamental aspect is the assertion of difference from Western cultures and the Indian and African novel are manifestations of that difference. In conclusion it may be said that cultural resistance in India and Africa is an ongoing, gender-collaborative and culture-specific process anchored to anti-imperial impulses. All cultural forms mediate the process of resistance but fiction in particular appears to have accompanied, and participated in, this process thereby getting itself reconstituted.

Selected Bibliography

Achebe, Chinua. *Anthills of the Savannah.* London: Heinemann, 1987.

---------.*Arrow of God.* In *The African Trilogy.* 1964. London: Picador, 1988: 17-168.

---------. "An Image of Africa." *Research in African Literatures* 9.1(1978): 1-15.

---------. *Man of the People.* London: Heinemann, 1966.

---------. *No Longer at Ease.* 1960. In *The African Trilogy.* London: Picador, 1988: 169-315.

---------."The Role of the Writer in a New Nation." *African Writers on African Writing.* Ed. G. D. Killam London: Heinemann, 1973.

---------.*Things Fall Apart.* In *The African Trilogy.* 1958. London: Picador, 1988: 319-555.

Ahmad, Aijaz. *In Theory: Classes, Nations, Literatures.* 1992. Delhi: Oxford UP: 1997.

Anand, Mulk Raj. *Gauri.* 1960. New Delhi: Arnold-Heinemann, 1981.

---------. Interview with Varma.K.D. "Being Truthful To the Echoes of the Mother Tongue: Mulk Raj Anand." *Frontline* 30 Dec. 1995- 12 Jan.1996: 93-95.

---------. *The Sword and the Sickle.* London: Jonathan Cape, 1942.

---------. *Two Leaves and a Bud.* 1937 New York: Liberty Press, 1958.

---------. *Untouchable.* 1935. New Delhi: Arnold Associates, 1970.

Andrade, Susan.Z. "Rewriting History, Motherhood and Rebellion: Naming an African Women's Literary Tradition," *Research in African Literatures* 21.1: (1990): 91-110.

Anshuman, Mondal. "The Ideology of Space in Raja Rao's *Kanthapura.*" *Journal of Commonwealth Literature* 34.1 (1999): 103-04.

Ashcroft, Bill, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, eds. *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures.* New York: Routledge, 1989.

Azim, Firdous. *The Colonial Rise of the Novel.* London: Routledge, 1993.

Barry, Peter. *Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory.* Manchester: Manchester UP, 1999.

Bassnet, Susan and Harish Trivedi. *Post-colonial Translation: Theory and Practice.* London: Routledge, 1999.

Becker, George J., ed. *Documents of Modern Literary Realism.* Princeton: Princeton UP, 1963.

Blamires, Harry. *A Short History of English Literature.* London: Methuen, 1968.

Blaut, J. M. *The Colonizer's Model of the World: Geographical Diffusionism and Eurocentric History.* New York: Guilford Press, 1993.

Boehmer, Elleke. "Of Goddesses and Stories: Gender and a New Politics in Achebe's *Anthills of the Savannah.*" *Kunapipi* 12.2 (1990): 102-112.

---------. "The Master's Dance to the Master's Voice: Revolutionary Nationalism and the Representation of Women in the Writing of Ngugi wa Thiong'o." In *Postcolonial Literatures: Achebe, Ngugi, Desai and Walcott.* Eds. Michael Parker and Roger Starkey. London: Macmillan, 1995: 143-153.

Brennan, Timothy. "The National Longing for Form." *Nation and Narration.* Ed. Homi Bhabha. London: Routledge, 1990: 44-71.

Chatterjee, Partha. *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories.* Princeton: Princeton UP, 1993.

---------. "The Nationalist Resolution of the Women's Question." *Recasting Women: Essays in Colonial History.* Eds. K. Sangari and S. Vaid. New Delhi: Kali for Women, 1999: 233-253.

--------. "Their Own Words? An Essay for Edward Said," in Edward Said: *A Critical Reader.* Ed. Michael Sprinker. Oxford: Blackwell, 1992: 194-220.

Chinweizu, Onwuchekwa Jemie and Ihechukwu Madubuike. "Decolonizing African Literature." In *Literature in the Modern World.* Ed. Dennis Walder. Delhi: Oxford UP, 1990: 279-288.

Clarke.J.J. *Oriental Enlightenment*: *The Encounter Between Asian and Western Thought.* London : Routledge, 1997.

Cole, Sarah. "Conradian Alienation and Imperial Intimacy," *Modern Fiction Studies* 44.2 (Summer 1998): 251-81.

Conrad, Joseph. *Heart of Darkness.* New Delhi: UBS Publishers, 1994.

Cowasjee, Saros. *Studies in Indian and Anglo-Indian Fiction.* New Delhi: Harper Collins India, 1996.

