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## Chapter V

### Type Characters in Indian English Novels and Their

#### Impact on Ghosh's novels

Rochelle Almeida published an essay entitled Characters and Their Indianness in the Novels of Kamala Markandaya in *The Anthology of critical essays called Postcolonial Indian Literature in English* (1998) edited by Nilufer. E Bharucha and Vrinda Nabar. In the beginning of his essay he says that 'type' figures dominate Indian English novels.

'Individuals' are less commonly present. He remarks: "It appears that the characters in Indo - English novels can be categorised into stereotypes both by issue of their frequent presence since the very beginning of Indo-English fiction and by the very pronounced element of realism in their depiction" (332).

The following 'types' stand out in Indo-English writing:

- a. The exploited Indian Labourer.
- b. The Sati - Savitri or Sacrificial Mother Figure.
- c. The Memsahib.
- d. The Sahib.
- e. The Anglicised Indian.
- f. Royalty.
- g. Ascetics.

### a. The Exploited Indian Labourer

When Dorothy Spencer observes the stereotype characters commonly found in the Indo-English novels, she first finds the Indian peasant. She remarks: “Another peasant, who may be called the man with the hoe, makes his appearance early. We may trace him to the stereotype ...of the peasant bowed with the weight of centuries, over-burdened, poverty-stricken, victimised by landlords and money-lenders, helpless... in the face of social convention, a prey to defeat by the forces arrayed against him” (21).

Though these types of characters are called as stereotype, we cannot deny that they are true to life. We see such “type” characters in Markandaya’s *Nectar in a Sieve* and *The Coffer Dams*: Nathan and Bashiam. The former novel is set in a period prior to Independence and the abolition of the zamindari system. Hence, she gets ample scope to write more about the pathetic lot of the Indian peasant. His labour was very similar to collecting nectar in a sieve, i.e., useless and unrewarding. The major portion of Nathan’s income linnet the treasure-chests of his landlord, leaving him without anything for his survival. Moreover, the vagaries of the weather, famine, drought and flood affect him directly and prevent him earning a decent income.

Kamala Markandaya gets good opportunity to study the lifestyle of the farmer in pre-Independent India through the character of Nathan. Nathan is indeed the typical Indian peasant - ignorant, illiterate, naive, too trusting, a passive believer in fate, burdened by the constant threat of hunger and poverty. He never thinks to rebel against his life or to try to redeem his circumstances. His strength does not come from fighting the external forces that cripple him, but from mustering his own resources: patience, resilience and personal courage. Nathan is a fine example to the definition of Dorothy Spencer for a typical Indian peasant who seems to be connected with a kind of primitivism, a desire for the simple life, and a

believer in Ram Raj as India's former condition and true goal. Bashiam in *The Coffey Dams* works as a crane operator on a dam site that is being developed in India under British collaboration. Bashiam is in the happy position of having other educated Indians fight for his interests and leading the labourers in a strike; but he himself is a simple aborigine, in awe of white skins, a victim of colonial exploitation, treated as cheap labour, easily dispensable.

#### **b. The Sati-Savithri or Sacrificial Mother Figure**

Indo-English fiction seems to be riddled with the figures of the long-suffering wife and sacrificial mother figure. This recurrent theme of the suffering wife must be analysed in the context of reality and the Indian fictional tradition. In *Nectar in a Sieve* Rukmani is such a typical stereotype character. Rukmani supports her husband emotionally as well as physically. She assists him in the fields, cooks, cleans and cares for the children. Other novels of Markandaya seem to reinforce this idealised conception of woman as wife and mother. The Indianness in the creation of these characters is clearly evident. Nalini in *A Handful of Rice* falls in love and marries a rakish, charming vagabond. Even her subsequent realisation that her husband is impatient, ill-tempered and given to bouts of drinking, violence and womanizing, does not make her consider leaving him. She temporarily seeks the refuge of her sister's abode, but eventually resolves to make the most of her miserable life. She does not try to analyse her situation rationally. An attempt at bargaining for her freedom, through divorce and the procurement of alimony common enough in the West, would not have occurred to the average Indian woman whom Nalini represented.

