



INDIA IN THE NOVELS OF FORSTER, JOHN MASTERS AND PAUL SCOTT : A CRITICAL STUDY

Dr. Renuka B. Janbow, Ph.D

Asst. Prof in English, G.F.G.College, K.R.Puram, Bangalore-36

Abstract

India has been the subject of a variety of writings in the West, especially in USA and the Great Britain and the Middle West Islamic countries for thousands of years. Hundreds and thousands of travelers came to India in search of job opportunities, wealth, livelihood and spirituality. Among them a lot of the British middle-class people came to India and stayed on here during the British rule for more than a hundred years. Those wrote about their experience of living in India, with the impressions of the people, religion, culture, language and climate, landscape etc. Among the E.M. Forster, John Masters and Paul Scott who portrayed Indian in their novels- A Passage to India, The Deceivers, and The Raj Quartet. Their perceptions of the country are different as they were from different socio-cultural background. India is thought to be a land of mystery, sadhus, thugs, rope trick, gold and raris and rajahs etc. These are the fictional representations of the country.

Keywords: India, country, travelers, job opportunities, British rule, novels and mystery, and fictional representation, etc.

India has been an obsession to the western people from the times immemorial. Since the times of Alexander, Indian was known as the land of gold. It was also called 'El Darado'¹. For thousands of travelers, missionaries, merchants and administrators, it was very curious phenomena due to its vastness of variegated uneven fascinating land of complex nature with diverse languages, cultures and religions, living together. In a sense, it is not a country but a continent, so to say. They came by land, and sea for the multi-purposes of making loving and living and tradition and for gaining knowledge of its religion, philosophy, and mysticism. Of all, the Mt. Everest and Mt. Kailasa was most curious and it was an illusion of mountain full of gold. So were the modern British and American writers who came, stayed and experienced the land and its people and wrote stories, and novels and travelogues etc. Among them the British were prominent like Rudyard Kipling, John Masters, Forster and Paul Scott.

British novelist and visited India some times. He published novels- *Where Angels Fear to Tread* (1905), *The Longest Journey* (1907), *A Room with a View*(1908), *Howards End*(1910), *A Passage to India* (1924) and *Maurice* (1971). He also published *The Celestial Omnibus and Other Stories* (1912) and *The Eternal Moment and Other Stories* (1924). His *Collected Stories* was published in 1948. His perception of India as short but sharp. He could also describe India in the same was as Masters did - 'a land of mystery'. He was struck by the luxurious living of *rajās* and *ranīs* and other members of the royal family and the common poor common people. He had also eye on the uneven land and its mystery- a kind of *zeitgeist*.i.e., the spirit of the land, so to say. Forster, in his only Indian novel, *A Passage of India*, delineates the Indian society of Chandrapore with vivid description of the society in terms of religion of Hindus and Muslim. He brings the images of the temples and mosques, and churches. He recognizes the place of the British as n odd and awkward in the middle of the multi-cultural -society. He also puts his finger on theme of love between the men and women of opposite races. It was not something new. There were the inter-religious marriages in the pages of history. But he says that his ear was 'ear of Doubt'. The mistrust and suspicion begun between the Indians and the British. This he elucidates through the story of British girl who complains against Dr Aziz during their picnic in the Malabar Hills. She fantasizes that she was caught and molested by him in the cave. Inside the cave, there was a sound of 'Boom...Boom'.

The rumor was spread in the city and a lot of protests take place. The case was take to the court and at last the was resolved peacefully. Miss Adela Quested and Mrs More, her aunt, who come to India to explore its reality but at the end, leave India having had a bitter experience of their love for India. There are other characters like Dr.Aziz and Prof Godbole. It was story of a Indians' assault on the white girl on a self arranged picnic to the Malabar Caves. The case was taken seriously by the white judge and somehow Dr.Aziz escapes punishment; but he was put a great humiliation for having friendship with Miss Adela Quested. Forster concluded by saying that the time of the British to leave the country has come. There was mistrust and no love between the Indians and the British. At the novel's end, he says: "...here our ways divide" (*A Passage*, 299)