Deshpande, Sashi. "Of Concerns and Anxieties." *Women in Indo-Anglian Fiction: Tradition and Modernity.* Ed. Naresh K.Jain. New Delhi: Manohar, 1998: 29-37.

Dey, Esha. *The Novels of Raja Rao.* New Delhi: Prestige Books, 1992.

Dhar, T.N. "Looking the World in the Face: The Changed Woman in Anand's *Gauri.*" In *Women in Indo-Anglian Fiction: Tradition and Modernity.* Ed. Naresh K.Jain. New Delhi: Manohar, 1998: 75-85.

Driesen, Cynthia Vanden. *Centering the Margins: Perspectives of Literatures in English from India, Africa, Australia.* New Delhi: Prestige Books, 1995.

Duerden, Dennis and Pieterse Cosmo. *African Writers Talking.* London: Heinemann, 1972.

Eagleton, Terry. *Marxism and Literary Criticism.* London: Methuen, 1976.

---------. "Capitalism, Modernism and Postmodernism" in *Art in Modern Culture: An Anthology of Critical Texts.* Eds. Francis Frascina and Jonathan Harris. London: Phaidon, 1992: 62–120.

Emecheta, Buchi. *The Joys of Motherhood.* 1979. London, Heinemann, 1988.

Green, Martin. *Dreams of Adventure, Deeds of Empire*. London:Routledge, 1980.

Greenblatt, Stephen. *Marvelous Possessions: The Wonder of the New World.* Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1991.

Guha, Ranajit. "Dominance Without Hegemony and Its Historiography." In *Subaltern Studies VI: Writings on South Asian History and Society*. Ed. Ranajit Guha. Delhi: Oxford UP, 1989: 210-309.

Hall, Stuart. "When Was 'the Post-Colonial'? Thinking at the Limit." In *The Post-Colonial Question: Common Skies, Divided Horizons*. Ed. Ian Chambers and Lidia Curti. London: Routledge, 1998: 242-260.

Hobson..J.A. *Imperialism: A Study*. 1902. Ann Arber: Michigan UP, 1972.

Hubel, Teresa. *Whose India? The Independence Struggle in British and Indian Fiction and History*. London: Leicester UP, 1996.

Hulme, Peter. *Colonial Encounters: Europe and the Native Caribbean, 1492-1797.* New York: Methuen, 1986.

Inamdar. F.A. "Image and Symbol Pattern in Kamala Markandaya's Novels." *Indian Writings in English*. Ed. Manmohan K. Bhatnagar. New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers, 1998: 55-171.

Ikegami, Robin. "Knowledge and Power, the Story and the Storyteller: Achebe's *Anthills of the Savannah*." *Modern Fiction Studies* 37:3 (Autumn 1991): 493-507.

Inden, Ronald. *Imagining India*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990.

Innes, C. L. *Chinua Achebe*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1992.

Irumpayam, George. *Malayala Novel Pathonpatham Nootandil*. Kottayam: NBS, 1994.

Iyengar, Srinivasa. *Indian Writing In English*. New Delhi: Sterling Publishers 1983.

Jain, Naresh. K. "Tradition, Modernity and Change." *Women in Indo-Anglian Fiction: Tradition and Modernity*. Ed. Naresh K.Jain. New Delhi: Manohar, 1998: 1-28.

Jones, William. "The Enchanted Fruit; Or, The Hindu Wife." In *The Works of Sir William Jones*. Ed. Lord Teignmouth, 13 vols. London: J. Stockdale, 1807: 222-233.

Kabbani, Rana. *Imperial Fictions: Europe's Myths of Orient*. 1986. London: Pandora: 1994.

Kapur, Manju. *Difficult Daughters*. New Delhi: Penguin, 1998.

Kaushik, Asha. *Politics, Aesthetics and Culture: A Study of Indo-Anglian Political Novel*. New Delhi: Oxford UP, 1991.

Keay, John. *India Discovered*. New Delhi: Rupa, 1989.

Kipling, Rudyard. *Kim*. Ware: Wordsworth Classics, 1994.

Kishwar, Madhu. "Women in Gandhi," *Economic and Political Weekly* 20:40, 41, 1985: 1691-1702; 1753-1758.

Kopf, David. *British Orientalism and the Bengal Renaissance: The Dynamics of Indian*

Modernization, 1773-1835. Berkeley: U of California P, 1969.

Leavis, F.R. The Great Tradition. 1948. London: Penguin, 1983.

Loomba, Ania. *Colonialism/Postcolonialism*. London: Routledge, 1998.

Ludden, David. "Orientalist Empiricism: Transformations of Colonial Knowledge." In *Orientalism and the Postcolonial Predicament: Perspectives on South Asia*. Ed. Carol A. Breckenridge and Peter van der Veer. Delhi: Oxford UP, 1994: 250-78.