In *Pleasure City*, Amma is portrayed as the long-suffering wife and mother, who sticks by her husband through good times and bad. She seems to tower over her husband when it comes to domestic decisions and so far as the upbringing of her children is concerned. The women in Markandaya's novels are more important, more decisive and more

powerful. Dorothy Spencer wonders whether the qualities portrayed by Markandaya through her women are characteristics of Indian women in general. She concludes like other critics that these fictional heroines are cast in the well-established literary tradition found in Indian mythology and other ancient Indian literature: Sita, Savitri, Shakunthala, serve as models, and at the vernacular level in Bengal, for example, Behula, Malanchmala and various others.

### **The character of Tha'mma**

Tha'mma the grandmother of the narrator is a powerful pillar in the novel *The Shadow Lines* who can be considered as typical of sacrificial mother figure. Ghosh depicts all the peculiarities of suffering in her. She is a typical brave middle-class Indian woman. She became a widow at the age of thirty-two. She joined a school to run her family. She has given her life to her school. She retires from the school as its headmistress. She is sincere, devoted, hardworking, disciplined in her life. Therefore, she is quite capable of producing strong disciplined children and coherent family. She cannot see anyone idle at her home. She tells the narrator, her grandson that if anyone wastes time, it starts stinking. She has a militant's attitude to life. She is always on the defensive. She does not want any favour even from her own rich sister, Mayadebi. Mayadebi offers to take them to a place in her car. But Tha'mma does not agree readily to it. This is typical Indian middle-class mindset. The upper class is used to receiving favours. The lower class cannot refuse them because it needs them badly. It is only the upright middle class that tries to balance the scales.

Tha'mma's whole world view is around defending herself and her family against a hostile world. We can even call her a feminist in her own way because of her low opinion of men. Her job becomes her second self. When she gives the narrator a broad, warm smile after her retirement he feels awkward because it was so different from her mistress's tight-lipped smile. Her involvement in her job is complete. Her farewell at school is very touching. She is

full of those small projects, little techniques that a teacher develops in order to encourage her students. The narrator says about his grandmother:

.....when she was headmistress, my grandmother had decided once that every girl who opted for Home Science ought to be taught how to cook at least one dish that was a speciality of some part of the country other than her own. It would be a good way, she thought, of teaching them, about the diversity and vastness of the country (116).

Tha'mma's character is a tribute to so many unrecognised women in this country who are holding the world of their children and near and dear ones together by their toil and labour. She brought up her son alone. But she never showed her vulnerability. Her extraordinary keen observation and the unbending steel of her personality set her in a class of her own. When the narrator is studying at Delhi, Tha'mma gets sick. He comes home to see her. But what does he receive? Tha'mma accuses him of unnecessarily worshipping Ila and also of going to cheap women in Delhi. It is so shocking. The narrator is almost disgusted at the cruelty of her remarks.

When Tha'mma dies, just a day before, she writes in her firm handwriting to the principal of the narrator's college that her grandson is visiting cheap houses, that she tried to talk to him but he showed no signs of repentance and that he should be ousted from the college even though he is her own grandson. Fortunately, the narrator is able to convince the principal of his good conduct and of the sickness that might have affected Tha'mma's mind. After convincing the principal, the narrator writes, 'I have never understood how she learnt of the women I had visited a couple of times, with my friends; nor do I know how she saw that I was in love with Ila so long before I dared to admit it to myself' (93). But her character, her behaviour and the consequences of it, like everything else in this book, have a tragic tinge.

Basically, Tha'mma is a person who has kept relatives at bay. She never allows relatives to influence her immediate family. Except for her sister, Mayadebi's family, there is hardly anyone who matters to her. But after retirement she derails from her regular path. The family and relatives somehow overpower her. The very relatives who have been so hostile, almost enimical, become important to her. The old ghosts come to her and finally claim a precious, young promising life. But then, life goes on its own course. Nobody can control it. She finds a mission in her old age. The mission is to go back and find out her uncle Jethamosahi and help if she can. So a lady who never pretended to have much family feeling, suddenly bursts out, "It doesn't matter whether we recognise each or not. We're same flesh, the same blood, the same bone and now at last, after these years, perhaps we'll be able to make amends for all bitterness and hatred" (129).