John Masters (1914-1983) was in the British Indian army and served in the various parts of north-eastern India and Burma fighting the battles with the enemies, the Japanese². Although he was a soldier, he had a flair of writing stories and novels. Out of his travel experience of India its interior, people, and culture, he wrote nearly eleven novels- *Bhowani Junction*, *The Nightrunners of Bengal* and *The Deceivers -The Indian Trilogy*, (1956) *The Lotus and the Wind* (1953) *Coromondel!* (1955), *Far, Far the Mountain Peak*, (1957) *Fandango Rock* (1959) *The Venus of Konpara*, (1960) *To the Coral Strand* (1962), *Trial at Monomoy* (1964), *The Ravi Lancers*, (1972) *Himalayan Concerto* (1976), *The Heart of War* (1980), *By The Green of the Spring* (1981) and *Now, God be Thanked* (1982), and *Man of War* (1983). In his novels, Masters portrays India as a woman who is not understood. For she was a mystery. More often he compares India to a woman towards whom was attracted and fell in love. Many of his woman characters are sensuous and if not very beautiful and they serve his passion of love and sex. He particularly portrays 'the life of the kings and queens, sadhus and thugs'³ and also interior living tribal peoples. His geographical knowledge of India was of the first hand and very reliable. Vividly he portrays the peoples, its land and religion, more, culture etc. He wrote his novels only after 1950 after going back to England after the end of the World War II. He was very nostalgic of his past experiences in India. As a male he was very aggressive and dominant and powerful. He sees the relation between the country and him as a romantic love between man and woman⁴. In one of his novels, he portrays a immoral woman, a whore. For him, his concept of India as whore was more amusing than India as a sensuous and beautiful woman who could love in trust and fidelity.

Paul Scott (1932-1978) is most modern and true successor E. M. Forster in the tradition of the images of India in western creative writing. He was more or less the contemporary of John masters. like Masters he also began to write during 1950s- *The Alien Sky* (1952), *A Male Child*, (1953) *The Mark of the Warrior* (1954), *The Chinese Love Pavilion*, (1960) *The Bender*,(1963) *The Corrida at San Felieu*, (1964)⁵ and the volumes on the theme of the raj with the first *The Jewel in the Crown*(1965), *The Day of the Scorpion* (1966), *Towers of Silence* (1968) and *The Division of the Spoils*(1972). All four volumes out together was published one volume edition of 200 pages and 175 character under the title *The Raj Quartet*, an epic novel. There is only comparison between this and Lawrence Durrell's *The Alexandria Quartet*.

Paul Scott, being sponsored by the Heinemann Publishing house, London, made three trips to India, 1969, 1973 and 1975 and imbedded the experience of the whole country in its various facets. He was also an army officer like John Masters and served in the borders of Burma and other places. He had a penchant for writing fiction and after joining Heinemann as a literary agent, he began writing the novel about India. Almost seven novels are on India unlike the novels of John Masters and E.M. Forster. Only *The Bender* (1963) and *The Corrida at San Feliu* (1964) were set in England dealing with the economic crisis in the English family of the Smalleys during the post-war period. *The Corrida* is partly set in Spain and partly in India. *The Birds of Paradise* is also partly set in India and partly in Europe. Except these three other seven novels are purely on India. His vision of India is slightly different from those of E.M. Forster and John Masters, he continues the theme of misunderstanding and the tussle between the Indians and the British takes it to the next level of a love-rape incident of Miss Daphne Manners and Harry Coomer in *The Jewel in the Crown* (1965). That sets the metaphor of the whole epic novel, the British-Indian relationship has gone sour. Scott's novels are a mix of story and history and the historical facts authenticate them. In *The Division of the Spoils* he deals with the theme of the Partition of India in 1947 and the subsequent massacre of Indians and Muslims and the event of freedom at midnight of 15th August, 1947 and the departure of the British from India of which they thought of as their 'home'. Scott brings all other images of India in the tradition of writing and creates something new about the portrayal of the people, land, and its history, religion, cultural divisions etc. He also uses the theme of love metaphorically between them but leading to marriage but to the breaking up of the relationship. In a sense he sums up the British writing on India by the West in his fine novels.

Thus, India has been an obsession to the Western writers -especially the British. It is seen as a land of mystery, gold, *sadhus*, rope snake tricks, magic, mysticism, raja and rani's etc. These novels, having the country as an obsession, write their fine novels about their perception of the country, its people, land, religion, culture etc. With *The Raj Quartet*, the tradition ended with the glorious portrayal of the division of the country and the departure of the British. Of course Scott could not write the last *Staying On* (1977) ⁶ and it was about the post-Independent India where the British are second-rate citizens and face a lot of trouble living here and die for their love for the country.

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