Macherey, Pierrie. "The Text Says What it Does Not Say." In *Literature in the Modern World*. Ed. Dennis Walder. Delhi: Oxford UP, 1990: 215-222.

Majeed, Javed. *Ungoverned Imaginings: James Mill's 'The History of British India' and orientalism*. Oxford: OUP, 1992.

Markandaya, Kamala. 1954. *Nectar in a Sieve*. Bombay: Jaico, 1999.

McLeod, John. *Beginning Postcolonialism*. Manchester: Manchester UP, 2000.

Metcalf, T. *Ideologies of the Raj*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP (Indian Edition), New Delhi: Foundation Books, 1995.

Menon, Chandhu. *Indulekha*. Kottayam: SPCS, 1978.

Mill, James. *The History of British India*. 1812. New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers, 1990.

Mills, Sara. *Discourse*. London: Routledge, 1997.

Montrose, Louis. "The Work of Gender in the Discourse of Discovery." In *New World Encounters*. Ed. Stephen Greenblatt. Berkeley: U of California P, 1993:177-217.

Moore, Gerald. *Seven African Writers*. London: Oxford UP, 1962.

Mudimbe, V.Y. *The Invention of Africa: Gnosis, Philosophy, and the Order of Knowledge*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1988.

Mukherjee, Meenakshi. *The Twice-born Fiction: Themes and Techniques of the Indian Novel in English*. New Delhi: Heinemann, 1971.

Mwikisa, Peter. "Conrad's Image of Africa: Recovering African Voices in Heart of Darkness." *Mots Pluriels* 13, April 2000. http://www. arts. uwa.edu.au/Mots Pluriels/Mp 1300pmw.html.

Naik.M.K. *Raja Rao*. Madras: Blackie and sons, 1982.

Nandi, Ashis. *The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self Under Colonialism*. Delhi: Oxford UP, 1983.

Narasimhaiah, C.D. "Raja Rao's *Kanthapura*". In Critical *Essays on Indian Writing in English*. M.K.Naik. Ed. New Delhi: MacMillan, 1977.

Ngugi wa Thiong'o. Ngugi, Thiong'o wa. *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language*. London: James Currey, 1989.

---------. *Detained: A Writer's Prison Diary*. London: Heinemann, 1981.

---------. *Devil on the Cross*. London: Heinemann, 1982.

---------. *Matigari.* Trans. Wangui wa Goro. Oxford: Heinemann, 1989, trans. of *Matigari.* Nairobi: Heinemann, 1987.

---------. *Petals of Blood.* London: Heinemann, 1977.

---------. *The River Between.* London: Heinemann, 1965.

---------. *Weep Not, Child.* London: Heinemann, 1964.

---------. *Writers in Politic: A Re-engagement with Issues in Literature and Society.* Ed. James Curry. Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers and Heinemann, 1981.

Niranjana, Tejaswini. *Siting Translation: History, Post-structuralism, and the Colonial Context.* New Delhi: Orient Longman, 1995.

Nnaemeka, Obioma. "Feminism, Rebellion, Women and Cultural Boundaries: Rereading Flora Nwapa and her Compatriots." In Ogunyemi, "Special Isssue: Flora Nwapa." *Research in African Literatures* 26.2 (1995): 80-113.

Nwapa, Flora. 1966. *Efuru.* London: Heinemann, 1978.

Omvedt, Gail. *Dalit Visions.* New Delhi: Orient Longman, 1995.

Padikkal, Shivarama. "The Novel in India." In *Interrogating Modernity: Culture and Colonialism in India.* Eds. Tejaswini Niranjana, P. Sudhir and Vivek Dhareshwar. Culcutta: Seagull Books, 1993: 220-239.

Palkar, Sarla. "The Politics of Gender in Raja Rao's *The Serpent and the Rope.*" In *Women in Indo-Anglian Fiction: Tradition and Modernity.* Ed. Naresh K.Jain. New Delhi: Manohar, 1998:

Panikkar.K.N. *Culture, Ideology, Hegemony: Intellectuals and Social Consciousness in Colonial India.* New Delhi: Tulika, 1995.

Pareira, Senath W. "Towards a Limited Emancipation: Women in Raja Rao's *Kanthapura.*" *ARIEL: A Review of International English Literature* 23.4 (1992): 99-110.

Parry, Benita. *Delusions and Discoveries: Studies on India in the British Imagination 1880-1930.* London: Orient Longman, 1974.

Pennycook, Alastair. *English and the Discourses of Colonialism.* New York: Routledge, 1998.

Premila, Paul. *The World of Mulk Raj Anand: A Thematic Study.* New Delhi: Sterling, 1983.