In fact, she does not realize that malevolence in human nature does not die. No one, no earthly force can end old bitterness. There is no soap or wash that can clean a heart of its past injuries, humiliation and venom. When she finally gets to meet Jethamoshai, she finds that he has lost his memory. He does not recognise her. But when Tridib reminds him in a loud voice that they are the daughters of his brother who lived in the other part of the house, 'the old man's face lit up. They died! He said, his voice quivering in triumph. They had two daughters: one with face like a vulture, and another one who was poisonous as a cobra, but all pretty and goody, to look at' (214). He has not forgotten; he has not forgiven. Old age does not bring nobility with it; it only brings weakness and so perhaps people bend a little due to compulsions. Whatever the truth may be, Tha'mma's visit to Dhaka and her new passion for relatives is the tragic flaw of her personality. She pays for it. In the end, she has only one thing to say, we have to kill them before they kill us' (237).

### c. The Memsahib

While the Indian female protagonist in the Indo-English novel is usually depicted as an idealised being, the European woman on the contrary, is seen negatively as mean and unkind, secure in her position of racial superiority, the consort of the White ruler. Generally we call the white woman as the Memsahib. It is something associated with the colonial rule. The white woman's world in India was a luxurious and idle one, and her wants were attended by a plethora of servants. It was punctuated by leisure time events like Club Dances and sessions at whist. Disdainful of native Indian culture, these women made no attempts to understand or appreciate its differences. They preferred to recreate the feel and ambience of English life in the most remote regions of India. They tended to bring with them the English prejudices of the time. Their attitude was narrow Christian in general. They hadn't anything worth to occupy their minds. Their life was a tedious social round spending more time for gossips. The figure of the Memsahib in Kamala Markandaya's works follow the same pattern in the Indo-English novel. Millie Rawlings in *The Coffer Dams*, Caroline Bell in *Possession* and Lady Copeland in *The Golden Honeycomb* are examples of this sort of English woman.

#### **Mrs Burnham in *Sea of Poppies***

Mrs Burnham serves the role of a memsahib which is a stereotype one in Indian English literature. The novelist introduces her like this: 'And to seal it all, Miss Catherine Bradshaw for a wife - about as pukka a memsahib as ever there was, a brigadier's daughter' (77). Mrs Burnham is the queen of Bethel, the official residence of Mr Burnham in Calcutta. Mr Kendalbushe, the English judge happens to meet Miss Paulette, the French orphan girl, in the dinner at Bethel hosted by Mr Burnham. The judge is an aged widower who wishes to marry Paulette and conveys his desire to Mr Burnham at the Bengal Club on the previous day. Mr Burnham who is lucrative in anything sees the judge's proposal to his adopted



daughter as a golden opportunity to expand his business empire. He at once assures his help to the judge in this matter and arranges his wife to make Paulette agree for the proposal.

When Mrs Burnham reveals the judge's desire to Paulette she couldn't believe what she has heard from her foster-mother. She expresses her unwillingness to marry such an aged man with great disappointment. Mrs Burnham rises to the occasion and convinces her the great prospects that she can achieve by marrying the judge. Mr Kendalbushe is immensely rich and doubled his financial position many times from the China trade. Many madams in Calcutta city have been trying to be his wife.

Mrs Burnham's persuasion of Paulette to marry the judge reveals the western attitude towards marriage and family. There is no question of love whereas everything is connected with material achievement. The conversation between Paulette and Mrs Burnham about the proposal is quite noteworthy:

'..... I am greatly honoured, Madame - yet I must confess that my sentiments are not the same as those of Mr Kendalbushe.'

At this, Mrs Burnham frowned and sat upright. 'Sentiments, my dear Puggly,' she said sternly, 'are for dhobis and dashies. We mems can't let that kind of thing get in the way! No, dear, let me tell you - you're lucky to have judge in your sights and you mustn't let your bunduk waver. This is about as fine a shikar as a girl in your situation could possibly hope for.'

'Oh Madame,' said Paulette, weeping freely now, 'but are not the things of this world mere dross when weighed against love?' 'Love?' said Mrs Burnham, in mounting astonishment. 'What on earth are you backing about? My dear Puggly, with your prospects, you can't be letting your shocks run away with you. I know the judge is not as young as he might be, but he's

certainly not past giving you a butcha or two before he slips into his dotage. And after that, dear, why, there's nothing a mem needs that can't be cured by a long bath and a couple of cushy-girls' (274).

#### **d. The Sahib**

The Englishman in India is known as the Sahib. It has been characterised in literature as belonging predominantly to the middle classes. Such a character is very common in Indian English novels. In depicting such characters knowingly or unknowingly Indianness also is revealed through them. Their attitude to local Indians and vice versa reflect Indianness in such novels. The depiction of the Sahib in Indian English literature can be divided into two groups; the imperial age and the post-imperial age. Rudyard Kipling and E.M.Forster belong to the imperial age. The post imperial age has three main novelists, Mr. Paul Scot, Mr. Manohar Malgonkar and Mrs. R. Prawer Jhabvala. Scott and Malgonkar have written in a reflective vein, depicting the problems which confronted their sahibs during the last two decades of the British Raj, whereas Mrs. Jhabvala concentrated entirely on the Englishman in India today without any reference to the past.

According to Rochelle Almeida, the figure of the British industrialist, the British missionary, the British doctor, the British officer, etc. is common in Indo-English fiction. Such characters represent Indianness in them deliberately or spontaneously. In *Some Inner Fury* of Kamala Markandaya, Richard Marlowe becomes a representative of "the British government official".

#### **Mr Burnham in *Sea of Poppies***

Ghosh introduces Benjamin Burnham in *Sea of Poppies* as a typical sahib in Indian English literature belonging to the imperial age. He represents the category of the British industrialist who has no other concern except make maximum profits from his ventures. He

bought the schooner *Ibis* with the intention of carrying opium from Calcutta to Canton in China. As the Chinese have forbidden opium trade, Burnham decides to employ his vessel in transporting indentured labourers from Calcutta to Mauritius. The novelist gives a detailed background of Burnham beginning from his early days to the present state. It also reveals how the western culture utilises Christianity in the expansion of their empire even in engaging the forbidden businesses like opium trade.

Benjamin Burnham was a man of imposing height and stately appearance with a full curly beard. He was the son of a Liverpool timber merchant but he had spent hardly ten years at home. As a child young Ben was a 'right shaytan' and a trouble - maker who was clearly destined to spend his lifetime in penitentiaries and houses of correction. Therefore his family had shipped him out as a 'guinea-pig' from England to India. He continued his malice and was deported to the British penal colony of Port Blair, on the Andaman Islands. At Port Blair, Ben Burnham found employment with the prison's chaplain. There he got a chance to acquire faith as well as an education. Then at the age of nineteen he was sailing China wards on a ship that was carrying a well-known Protestant missionary. His accidental acquaintance with the English Reverend was a turning point in his life.

The Reverend helped Benjamin Burnham to secure a job as a clerk with the trading firm of Magniac & Co . He spent most of his time in two China cities - Canton and Macao- the two poles of the Pearl River Delta and during his freetime he engaged in opium trade. He wanted to take part directly at the Calcutta opium auction. In this context Ghosh brings forth an undesirable truth like this: 'As with many another Fanqui merchant in Canton, Burnham's church connections were a great help, since several missionaries had close connections with opium traders'(75,76). In 1817 Burnham got an opportunity to escort a team of Chinese converts to the Baptist Mission College at Serampore in Bengal. There he remembered what he had heard in his boyhood training about another branch of the British Empire's commerce:

“In the good old days people used to say there were only two things to be exported from Calcutta: thugs and drugs - or opium and coolies as some would have it” (76).