Rajan, P. K. "Myth and Realism in *The Old Woman and the Cow.*" In *Indian Writings in English.* Ed. Manmohan K. Bhatnagar. New Delhi: Atlantic, 1998: 109-113.

Randall, Don. "Post-Mutiny Allegories of Empire in Rudyard Kipling's *Jungle Books.*" *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 40.1 (1998): 97-120.

Rao, Raja. *The Cat and Shakespeare: A Tale of Modern India.* 1971. New Delhi: Orient, 1992.

---------. *Kanthapura.* 1938. Madras: Oxford UP, 1978.

---------. *The Meaning of India.* New Delhi: Vision Books, 1996.

---------. *The Serpent and the Rope.* 1960. Delhi: Orient, 1968.

Robertson.R.T. "Untouchable as an Archetypal Novel." In *The Novels of Mulk Raj Anand.* Ed. R.K. Dhawan. New Delhi: Prestige Books, 1992.

Robinson, C.N, and John Leyland. "The Literature of the Sea: From the Origins to Hakluyt." *The Cambridge History of English Literature.* 1909. Eds. Sir A.W.Ward and A.R.Waller. 14 Vols. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1966: 66-85.

Rocher, Rosane. "British Orientalism in the Eighteenth Century: The Dialectics of Knowledge and Government." In *Orientalism and the Postcolonial Predicament: Perspectives on South Asia.* Ed. Carol A. Breckenridge and Peter van der Veer. Delhi: Oxford UP, 1994: 215-49.

Said, Edward. *Culture and Imperialism.* London: Chatto and Windus, 1993

---------. *Orientalism.* London: Penguin Books, 1995.

Singh, Jyotsna G. *Colonial Narratives/Cultural Dialogues: "Discoveries" of India in the Language of Colonialism.* London: Routledge, 1996.

Sircar, Roopali. *The Twice Colonized: Women in African Literature.* New Delhi: Creative Books, 1995.

Spurr, David. *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration.* Durham: Duke UP, 1993.

Stratton, Florence. *Contemporary African Fiction and the Politics of Gender.* London: Routledge: 1994.

Swamiji, Sree Kumara. "Virasaivism." *The Cultural Heritage of India :IV: The Religion.* Ed. Haridas Bhattacharya. Culcutta: The Ramakrishna Institute of Culture, 1983: 98-107.

Taneja. G.R. "History, Change and Modernity: Markandaya's New Woman in *Nectar in a Sieve.*" *Women in Indo-Anglian Fiction: Tradition and Modernity.* Ed. Naresh K.Jain. New Delhi: Manohar, 1998 : 48-55.

Teltscher, Kate. *India Inscribed: European and British Writing on India 1600-1800.* Delhi: Oxford UP, 1995.

Thapar, Romila. *The Past and Prejudice.* New Delhi: NBT, 1975.

Tharu, Susie. "Decoding Anand's Humanism." *Kunapipi* 4.2 (1982): 30-39.

---------. "Tracing Savitri's Pedigree: Victorian Racism and the Image of Women in Indo-Anglian Literature." *Recasting Women: Essays in Colonial History.* Eds. Kumkum Sangari, Sudesh Vaid. New Delhi: Kali for Women, 1999: 254-268.

--------- and Lalita, K, eds. *Women Writing in India: 600 BC to the Present.* 2 vols. New Delhi: Oxford UP, 1993.

Thomson, Edward. *The Other Side of the Medal.* London: Hogarth, 1925.

Tiffin, C. and Lawson, A. Eds. *De-scribing Empire, Post-colonialism and Textuality.* London: Routledge, 1994.

Tiffin, Helen. "Post-Colonialism, Post-Modernism and the Rehabilitation of Post-

Colonial History." *Journal of Commonwealth Literature* 23.1 (1988): 169--81.

Trevelyan, George. *The Competition Wallah*. 1864. New Delhi: Indus, 1992.

Watson, Tim. "Irish and Indian Unrest in Kipling's *Kim*." In *Postcolonial Theory and Criticism*. Ed. Laura Chrisman and Benita Parry. Cambridge: D.S.Brewer, 2000: 95-113.

Winks, Robin. W. Ed. *The Age of Imperialism*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall, INC, 1969.

Wren, Robert M. *Achebe's World: The Historical and Cultural Context of the Novels of Chinua Achebe*. Harlow: Longman, 1981.

Varma.K.D. "Being Truthful to the Echoes of the Mother Tongue: Mulk Raj Anand." *Frontline*. 30 Dec. 1995 – 12 Jan. 1996: 93-95.

Zins, Henryk. *Joseph Conrad and Africa*. Nairobi: Kenya Literature Bureau, 1982.