Benjamin Burnham began his ventures first with the transportation of convicts. Calcutta was then the principal centre from where Indian prisoners were shipped to the British Empire's network of island prisons - Penang, Bencoolen, Port Blair and Mauritius. Managing a convict ship was not an easy matter. Fortunately Burnham approached his childhood friend Mr Charles Chillingworth who was a competent and bold ship's master. With the help of Captain Chillingworth, Burnham was able to amass a large fortune from Calcutta and entered in the opium trade in China on a larger scale. He had a sizeable fleet of his own ships which helped him to expand his business empire. Soon he had formed a partnership with two of his brothers and started trading centres in such cities as Bombay, Singapore, Aden, Canton, Macao, London and Boston. He strengthened and spread his connections to all the spheres of private as well as public in the city of Calcutta. Moreover, his wife Miss Catherine Bradshaw, a brigadier's daughter, was a strong support to all his ventures. Benjamin Burnham started his business dealings with the father of Raja Neel Rattan Halder about twenty - five years before by leasing one of his properties as an office in Calcutta. He was a Zamindar and shrewd judge of people, and regarded the Englishman of highly promising. He agreed to invest in his business even without inquiring the nature of his business. The old Raja knew this much about Mr Burnham that he was a ship - owner. Each year at the time of their meeting the Zamindar gave a sum of money to Mr Burnham to buy large consignments of opium from Calcutta. At the end of every year he got back a much larger sum. After the death of the father, Neel Rattan continued the same transactions without investigating further about the business. Neel didn't examine the genuineness and financial position of the Raskhali estate, and signed all the documents prepared by his clerks.

Later it was found out that Mr Burnham trapped Neel Rattan by accusing forgery of a document. He was arrested and trial was done for the namesake. The English magistrate Kendalbushe awarded the sentence in favour of his own countryman Mr Burnham. All his properties were seized and handed over to the complainant. Besides he should be deported to the penal settlement on the Mauritius Islands for a period of no less than seven years. No doubt Benjamin Burnham proves himself that he belongs to a ruthless colonial man born for making profits exploiting Indians even in the name of religion.

#### **e. The Anglicised Indian**

As a result of widespread English education in India during the British rule, a large number of Indians began to follow the western ways and thoughts in their private as well as public life. The Indian educationist Raja Ram Mohan Roy realised early the importance of English and urged Indians to partake in the learning and mastering of that language. He associated with Lord Macaulay for the propagation of English education neglecting the opposition of many Indian leaders. Besides conversion to Christianity, the missionaries performed some civilizing functions like starting schools, translating the Bible into the vernaculars, setting up printing presses, teaching the English language, etc. The outcome of this education was the Anglicised Indians. These Anglicised Indians were mainly professional people. The majority of them were employed by the Govt. of India. A few of them received employment in private enterprises. The quality of these Anglicised Indians was still in controversy. The followings are some examples to these Anglicised Indians appeared in the Indian English novels.

In 1952 E.M. Forster published *A Passage to India* in which he portrayed the anglicised Indian doctor, Aziz, who after completing his medical studies, returned to Chandrapore to assist the Englishman Callendar at the local hospital. Aziz is bolder and self-

confident when confronted by the rulers of his country. Mrs. Moore wanders alone in the evening through an old mosque. Aziz watches her first and then walks up to her and begins a conversation. He later invites Mrs. Moore and Adela Quested to the Marabar Caves. His boldness outrages the English at Chandrapore, but this does not deter Aziz from remaining conversational and courteous with the ladies from England. Aziz has successfully managed to pierce the bubble of English society at Chandrapore. He partakes with great joy in an evening meal at Hamiduallah's house. The dinner is Indian in choice and it is served in the Indian manner. At this conjecture, E.M. Forster underlines the Indian in the anglicised Aziz and thus shows him as a man who has not really divorced himself from his native background.

Mr. V.S. Naipaul presents such an anglicised Indian in his novel *An Area of Darkness*. He is called Bunty. The name itself sounds out of place for an Indian and produces an effect of ridiculousness. Bunty is anglicised by background and birth; he has not acquired anglicisation during his lifetime and therefore he belongs to caste which at present is the 'Dominant Minority' in the country. Bunty is not struggling for survival; he is established and moreover exclusive. Thus he belongs to a fixed caste within the framework of Hindu casteism. Bunty is qualified not only by birth but also by his adherence to the traditional colonial way of life.

Mrs. R. Praver Jhabvala portrays the wealthy Anglicised Indian family of Har Dayal in her novel, *Esmond in India*. Har Dayal has always been wealthy. He has been to Cambridge and is now chairman of a government cultural commission. His wife Madhuri is also a member of the same class and comes from an equally wealthy background. They have three children. One is away at Cambridge. Amrit is the elder of the two children. He has studied at Cambridge, is married to Indira and is employed as a box-Wallah by a British paint firm. Shakunthala is his sister, younger than he, a B.A. graduate of Delhi University. Har Dayal is proud of his family and especially of his daughter Shakunthala whom he adores

above all, and his adoration is reciprocated with adulation. But he is also proud of himself, at achieving the mode of behaviour required by an anglicized Indian of the wealthier class. Mrs. Jhabvala displays Har Dayal's deprecative attitude to his Indian past. Har Dayal is ashamed of having belonged to Indian civilization and is triumphant on having divorced himself from the purely Indian India. He has withdrawn from the Indian environment. By shedding one form of civilization he has been able to acquire another and thus he becomes a typical anglicised Indian. In short, when Har Dayal has acquired anglicisation, he rejects his Hindu background.

Mrs. Nayantara Sahgal's novel *This Time of Morning* depicts the lives of diplomats and politicians of contemporary New Delhi. Dhiraj is a successful diplomat with a fire of luxury and good living, and he is wealthy. His son, Vishnu is an undergraduate at Oxford and at present is home on vacation. Vishnu who was studying the newspaper and commenting on the 'appalling' state of affairs in the country, troubled him (Dhiraj) more. Vishnu's favourite word was 'appalling' and every aspect of life in India 'appalled' him. Vishnu had (at Oxford) spent a considerable amount of money on clothes and entertainment and considerably little time on intellectual pursuits. Vishnu's ideals of setting about finding work (after his finals) was for Dad to speak to a director and get a job either in Bombay or Calcutta - the provinces would be too ghastly. It is very clear that Vishnu is a good example for the rootless anglicised Indian. From a sociological point of view, he can be considered as a typical urban character in contemporary India.

Kitsamy (Kit), the Oxford graduate in *Some Inner Fury* is a typical representative of the Anglicized Indian. Everything about Kit is anglicized, including his name. Kit expects others to fall in line with his English ways. He has no patience with so called Indian sloppiness and inefficiency. He calls a blundering Indian driver as "a bloody incompetent

ass''. Social life is built around a Western pattern. His home after marriage to Premala is furnished entirely in contemporary British style.

### **Ghosh's anglicised Indian characters**

#### **'The Saheb' in *The Shadow Lines***

Ghosh follows his predecessors in moulding anglicised Indian characters. 'The Saheb' in *The Shadow Lines* is a typical example for introducing such characters. It cannot be denied that an average Indian sees his role model in an Englishman. The narrator's grandmother calls her brother-in-law, Mayadebi's husband, the Saheb, because his mother was very proud to regard her son as much Europeanised in his appearance and all his interaction with others. She said that his hat wouldn't come off his head. She even called him 'Saheb' when she was speaking to him directly. He gives maximum attention to his dress and appearance, and spent money lavishly for it. Whatever he wore, there was always a drilled precision about his clothes. Often he looks like a dressed-up doll in a shop window. Ghosh narrates in detail the Saheb's taste for dress. He writes,

It was my grandmother's theory that the Saheb's wardrobe was divided into sets of hangers, each with its own label: Calcutta zamindar, Indian diplomat, English gentleman, would-be Nehru, South Club tennis player, Non-Aligned Statesman, and so on. It was certainly true that there was always a rigorous completeness about the Saheb's appearance: in Calcutta the fall of his dhoti was always perfect-straight and starched-the top button of his kurta open in an exact equilateral triangle; in Lagos the pockets of his safari suits were never too obtrusive ; his suits, when he wore them, looked as though they had been moulded on to him by the lost looked as though they had been moulded on to him by the lost-wax process whatever he wore, there was always a drilled



precision about his clothes which seemed to suggest that he was not so much wearing them as putting them on parade. He looks like a dressed up doll in a shop window my grandmother used to say. No wonder everyone stares at him (34).

It is common in India, even today, we try to follow the western way of dressing. Our school and college uniform for boys and girls in most of the institutions is a good example for this. We do not think twice to call a perfectly dressed man as a Saheb. Here we find literal Indianness in these descriptions.

### **Beni Prasad Dey, the District Collector in Ratnagiri, in *The Glass Palace***

Beni Prasad Dey is another anglicized character of Amitav Ghosh. He was in his early forties and a Bengali from Calcutta. He had the privilege of having English education. He believed that the British way of thinking and living are the best in the world. He took his degree from the Calcutta University, joined the Cambridge University for higher studies and subsequently cleared his administrative service exams. He started his official career as the District Collector in Ratnagiri. His blind admiration to the British ways prompted him to treat the British as the superior and the Indian as the inferior. He dressed in a finely-cut Savile Row suits and wore gold rimmed eyeglasses. He tries hard to prove himself an exceptional Indian who is closer to the British than Indian ways of life. His ultimate goal was to get certified from the colonial authorities as the best Deputy Collector. He works hard as the District Collector of Ratnagiri to impress his superiors. His major responsibility was to take care of the family of the exiled King Thebaw.

Beni Prasad Day married Uma, a girl who was born and brought up in Calcutta. She was some fifteen years junior to her husband. She was a tall and vigorous looking woman, with thick, curly hair. He dreamed of a wife who would be able to comprehend his status in

the society and mingle easily with the upper-class people. Unfortunately Uma fails to fulfil his idea of a wife. She realizes the disparity between herself and her husband, but tries her best to maintain what little was possible for her to make her husband happy. The marriage of the first princess with Mohan Sawant, the coachman, comes as a blow to him. Though his wife knew it and also knew the gravity of it, she maintains it a secret from him. She was more comfortable with and faithful to the prisoner than the jailer. Dey had to pay very heavily for the mistake done by his wife. He was terminated from the post and was asked to return to Bombay. His failure to prove himself the best leaves a deep scar in him and it leads to his death. His ambition to serve the British well paves the way to his own tragedy: Dey failed not only to fulfil his ideals of life but also to mind the feelings of others like his wife Uma, Mohan Sawant, Queen Supayalat, etc. He regarded them as his wife, coachman, and the queen in exile, respectively. He didn't try to consider them as individuals who are capable of having a life of their own.

### **Arjun Roy in *The Glass Palace***

Arjun also is another anglicized character of Ghosh. He is proud in saying that he and his colleagues live with the British and have a first-hand knowledge of them. The racial discrimination and disparity in the cantonment do not affect him. In spite of repeated humiliation, Arjun believes that everything about the British is unquestioningly acceptable and admirable. Therefore he regards them superior in all aspects and everything Indian as inferior. Ghosh describes the condition of the youth in the British Indian army through the character Arjun Roy. He makes us understand how the colonial authorities mould the Indian youth and maintain their rule in India. Arjun serves the British army with all his zest and royalty to British. Gradually he realizes the futility of his effort in British army and finds that he is a mere tool in the hands of British. In the beginning of his career, he is a loyal soldier on the British side and he always wishes to be thus till his death. When his intimate friend and

colleague, Kishan Singh, decides to leave the British camp and join with the Japanese, Arjun experiences a terrible dilemma about his future. His last meeting with his officer Lieutenant - Colonel Buckland clearly brings forth the conflict of a large number of soldiers in the British Indian army:

‘Sir, do you remember when you were teaching at the academy - you once quoted someone in one of your lectures. An English general - Munro, I think his name was. You quoted something he’d said over a hundred years ago about the Indian army: The spirit of independence will spring up in this army long before it is even thought of among the people....’ Lieutenant - Colonel Buckland nodded: ‘Yes. I remember that. Very well.’ ‘All of us in the class were Indians and we were little shocked that you’d chosen to quote something like this to us. We insisted that Munro had been talking nonsense. But you disagreed....’

‘Did I ?’

‘Yes. At the time I thought you were playing devil’s advocate; that you were just trying to provoke us. But that wasn’t true, was it, sir? The truth is you knew all along: you knew what we’d do - you knew it before we did. You knew because you made us. If I were to come away with you now no one would be more surprised than you. I think, in your heart, you would despise me a little.’ ‘That’s rubbish, Roy. Don’t be a fool, man. There’s still time.’

‘No, sir.’ Arjun brought himself to a halt and held out his hand. ‘I think this is it, sir. This is where I’m going to turn round’ ... (449,450)

Arjun's friend Hardy became a national figure. He came to see Jaya's grandparents in Calcutta in 1946. He informed them that Arjun had died fighting in one of the INA's last engagements - fought in central Burma, in the final days of the war.